

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS: PROBLEMS, METHODS, AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

This article addresses the major challenges faced by university students in developing English writing skills and suggests effective pedagogical methods to overcome them. The study highlights the importance of step-by-step writing, reflective learning, and peer review as essential strategies for improving writing quality. It aims to integrate theoretical and practical aspects to enhance the effectiveness of English language teaching.

Keywords: Writing skills, methodology, students.

Introduction

In the process of globalization, English has become an important tool not only for international communication, but also in the scientific, professional and educational spheres. In particular, written communication is recognized as one of the important indicators of language proficiency. Therefore, the development of writing skills in English for students studying in higher education institutions is one of the most urgent issues today. Writing competence is one of the important pillars of language organization, and therefore it should be the main focus of attention for teachers, students and researchers. Many studies have been conducted on the writing process or what problems students face the most, and, of course, researchers have tried to determine how writing skills can be developed. Having mastered writing skills, writers can express their ideas in a systematic manner. (Asmuti, 2002). To do this, first of all, we need to clarify the concept of writing. Writing in English is one of the most complex but essential academic language skills. While most students are fluent in oral communication, they struggle to express their thoughts in a coherent, grammatically correct and stylistically appropriate manner in written communication. Writing skills are

needed not only in exams, but also in writing essays, projects, research papers and scientific articles. Learning to write in English is a complex but rewarding process. Students need theoretical knowledge, practical exercises, reflection and constant analysis to develop this skill. Learning to write is more effective through the use of modern teaching methods. Teaching English writing is theoretically based on several main approaches. Each approach approaches the writing process differently and plays an important role in shaping the student's writing skills. First, the cognitive approach views writing as a complex mental activity. According to this approach, writing is a process consisting of sequential stages such as planning, thinking, writing and editing. According to the model developed by Linda Flower and John Hayes, the author processes, selects, and presents information in a logical form during the creation of a text. Explaining this process to students step by step and teaching specific strategies at each stage will produce the expected results. Second, the social constructionist approach considers writing as a social activity. This approach is based on Lev Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development. Learning to write occurs in the process of communication, exchange of ideas, and joint writing among students. For example, through working in groups, peer review, and collaborative writing, students learn not only to express their own ideas but also to understand the ideas of others. This develops critical and analytical thinking. Third, the process approach views writing as a process rather than an outcome (i.e., a finished text). In this approach, the emphasis is on the student's involvement in the practice of writing, working on mistakes, revising, and improving their writing. Students first make a plan, then write a rough draft, edit, and finally submit a final text. This model helps to gradually strengthen writing skills. The above approaches complement each other and, when used in an integrated manner, produce effective results. Writing is not only about knowing grammar, but also about the ability to think, compose, communicate, and express one's thoughts clearly. Therefore, when developing writing skills, it is necessary to take into account not only the result, but also the entire learning process. Students face the following problems when writing in English:

1. Lexical deficiency - lack of sufficient vocabulary - prevents clear expression of thought.
2. Grammatical errors - incorrect use of tenses, verb forms, and word order.

3. Lack of text structure - insufficient logical sequence of introduction, main part, and conclusion.

4. Inconsistent written style - use of oral language, incorrect expression of personal opinion.

As mentioned above, writing is considered a complex and difficult skill by students and teachers. Heaton (1975) stated that writing is a complex skill and sometimes difficult to teach. This skill involves a number of important processes: first, the writer must understand and organize what he wants to write, and then apply and synthesize this knowledge. Writing can be more complex because it requires creative inspiration, problem solving, critical thinking, reflection, and revision, all of which lead the writer to produce a final, complete work. Therefore, the writing process becomes more engaging. Demnery's study titled Students' Difficulties in Writing in English states that because writing is a complex activity, students learning English as a foreign language face various problems, including native language interference, grammatical errors, lack of vocabulary, and other factors. For students who are not familiar with the target language English to some extent, it is extremely difficult to create grammatically and syntactically correct, clear and understandable written assignments. To become a good writer, students need to master other skills, especially grammatical knowledge of conditional sentences, correct use of verb tenses, phrasal verbs, idioms, etc. Another important aspect of writing is vocabulary, that is, the use of appropriate and precise terminology. This is one of the biggest challenges for students learning English as a foreign language. In the writing process, students often have difficulty choosing the right words to express the desired idea. In practice, students can easily use many familiar terms, but some concepts may be in the form of abstract phrases or complex terms, the meaning of which is not yet fully understood, which creates a problem. Another important obstacle that students face when writing in English is the interference of their native language. This is one of the most serious problems. In this case, there is a discrepancy between the student's written text and his or her original intention, which occurs as a result of the subtle and incorrect influence of their mother tongue. This is a problem that almost all students experience, and it is impossible to completely avoid it. The main role in this is played by the way the language is taught and the level of familiarity of the writer with the culture of the target audience. The following methods can be effective in developing students' writing skills:

- a) Step-by-Step Writing - Students are taught a logical sequence of writing by planning, writing a first draft, editing, and preparing a final version.
- b) Working with Model - Writing Students improve academic style and structure by analyzing examples of well-written essays or articles.
- c) Peer Review - Students evaluate each other's written work, make suggestions, and develop critical thinking skills.
- d) Interactive Exercises and Writing Assignments - Students develop independent thinking skills through writing assignments based on real-life situations.

Conclusion

Writing skills in English are one of the most complex but essential aspects of language teaching. In order to develop this skill in students, modern, reflective, and student-centered methods should be used alongside traditional approaches. The main task of teachers is to increase students' confidence in writing, provide them with a solid language foundation, and actively engage them in the writing process.

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