

WRITING MATTERS IN EFL

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ABSTRACT

This article gives readers some understanding about issues concerning essay writing, factors giving rise to these issues and gives some recommendations to get rid of the problems mentioned.

Keywords: EFL context, mechanical skill, drafting, editing, planning, a topic sentence, thesis statement, coherence, cohesion.

INTRODUCTION

Since writing is one of the essential tools for clear communication in cross-cultural contacts and business in general, English major is a key course. Writing is employed at the university level as a common form of communication and as a tool for clear expression of thoughts and ideas. English writing skills, ranging from a short paragraph to an essay, are required in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts. However, English-major students all over the world sometimes struggle to express themselves in a clear, accurate, and thorough way. There are several reasons for this. Therefore, the goal of this investigation is to pinpoint the challenges that 320 English-major students encounter when writing English essays and then offer some pertinent solutions to address those challenges. When people discuss the challenges of using the language, they are not just referring to the difficulty of finding the right words and using them. Numerous academics have focused on the study of writing and the other language abilities. Writing is both a physical and a mental act, according to Nunan (2003). In addition, Richards (2008) points out that one of the most challenging jobs students have is learning how to write in either a first or second language. Writing is a tough task for any language student since it requires the mastery of a variety of abilities, according to Kroll's 2003 observation. Writing, according to Hyland (2003), necessitates composition, which connotes the capacity to either transmit facts in the form of stories or descriptions or to rewrite them into new texts, as in expository or argumentative writing.

As a result, it is seen as a continuum of tasks that vary from the more formal or mechanical parts of writing to the more complicated process of composing. Similar to this, according to Heaton (1979), writing in a foreign language requires a complex set

of skills that are challenging to learn, in contrast to mechanical skill, which is the ability to correctly use conventions unique to written language, such as spelling and punctuation. Actually, according to Harmer (2007), writing is a process that should go through several stages, including drafting, editing, planning, and the final draft. In other words, planning, reflection, and concept organization are all regarded to be part of the writing ability. Writers must not only pay attention to sentence structure, vocabulary choices, spelling, and punctuation, but also master linguistic knowledge and integrate ideas clearly and cohesively in written speech.

Challenges experienced by students

There are several aspects of difficulties that EFL students may have in EFL writing such as poor handwriting, poor spelling skills, or problems with grammar. On the other hand, in this review, two biggest problems are clarified like coherence and cohesion that students encounter in their English essay writing. In order for the reader to readily read and understand the content, the writer should group sentences together in the text. In other words, coherence is the capacity to construct coherent, accurate sentences using the appropriate vocabulary selections and adhering to predetermined standards of word order. The following are some typical essay writing mistakes:

- creating a paragraph without a topic sentence;
- using controlling concepts that are overly particular;
- having trouble coming up with a thesis statement;
- a propensity to stray from the controlling idea.

Cohesion in EFL essay writing is another factor. Many academics concur that integrating ideas, sentences, and phrases together promotes cohesiveness. It is argued that a text can stand as a text by virtue of cohesiveness, which highlights the significance of text cohesion.

semantic readability refers to the relations of meaning that exist inside the text and characterize it as a text. To create this readability, the writer must utilize a variety of cohesive methods, including references, ellipses, conjunctions, substitutions, and lexical cohesion.

Reasons why EFL writing can be poor

The primary issue is a lack of drive. Motivation is essential for language learning success. According to Harmer (2006), there are numerous variables that contribute to learners' poor motivation, such as their anxiety of failing to demonstrate their language competence and their dread of making mistakes. It is clear that this condition is normal and widespread and that both internal and external factors may contribute to it. Teachers must encourage pupils to write often and express their ideas in order to overcome this obstacle. Second, a lack of reading is another cause of poor writing. Raimes (1998:42) underlines that the more reading pupils do, the more they are

exposed to the vocabulary, idiom, sentence structures, organizational flow, and cultural presumptions of language native speakers. Reading is regarded as a useful method to be used and valued in addition to writing strategies to improve writing proficiency. In other words, one of the factors contributing to essay writing in English that is unsatisfactory is a lack of reading.

Students' ability to write is hampered by the impact of the target language in addition to a lack of enthusiasm and reading. Each culture actually has its own means of structuring and interpreting speech, as well as its own set of rhetorical traditions. Writing is still difficult to master, and each language has its own rules that the writer must learn without interfering with another language or languages, according to Blanchard & Root (2004:203). In certain instances, it appears that pupils are ignorant of the conventions of English writing and are instead using their native tongue to think rather than the target language. As a result, they just combine words to produce their own writing, just as they would in their native tongue. Another prevalent issue that hinders the capacity to develop innovative writing is a lack of time. Lack of time can be caused by a variety of factors, including unforeseen events and needing personal time to finish responsibilities.

Useful methods to solve the problems

Students can be advised to use writing techniques including free writing, journal writing, writing emails, and keeping diaries to overcome their writing challenges. Additionally, it might be beneficial for instructors to include computer-based writing in the curriculum so that students can practice quick drafting. To increase their vocabulary and improve their lexical usage, students should be encouraged to learn how to employ English collocation dictionaries in their writing. All in all, students can feel more at ease

CONCLUSION

To sum up, writing is one of the most challenging skills to learn and practice because it requires a variety of competence, including linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse knowledge, and knowledge of language use, including knowledge of grammar, structure, and vocabulary. As a result, language learners generally, and English language learners specifically, may encounter a number of challenges when writing. Consequently, these learners might also run into the most common problems with essay writing.

To deal with issues given, writing essays by practicing the writing tactics can help learners to master it. Last but not least, teachers must devote a lot of time to checking, marking, and providing feedback to their students. For editing and fixing essays, teachers and students are advised to have a dialogue.

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