

THE METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES OF DEVELOPING WRITING COMPETENCE OF ESL (ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE)

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Abstract: *This article deals with teaching writing competence which is a productive type of language skills to the students of foreign departments. The objective of this article is to discuss the methodical issues of developing writing competence of English as a second language classes. This will help to develop students' writing skills through approaches. In addition, approaches in writing practices will encourage the student's thinking ability, outlook and motivate students to express their ideas in writing.*

Key words: *approaches, the controlled-to-free approach, the free-writing approach, the pattern-paragraph approach, the grammar-syntax-organization approach, the communicative approach, the process approach.*

Nowadays, the development writing competence in a foreign language is one of the main requirements of international and national exams. Therefore it is necessary for the learners to master the writing skill effectively. Antony was one of the first applied linguists to distinguish the terms approach, method and technique as they apply to language teaching. For Antony, an approach reflects a theoretical model or research paradigm. It provides a broad philosophical perspective on language teaching, such as found in the justifications for the direct method, the reading approach, or the communicative approach. A method, on the other hand, is a set of procedures for Antony. It spells out rather precisely in a step-by-step manner how to teach a second or foreign language. Examples of methods are the Silent Way, Community Language Learning, and Suggestopedia. A more recent framework for discussing language teaching methodology has been proposed by Richards and Rodgers. Richards and Rodgers use method as the most general and overarching term. Under method, they have the terms approach, design, and procedure. [4; 3]. There are many approaches and techniques that could lead to major issues in students' academic performance if they have a weak foundation in writing. The following approaches are included in the development of writing competence (figure 1).

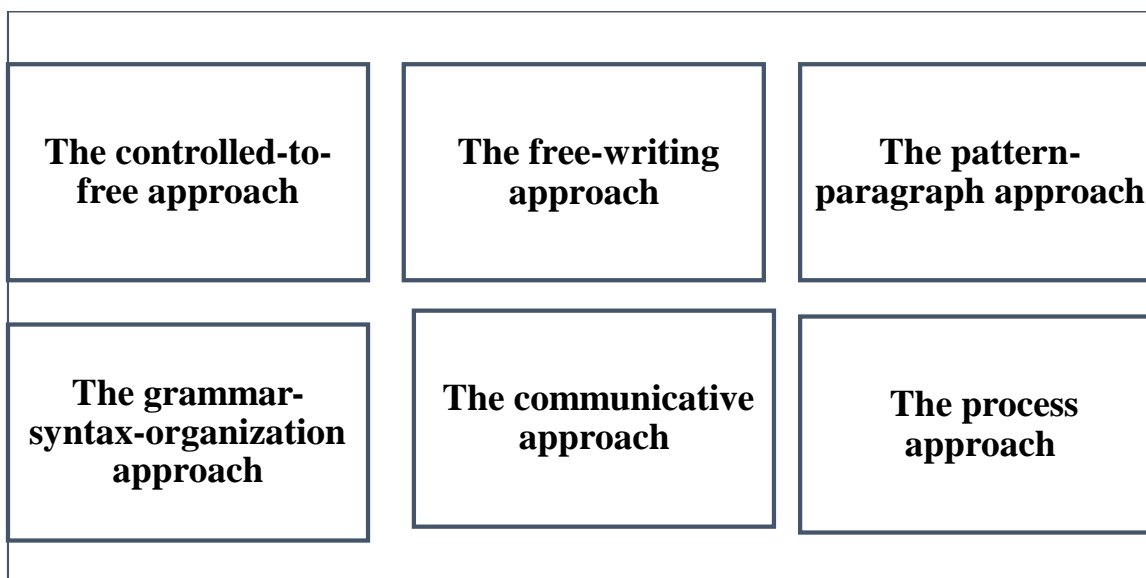


Figure 1. Approaches in Writing Practises

The controlled-to-free approach: In 1950 and early 1960, the audio-lingual method dominated second language learning which emphasized on speech and writing through mastering grammatical and syntactic forms.

Here, the students are given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically, these controlled compositions then followed by correction of errors, so that it can lead to the free composition. Overall, this approach focuses on accuracy rather than fluency [1; 5].

The free-writing approach: a writing strategy was developed by Peter Elbow in 1973, is similar to brainstorming but is written in sentence and paragraph form without stopping. To emphasize fluency even more, some ESL teachers begin many of their classes by asking students to write freely on any topic without worrying about grammar and spelling for five or ten minutes. At first, students find this very difficult. They have to resort to writing sentences like, “I can’t think of anything to write.” As they do this kind of writing more and more often, however, some find that they write more fluently and that putting words down on paper is not so frightening after all. The teachers do not correct these short pieces of free writing; They simply read them and perhaps comment on the ideas the writer expressed [7; 7].

Example of Free-Writing

A Memorable Moment

The day I got my driver’s licence. Cloudy. Raining. Crummy taste in my mouth. Nerves stomach. Sweaty hands, exam room. Crowded. People pushing. Smoking. Waiting in line for eternity. Dirty floor, carved up desk tops. Waiting and waiting. Still in line. Candy wrappers on floor. People next to me looked poor. Dirty T- shirts Everyone seems older than me. My written test graded. Passed. Thanks I said. He

ignored me, just looked straight ahead. Next, he mumbled. Wait. Wait in line for vision test. People loud, rude, nervous in line. Getting angry at waiting. Been here three hours said a scruffy looking kid. Tough. Faceless eye examiner. Passed. Go to the next line. Thank you. No response. Thanks a lot. Still no response. Important moment for me [9].

The pattern-paragraph approach: This approach focuses on organization by copying the paragraphs or model passages. It is based on the principle that in different culture or situations, people construct and organize communication with each other in different ways.

The grammar-syntax-organization approach is based on the need to work with the several aspects of writing simultaneously. Tasks are based on several different aspects at once and students are guided and expected to see the connection between what they are trying to write and what they actually need to write. Forms and message are key features in this approach.

Example of Paragraph Organization.

<p>Present a topic sentence that identifies the main claim or claims that you will prove in the paragraph</p>	<p>The topic sentence should present the claim and claims that you will support and develop in the rest of the paragraph.</p>
<p>Present the first supporting fact and explain how the fact helps prove the claim or claims in the topic sentence. Present the second supporting fact and explain how the fact helps prove the claim or claims in the topic sentence. Present the third supporting fact and explain how the fact helps prove the claim or claims in the topic sentence.</p>	<p>After the topic sentence, you should present (1) specific facts that support the claim or claims that appear in the topic sentence and (2) explain how each fact logically supports the claim or claims.</p> <p>Be careful not to present facts that do not support the ideas in the topic sentence, and be careful not to present additional claims that are not relevant to the ideas in the topic sentence.</p> <p>Each with a transitional sentence that shows how the main idea in this paragraph is logically related to the main idea in the next body paragraph</p>
<p>After proving the claim or claims in the topic sentence, present a transitional sentence that leads readers to the main idea in the next paragraph.</p>	<p>End with a transitional sentence that shows how the main idea in this paragraph is logically related to the main idea in the next body paragraph [8].</p>

The communicative approach: This approach is based on the idea of an audience. Typical tasks within this area consists of writing a letter to a pen friend in another part of the world for instance. Students are asked to focus on two questions while preparing to write: “Why am I writing this” and “Who will read it”. Students may write about almost anything, but they may also be given tasks like describing a winner day. The teaching should not be considered the main audience in most cases, which traditional teaching otherwise states.

This approach may also be described as a functional approach, as students learn that writing can be the means to an end.

The process approach: The emphasis in this approach lies on the process rather than the written product, where the key question here is: “how”. In this approach teachers try to make students recognize that what they write first is not necessarily what the text will look like or contain in the end. To do the process approach justice requires a large amount of time since work is divided into several parts. First students write their first draft, which is not marked or corrected by the teacher. Using peer response or other types of feedback the student will then have another opportunity to produce a second draft. The aim is to explore the chosen topic and develop it as the writing proceeds. The process approach is the most recent ideas and the approach suggested by many researchers. The process of teaching writing is organized according to a three-phase framework: pre-writing, while-writing and post-writing.

Pre-writing (schemata activation, motivation for writing, preparation for the language, familiarization with the format of the target text).

While-writing (thesis development, writing from notes, ending up with a given phrase, proceeding from a given beginning phrase, following plan, following a format and register, solving a problem).

Post –writing (reflection on spelling and reasoning errors, sharing the writing with the classmates, redrafting, peer editing) [5; 200].

In conclusion, it is essential to teach students different approaches in writing classes. That’s why, it will help to develop students’ writing skill, enrich their vocabulary, grammar and spelling. And also it will be easy to explain and express their ideas accurately and fluently.

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