



Writing in English as A Foreign Language: How Literary Reading Helps Students Improve Their Writing Skills: A Descriptive Study

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Abstract

Writing has long been recognized as a crucial ability in acquiring English. In contrast to the need to communicate using active English, passive English is crucial in getting the point through. It is not just intended to discuss any issue while writing to examine our passive English. Writing is a productive activity in this situation. While all abilities are crucial for language learning, academic and professional groups undoubtedly require writers the most. It is an essential medium for the writer to communicate his or her emotions, thoughts, and arguments. Writing in a language that one is unfamiliar with is difficult when learning the English language. Even though writing is essential for learning a foreign language, due to its complexity, it may be difficult for both students and teachers. For learners to succeed, they need to be mentored and supported; furthermore, teachers are supposed to provide the necessary tools for achieving the learning objectives. Therefore, this review article highlights the significance of writing and how literary reading works help EFL students improve their writing skills. The study suggests and focuses on identifying writing abilities and how employing literature in teaching writing may boost student learning (EFL).

Keywords: Writing Abilities, literature Role, EFL Students, Challenges, Strategies, Academic Writing

Introduction

Writing is vital for conveying our thoughts, ideas, and viewpoints to others (Zuhri & Sukarnianti, 2015, p.186). Setyowati (2016, p.80) claims that writing is about having thoughts to communicate on paper and putting them together correctly. Literacy proficiency is the goal of every student learning English as a foreign language. This objective presents a significant challenge for the students and the teachers, particularly regarding their writing skills. The latter involves understanding both the language structure

and the writing techniques required to produce a work that is clear, organized, and simple to comprehend. Writing for academic purposes is distinct from other forms of writing. There are necessary steps that must be taken in a particular order, as well as factors that must be given a significant amount of weight (Irawati, 2015). A writer's ability to think critically, analyze data, provide a rationale, and provide scholarly and factual information are all examined when doing academic work. In order for our writing to get off to a good start, we need to make sure that we are concentrating on the core aims of academic writing. Irvin (2010, p. 8) pointed out that the issue of writing ability is, first and foremost, a disagreement in this particular instance. A diverse range of readers is located in different parts of the world. It is possible to attain this goal by encouraging pupils to study works of literature, which will assist them in developing their writing talents. As a result, an expansive viewpoint on writing ability and the many connections between reading written material and writing ability are investigated here. A presentation on using literary works as a teaching tool in an EFL classroom is emphasized, along with the language's communicative features, because EFL students need to understand structural and functional grammar. This is because EFL students must understand structural and functional grammar.

The Features of Writing

The idea that writing is a kind of communication may be construed in several different ways, depending on the context, according to the Online Dictionary of Written Languages and Languages, which asserts that writing is a technique. Writing is a way of visually or physically expressing language. This information comes from the section that indicates that writing is a technique. In writing systems, speech sounds are represented by sets of symbols, which may also contain symbols for punctuation and numerals. These sets of symbols are called orthographies.

On the other hand, writing goes beyond the simple symbolization of speech done with orthography since it also entails the purposeful selection and arrangement of sentences following linguistic rules (Brooks, 1960). Examples of the latter include things like grammar, vocabulary, penmanship, spelling, and layout. Punctuation is another example (Harmer, 2001). Crafting is "how a writer puts together the components of the text, developing ideas via sentences and paragraphs within an overarching framework," as Hedge (1988, p.89) defines the term. Research on writing has shown that this ability requires much complexity since the outcome results from combining many different processes. It illustrates numerous processes in which the writer engages, including intellect, problem-solving, and social interaction, and it is more than simply a depiction of ideas.

Writing as a Psychological Function

Trying to write or create anything, people can engage in many tasks at the same time because of the capabilities of the human brain. It is possible for individuals to study their surroundings, assess those surroundings, and then translate those assessments using the appropriate language. According to Sinclair (2010), successful writers have a keen sense of observation, enabling them to connect speech and writing and acquire meaningful information. In this regard, we can say that Sinclair's observational skills are applicable. According to Blamires (2003), the abstract conceptual frameworks that humans utilize, which are referred to as schemata, enable them to comprehend the meaning of the reality surrounding them. Their information on various objects, events, and circumstances is embodied in these schemata. In addition, Blamires draws attention to the fact that there may be particular difficulties involved if one is required to read or produce content in a language that is not their native tongue. This is because different cultures have different conceptual frameworks.

Using Writing as A Tool to Solve Problems

Writing is a complex skill requiring the writer to consider several different factors. These factors include the writer's comprehension of the subject matter, the audience, and the aim of the writing. According to Silva (1990), the process of writing is mainly concerned with arrangement, specifically with fitting words and paragraphs into predetermined formats. Mastering the abilities to recognize, internalize, and use these patterns is necessary to become a proficient writer. Therefore, a competent writer would consider these aspects and find pertinent answers to achieve the writing goals. According to Kern (2000), writing is a dynamic activity that requires active thinking and the ability to find solutions to problems. In order to produce new knowledge structures, the writer has to establish connections between the schema and the new components. Nevertheless, for this innovation to occur, cultural awareness of the culture being addressed must first be gained.

The Sociological Structure of Writing

The act of writing as a process takes place inside a framework that outlines the particular actions the writer is required to perform. Several steps are involved in composing an essential piece of work. At some time in their life, everyone passes through the traditional steps of planning, writing, and editing. "Depending on the situation, writers may start editing as soon as they decide what to do, while other authors may immediately record their ideas as they come to them. Writers are absorbed; they may pick which stages to undertake or continue in a particular process" (Camps, 2017, p. 15). Another aspect of the writing process to consider is the range of emotions children may feel when writing.

Consider, for example, the requirements imposed on pupils concerning the types of styles. They are to write in, and the standards associated with them, the length of time provided to work, and the number of word restrictions may all affect the quantity of writing they produce. They are apprehensive about it.

How Important Is Writing?

Because of its numerous advantages, writing plays a significant part in our everyday lives. According to Chappell (2011), writing facilitates communication, enables individuals to express themselves more fully, and improves mental acuity. In addition, Klimova (2013) emphasizes the benefits that may be obtained via the writing process. According to her, writing skill is vital since they may enable a person to “produce logical and appealing arguments, giving them the time to think on later and re-evaluate their thoughts, present and accept criticism, and prepare for school and profession.” Writing is a skill that is essential to both academic and professional communities, which is why Walsh (2010) places a strong emphasis on its importance. Most personal and professional talks are conducted via written communication these days. This essential ability may be seen in writing proposals, memos, reports, applications, emails, and a wide variety of other circumstances that need the transmission of written communications. Consequently, students who have difficulty communicating their ideas to their teachers and classmates will have difficulty doing the same with their employers and colleagues since the audience for whom the message is meant will not understand what is being said. Maley (2009) explains the many benefits associated with the practice of creative writing within the context of this paradigm. This researcher believes that it promotes language growth at every level, including grammar, vocabulary, phonology, and discourse because it challenges students to use language in imaginative and engaging ways as they attempt to express their concepts. This, in turn, leads to the growth of language and emotions. Students who participate in creative writing have a greater propensity to uncover hidden aspects of both the language and themselves; as a result, it encourages personal and linguistic development and the desire to keep writing. Another benefit of creative writing is boosting pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Finally, educating students to write creatively motivates them to read more. Students who write better comprehend how texts are constructed, encouraging them to recite more and utilize analogous structures in their writing. Writing helps students better understand how texts are put together.

Difficulties in Writing

Writing is a talent that demonstrates to a teacher that a student has a command of the language and the ability to express oneself accurately and comprehensively. Because writing is a complex activity, students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) encounter

some problems, including interference, grammar, vocabulary, and other factors. According to Harmer (2001), the exact definition of grammar is as follows: “the description of how elements in that language may take on different shapes and be joined together to create sentences” (p. 12). Students who are not acquainted with the grammar and syntax of the target language will have a difficult time producing writing that is correct and makes sense. Students must master several criteria associated with most grammatical rules, such as tenses, prepositions, and adverbs. It is essential that this fundamental feature of using language be taken into consideration. Proper terminology is one of the most challenging aspects of learning English as a foreign language.

When they put their thoughts down on paper, selecting the appropriate words to convey them might become a big challenge that has to be overcome. In practice, students are exposed to various concepts throughout their academic careers. Some are known to them and can use them without any problems; others, however, provide a challenge because they are novel terminology that they do not comprehend or ambiguous phrases whose meaning is still not entirely evident. Yakhontova (2003, p.61) believes that English spelling is rigid and irregular. “In academic writing, use American or British spelling consistently,” she explains. “Do as you please.” Proofreading is necessary for academic writing, focusing on completing, evaluating, and correcting material.

This approach is more straightforward since the writer checks the spelling as they go along with the words they are processing. The third possible stumbling block for authors working in English as a foreign language is incorporating their native tongue. It is perhaps the most challenging barrier that pupils may face while writing. This problem emerges when a student tries to transfer their native language knowledge to a foreign language, resulting in a mismatch between the literal and intended meaning of the sentence. This tendency cannot be avoided since it is linked to how the target language is taught and the writer's degree of familiarity with the culture of the target audience. The general meaning of the communication will likely change as a consequence of translating it from the mother tongue to the target tongue. Unfortunately, the printed words are often incorrect and difficult to interpret due to these interferences.

The Connection Between Writing and Reading Literary Texts

Even if it is not likely to improve our writing, engaging in extensive reading is essential. Students cannot develop without exposure to reliable samples of written stuff. The material they examine helps “make the hidden evident” (Schoenbach et al., 2012, p. 23). Because they will make it possible for them to do so, students will be able to recognize, evaluate, and apply the author's literary devices in a way that will inspire them to utilize them in their work. King (2017) emphasizes the importance of reading various literary works in this setting. He claims that the latter educates “the developing writer about style, fluid storytelling, the progression of the story's plot, the creation of credible characters, and

delivering the truth” (p. 211). Consequently, one may argue that reading and writing are inextricably linked. They are interconnected in many different ways.

Because of its connection to information distribution, reading is sometimes seen as a crucial component of writing. In other words, before beginning to write on a topic, students must properly understand it and become educated about it. Furthermore, children who read a broad range of genres have a strong command of vocabulary and an instinctual ability to use suitable syntax and punctuation even if they are not explicitly trained in the rules. Students may better understand the words and phrases used in a book.

Children are “exposed to language patterns” to facilitate their comprehension of the many complex ways phrases and paragraphs may be constructed (Vandrick, 2003, p. 265). In addition, writers are responsible for a deeper comprehension of the matter. Reading scholarly books and papers, whether in printed form or as digital copies accessible online, is the only way to learn the information discussed here. In a similar vein, works of literature offer pupils a plethora of information from which they may draw while writing and learning about the structural elements of language. They offer real-world examples of grammatical constructions and vocabulary words, which helps students become more aware of the characteristics of written language, such as sentence structure, form variation, and concept connections. In addition to improving students' vocabulary, this helps students become more aware of the characteristics of written language (Pardede, 2011; Vandrick, 2003). Students who read literature might get a greater awareness of the sociocultural features of various civilizations as a side benefit. Students who actively engage with works of literature will better understand a community's ideas, practices, and linguistic structure. Consequently, a lack of comprehension of the cultural context of the text will lead to misconceptions and an inability to transmit ideas appropriately (Steffenson & Joag-dev, 1992).

Literary Text Evaluation Criteria

Reading and analyzing different types of literature is an essential part of developing writing skills. This study was carried out so that a greater understanding could be gained, as well as so that students' writing abilities could be improved. According to Krashen (1989), “reading exposure is the main way language ability may be improved.” (Krashen, 1989, p. 109). According to him, for students to develop their writing skills and their reading, speaking, and listening talents, it is essential to connect with the natural language in written pieces of work. According to Krashen's Information Hypothesis (1985), one technique to improve this skill is to expose learners to linguistic material that is just a little bit above their level of expertise. In other words, push them farther than they now are. According to Lazar (1993), employing concise texts that are suitable for the level of the learners and that may keep them engaged inside the same framework is a good idea.

MacRae (1991) suggests picking works that encourage studying the outside world via the domain of ideas. This is in addition to the previous recommendation. The selected literary works should, as Nunan (1991) stated, “confirm, reaffirm, and increase one's capacity to interpret the universe around them, a suggestion from Lazar (2007, p. 35). Three criteria were utilized to choose the literary work that would be used to help students writing skills. These are connected to the particular class, the pupils, and other relevant parts of the book. The last assessment of the text's many related features focuses mainly on the students' readability. Another thing to think about is whether or not it is possible to generate responsibilities and activities using literary content. In the last step, the teacher is responsible for choosing materials that align with the curriculum's objectives.

To Avoid Plagiarism in Academic Writing

Plagiarism is the practice of using another person's words, phrases, or ideas without giving that person proper credit, and it is a severe issue in academic writing. Since this behaviour is against the law, the person who first thought of these thoughts may suffer consequences. Dryden (1999), and Norris (2007) argue that plagiarism is the practice of taking the words or phrases of another person without giving credit to the creator of the ideas. Plagiarism is a serious offence since it is comparable to "kidnapping" and "piracy." Furthermore, plagiarism is a significant issue since, according to Shahabuddin (2009, p. 353), it may result in "legal" and "ethical" issues. This is due to the potentially severe consequences of stealing someone else's ideas without giving them credit. Is "plagiarism" limited to stealing or duplicating someone else's ideas? According to Bailey, the term "plagiarism" may relate to various practices (2006, p. 7). The first kind of people steal ideas from others without giving them any credit. In the second case, a few words are taken from an internet article without giving the author full marks. Ultimately, somebody can take credit for a concept. Thankfully, new, cutting-edge approaches can be used to determine whether or not a specific essay or article has been published engages in this kind of activity. In this particular case, Shahabuddin (2009) brought attention to the possibility that reviewers may use specific techniques in order to locate instances of plagiarism in publications that have been submitted for consideration.

In addition, there are a variety of methods that may be used to make those who plagiarise feel bad. The following work may not be accepted for publication if the reviewers have any say in the matter. As a further step in the battle against plagiarism, the editors and board of the journal should assist reviewers when they identify indicators of plagiarism in the submitted work. The fourth approach is to request that the author acknowledges in writing that the work he has produced is an original addition to his body of work and that the journal's board of reviewers has clear policies to guard against copying. In this approach, the author is questioned about whether or not the piece of writing that they have produced is a unique piece of work." To prevent plagiarism, place every

item in your essay on your terms," suggest Colonna and Gilbert (2006, p. 81), who concur with Hirvela and Du's statement. You must enclose the statement in quotation marks and provide credit to the source if you use another person's exact words. Because it indicates that we understand the texts we have quoted, using our own words inside the Citation is strongly suggested in this case. In a nutshell, tactics like summarising, paraphrasing, and direct Citation of the author's idea by adding quotation marks around the relevant passage might be beneficial in avoiding plagiarism in the composition of our essays.

Recommendations

As a result of the study, the researcher has come up with several recommendations, outlined in the following list:

1. It is advised that a writing centre be developed to support students in developing their natural writing talents in order for them to fulfil their academic goals.
2. This would be done by allowing students to work with professional writers. As a direct result of the ongoing class sessions that are going to be done, the students are going to participate in a wide range of writing projects and practice sessions in order to apply what they have learned directly.
3. Students have a good chance of improving their writing talents if they use the internet as a resource for their writing and read the writing of other students who post their work online.
4. Putting the students through their paces by having them complete many different activities and awarding a medal to the classroom demonstrated the highest overall achievement level.

Conclusion

Writing skills are one of the essential tools one must possess to learn any language. It encompasses the capabilities of sending and receiving information, establishing and defending a position, and emphasizing other elements of the outside world's culture and beliefs. Because of the issue's complexity, it poses a challenge not only to teachers but also to pupils. Learners must be mentored and encouraged in order to achieve. Every author has to undertake research on concepts, jot them down on paper or a computer, arrange their writing, produce the first draught of their work, rewrite their draught, and then ultimately build the final product of their work in order to develop a beautiful piece of writing. If we wish to improve as writers, we need to and never should we give up after taking only one step. A more forceful and urgent strategy is required to make our writing more technical.

Furthermore, instructors must offer the resources needed to achieve the learning

goals. Consequently, we aimed to highlight the importance of writing skills in this work of literature and how it may be cultivated by including literary reading works in language schools. In this example, writing skill provides detailed guidance on making their work appear scholarly. As a result, the researcher endeavoured to explain this to the readers, especially students who wish to improve their ability to produce such academic writing.

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