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AN ANALYSIS OF WRITING SKILL PROBLEMS CAUSES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT: The initiative's goals were to determine the writing difficulties that General Foundation Programme (GFP) students have and to come up with creative solutions. In February 2023, investigators from Oman's A'Sharqiyah University carried out the study. Content analysis was used by the researcher as a descriptive research method. A total of 36 GFP students were chosen at random and given the task of writing an essay of 100 to 120 words on a predetermined subject. Six GFP educators double-checked each student's written assignments for typos. Grammar, punctuation, language, verb tenses, sentence structure, and word choice are some of the areas where children struggle when writing, according to the study. Many suggestions were made with the above-mentioned findings in mind. Students should read widely, for instance, to enhance their understanding, vocabulary, and grammar. In addition, instead of focusing on the pupils' mistakes, the writing teacher should highlight their great traits.

KEYWORDS*:* Writing problems, GFP, Effective solutions, A'Sharqiyah University, GFP instructors

1. INTRODUCTION

Verbal communication is incomplete without writing. It is recommended that people keep track of their feelings, ideas, and opinions. People want to send notes, emails, letters, reports, or blogs for a variety of reasons. Because of this, it is essential to always keep the reader in mind when writing. For example, while writing music, one could consider the audience to be either individuals or groups, or even a mix of sexes. Maybe you don't know who you're talking to when you reach out. There are two main kinds of written communication: formal and informal. When writing important stuff, use professional English, make your sentences longer, and avoid using informal language or colloquialisms.

Also, don't use first names unless absolutely necessary. On the flip side, informal patterns are distinct because they use nonstandard English forms, acronyms, and slang. There are a lot of reasons why writing exercises should be a part of every language learning curriculum. Learning can be facilitated, for example, by writing. According to Raimes (1983), this helps pupils build on their prior knowledge and use the language in new situations. Hedge (1988) argues that students learn more when they write in class because it gives them opportunities to practice and perfect their language abilities, grammatical rules, and vocabulary. Here, students can ask their teachers to review their work and provide feedback. By having students complete written assignments, teachers may gauge their progress and see where their students are struggling. In this perspective, the importance of learning a new language is demonstrated by handwriting.

The skills needed for writing and public speaking are distinct. For example, according to Hedge (1988), one needs to be able to arrange ideas and facts in a logical way, explain things precisely, use the right terminology, and adapt one's vocabulary, syntax, and sentence

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structure to the subject and audience. Finding out what difficulties GFP students at A'Sharqiyah University encounter is the main goal of this research. Finding answers to these problems is our top priority. College and university students in Oman often complain about their writing, especially when they need to be clear, succinct, and effective. There is a sense of community among A'Sharqiyah University students; they are not isolated. Teachers in higher education have noticed that their pupils' writing is riddled with mistakes. Paragraph writing is challenging for youngsters for a variety of reasons.

One major reason for this is how challenging it is to write appropriately. Raises (1983) asserts, "When learners articulate apprehension regarding the difficulty of writing in a second language, they refer to the challenges of conceptualizing and articulating ideas in a foreign language, in addition to the difficulties of employing appropriate vocabulary and syntax." (p. 13). This goes against what Byrne (1988) said about how linguistic, cognitive, and psychological aspects make paragraph writing difficult.

The purpose of this research is to find out what works best to help students at A'Sharqiyah University who are having trouble writing.

The objective of the study

The purpose of this research is to determine the challenges that Graduate Foundation Program (GFP) students at A'Sharqiyah University face when composing paragraphs and to provide solutions to those problems.

Research questions

The basic premise of this investigation is related to one of the three subjects that are being investigated.

1. What are the challenges that the GFP students at A'Sharqiyah University are facing when trying to write?
2. When it comes to writing paragraphs, what do GFP teachers find most difficult?
3. How can we help pupils become better paragraph writers?

Research hypotheses

Composing paragraphs might be challenging for GFP students at A'Sharqiyah University because of issues with mechanics, organization, thematic development, word choice, and sentence construction.Paragraph writing is a challenge for pupils, according to GFP English teachers. pupils' problems stem from a lack of subject understanding, incorrect word choice, and spelling mistakes.

Educators should give students a lot of writing assignments, while also pushing them to read a lot and recognizing great work.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Important writing abilities, research on teaching writing, difficulties in writing, and things that make writing more difficult will all be covered in this part.

Writing Techniques

The two main ways to approach writing are the process method and the result technique.

Process-based writing techniques

The First language writing instruction and analysis saw the rise of process writing in the '60s, '70s, and '80s. The process writing technique is supported by important works written by

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Raimes (1985) and Zamel (1982). Writing strategies used by native speakers of a language can teach ESL writers a thing or two, according to a 1982 statement by Zamel. The most difficult part of teaching English as a second language, he says, is making sure teachers can help students with rewriting. All writers are seen as unique individuals who come up with ideas in the process approaches. Many people thought that writing was a great way to express oneself and project an air of authority, but that written language made it difficult to understand how the mind worked. The term "process writing" describes a style of writing that places an emphasis on methodical approaches to brainstorming, ideation, and composition. People often use this tactic on their own, without thinking about how it could affect broader societal, political, academic, or cultural settings. According to Zamel (1982), the style of writing is chaotic, repetitive, and confusing. He states, "It is a method to discover and comprehend."

Product writing techniques

According to Nunan (1989), students' final projects necessitate specific language, and the product technique places an emphasis on that. As opposed to the process writing technique, students take on more responsibility for comprehending and expressing the given material when they choose for the product writing strategy. The major goal of the product-oriented approach to teaching, according to Getnet (1994), is to have students write. It is critical to follow all rules and be as precise as possible. To pull this off correctly, you must pay close attention to spelling, grammar, and word choice. The essay will be well-organized and free of biased or subjective views if you have a writing teacher who focuses on product-oriented ways to help you out. According to Byrne (1988), the product approach to writing places a premium on precision when completing assignments. The main goal is to find and fix mistakes in written material. According to Raimes (1983), using the product strategy, teenagers may duplicate and edit grammatically correct material with few mistakes.

According to Hedge (1988), while using the product writing style, students should keep these things in mind. Just a couple of examples below:

- Setting up and structure
- Right spelling
- Other choices for words
- The shape of the phreast
- A lot of delays
- Implements that stick to each other
- Many different kinds of sentences

Writing problems with learners

According to Byrne and Hedge (1988), in order for the discourse to remain logically coherent and for the substance of the text to be understood independently, the author must use suitable transitions and structures. The author must methodically organize their thoughts, carefully choose their words, and follow grammatical rules before beginning to write. Reading Byrne (1988) and Hedge (1988) closely, one can spot grammar, mechanics, sentence structure, and language mistakes.

Word-Choice problems

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According to Norish (1983), good writing calls for a wide range of sentence types, suitable vocabulary, and precise syntax. Reid (1983) argues that using words that match with one's intended theme is a great way for beginner writers to make their work more coherent. Though they struggle with word choice, second language learners captivate readers by their extensive vocabulary and use of complex sentences (1980, White). In the long run, this will make writing more difficult.

Sentence structure problems

According to Reid (1983), there are multiple grammatical rules that sentences might follow. But other students, according to Tsegaye (2006), make mistakes, leave out terms, and use long formulations. A study conducted by Kharma in 1986 found that certain students might not be able to make more nuanced expressions on their faces. Conjunctions are notoriously challenging for second language learners, as pointed out by Zamel (1983).

Spelling errors

Historical settings, different pronunciations, and the impact of other languages all make it harder for students to learn English spelling, according to Gowere et al. (1995).

Problems with capitalization

Capital letters serve several functions, according to Kroll (1991). These include indicating topic headings, emphasizing important words, and starting phrases. The lack of clear guidelines and the difficulties in differentiating between proper and common usage of capitalization are likely to make capitalization a challenge for students (Gowere et al. 1995).

Grammatical problems

Spelling problems are a common writing challenge for anyone learning a second language. Tyner and Kharma's 1987 research showed that second language learners have more trouble with conjunctions, tenses, pronoun references, and subject-verb agreements.

Organizational problems

According to Kharma (1986), pupils encounter difficulties when it comes to coming up with ideas and building sentences. According to research done in 1966 by West and colleagues, students often make mistakes in their writing when they don't have a clear idea of what they're trying to say or when their lines don't contain any meaningful dialogue. Some students, according to Raimes (1983), can't tell the difference between main and supporting points. According to Pincas (1982), pupils' ignorance about linking words prevents them from composing meaningful sentences.

Cognitive Challenges

Language, punctuation, capitalization, subject matter, and formatting are common areas where students struggle. The importance of punctuation in written language has not been widely recognized throughout history, according to Byrne (1988), Carroll (1995), and Wilson (1995). They assert that "the lack of universally applicable punctuation rules results in punctuation problems in student writing."

Content problems

Conversation in a language may present obstacles for those who are still in the process of learning it (Clifford, 1987). This is also linked to the use of traditional training methods, according to Leki (1991). Educators, according to Clifford (1987), shouldn't stress the importance of spelling, grammar, and punctuation too much. Rather, they should guide students in honing in on the specific ideas and terms they want to teach.

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Reasons for Learners' Writing problems

Inadequate knowledge, lack of time, lack of motivation, unfavorable comments from teachers, and the structure of the writing process are some of the reasons why students may struggle with writing.

Lack of practice

According to Davies (1998), writers must master the art of thought construction in order to keep readers engaged. A lot of work has to go into doing this well. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) state that regular practice is the only way to improve one's writing skills. In order for education to be effective, students must take responsibility of it. He believes that practicing a lot is the best way to get good at anything. Writing extensively is also the best way to become better at it.

Insufficient Time

According to Hedge (1988), writing occupations involve numerous processes, and each of them takes enough time. It takes time for students to plan, brainstorm, write, edit, and complete their work. A great deal of multi-level conformity is required for an entity to substantially impact writing, according to Colions and Gethen (1980). Everything from the choice of words to the literary style to the organization of lines and paragraphs falls under this category. It takes time and effort to organize all of these parts, they said. It takes mental effort to go from one level to another, as both White (1991) and Arndt (1991) agree. Additional evidence is provided by Raimes (1983). He says that time is an important component of writing and that this is one way in which writing differs from speaking. Proper use of time in writing is essential for achieving three goals: readability, structure, and logical consistency. A lot of people, including teachers and students, think that producing high-quality work in a short amount of time is both impossible and strange (Kroll, 1990).

Insufficient Motivation

The author Zamel (1997) argues that kids should write with a purpose and on subjects that interest them. Writing about things that students are interested in is beneficial, according to Davies (1998). Writing essays on subjects that interest pupils is much easier, according to research by Leki (1991). Students' writing can be improved by giving them more control over their course selection, according to Silva (1997). When Hudelson (1989) examined students who were allowed to choose their own topics, he found that they were able to generate high-quality writing. All students, regardless of age or level of knowledge, need motivation, according to Pincas (1982). Teachers make matters worse when they link students' writing projects to actual occurrences in the world. The results of Byrne's 1988 study showed that students turned in lower quality writing when given uninteresting themes to write about.

Teachers' Comments

In 1985, Zamel argues that teachers should not grade or comment on pupils' written work. It would be very appreciated if they could offer helpful critiques and act more like interested folks. According to Byrne (1988), teachers should highlight the good things in writing instead of the bad. In the end, teachers can help students improve their writing by providing them with comments on their work. That teachers should provide students constructive feedback is supported by Edge's (1989) claim. In addition to providing constructive criticism, Ferris (1995) argues that teachers should consistently compliment their pupils. Ellis's 1994 study highlights the importance of intrinsic motivation for language learners. After receiving input

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from students, educators are supposed to record the positive qualities of those kids. Students will not develop their writing abilities if they receive unfair and vague criticism from their instructors (Cohen & Cavalcanatic, 1990: 155).

The Writing Process' Nature

A multitude of language skills are required to engage in the challenging task of writing, as evidenced by numerous studies. Cognitive, linguistic, or psychological factors may all contribute to difficulties in writing, according to Byrne (1988). It takes a lot of work and dedication to improve one's writing skills, according to Grabe and Kaplan (1996).The need to express several ideas, both vocally and nonverbally, makes writing mentally demanding, as demonstrated in a 1984 study by Burnaby and Bell. It is the writer's responsibility to make sure that the topic, language, punctuation, and structure of each sentence are consistent. Paragraphs must be readable at a level higher than line level, as demonstrated by the author.

Abu (2001) argues that writing is difficult for everyone, regardless of their native English proficiency, because it requires bringing together many different ideas. All of these parts work together: the mechanics, the style, the content, the goal, the language, and the punctuation. A far higher degree of language competence is usually required for writing than for speaking, according to Ur (1996) (p. 163). This necessitates giving more time and energy to improving one's writing abilities, expanding one's vocabulary, and using language consistently. She goes on to say that writing is difficult and requires a lot of tweaking before it's good enough.

3. METHODOLOGY

Study methodology includes research question, research tools, research paradigm, and data analysis.

Participants

A' Sharqiyah University's 36 GFP students participated in the study. These students will likely start their first year of college when they finish level 3. All of the applicants were chosen at random. All of the classes are taught by native Arabic speakers who come from the same cultural and socioeconomic background. Six English teachers evaluated the students' papers and interviewed them.

Instrument

Analyzing the data includes talking to teachers to get their take on questions two and three and doing content analysis. The purpose of a material analysis is to provide a comprehensive and qualitative review of the material. The investigation is based on positivism.

Procedure

The assignment asked participants to explain, in a paragraph of no more than twelve words, why studying abroad is preferable to staying at home and completing the coursework. Could you tell me whether there is another teammate? In class, we finished the entire assignment. The time had passed, perhaps forty-five minutes. Two separate teachers read each student's work twice. so that everyone is given a fair chance.

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

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The dataset is made of student essays and instructor class comments. It was up to the pupils' chosen English teachers to complete the 36 lines of writing. The teachers looked at them again. In addition to correcting mistakes, teachers offered detailed comments on each student's work. Within the following collection of samples, you will find the teacher's remarks together with the portions of the students' paragraphs that were determined to be inaccurate.

Any person worth their salt will have it.

Value is not as important as affordability in our country. (Rapid generalizations)

Knowledge is power. (Determined existence)

A large number of new grammar rules and vocabulary is taught to the students. (That is a carefully constructed sentence you wrote.)

Investigations are carried out differently by each country. (To the classroom that best suits your needs.)

Students who move to a new apartment may run into people they don't know. The lack of paper, what does it mean?

One example is that they can communicate with these people. Take, for example, these

Studying abroad will broaden your horizons, in my opinion.

That country's history is replete with details.

The possibility of me having chats with my friends, professors, students, and other related folks. (It is beyond my comprehension.)

Knowing what happened in the area's past could be useful. in the know

At the outset, studying abroad provides students with access to a treasure trove of useful knowledge.

Living in a foreign nation also makes learning the language much easier. a stronger

The best way to learn the rules of your own country is, first and foremost, to study them. Investigating in the here and now.

There are many obstacles that students face while they study abroad, as stated earlier. Like I said before, the first tense is:

Instead of pursuing a degree overseas, it will be more beneficial to gain practical experience and educate oneself in one's home country. Compared to studying at home, I think studying abroad is the better option. (as mentioned earlier)

Sevelar is home to a wide variety of institutions and other types of organizations. (A large number of syllables are present.)

The practice of careful observation is another tool for education.

Speaking to strangers is a common way for me to pass the time while I watch. Please indicate the design you prefer.

Additional findings from in-depth interviews with third-grade writing teachers are as follows:

Participant 1 claims that children's main language (L1) is the main reason they have trouble writing. When given a writing project, many students turn to their mobile devices, where they may input their original language and have it translated instantly.

"A lot of students think writing takes a long time." Some students find it challenging to finish their writing projects because of all the components that need to be combined. Many mental disorders have predecessors, and dyslexia and dysgraphia are two of them."Students' inadequate practice is one of the primary causes of their writing difficulties." Respondent #4

declared, "Writing necessitates a diverse array of supplementary abilities." Participant #3 agreed with teacher #3 on this point. "Teachers should not assume that students can write proficiently without independently analyzing and enhancing each of these sub-skills."

Participant 5 claims that students have trouble writing coherent paragraphs because they have different viewpoints. Take English as an example; many pupils still think it's hard. That is why those who hold this view are more likely to make mistakes.

A decrease in students' writing abilities has been attributed to the usage of digital gadgets, according to Individual 6. It is not uncommon for students to move from texting to emailing and then writing letters. The convenience and speed of texting make it an ideal means of communication. Nevertheless, the language it uses gradually affects its students' writing skills. The vast majority of students also find it difficult to complete their writing tasks due to the abundance of written materials and resources accessible online. Instead of developing their own distinctive voice, many students erroneously assume that paraphrasing is acceptable.

DISCUSSION

The difficulties that GFP students at A'Sharqiyah University had when writing were the focus of this study. According to the teachers, the inquiry also looked into what was causing these problems and how to fix them the best. The research surveyed 36 students and 6 teachers on the factors that contribute to and how to overcome difficulties in writing paragraphs. Cognitive, linguistic, mechanical, and psychomotor difficulties are only some of the writing-related obstacles that students face, according to the research. The participants came up with a plethora of solutions to the problems (see results section for details).

Results from this study generally agree with those from other studies on the same topic.

Implications to research and practice

An explanation of writing difficulties and a description of successful writing pedagogies are two possible readings of the study's findings. This study added to the existing body of knowledge on the topics of writing skill development, English language education, and student achievement.

The data was collected and analyzed using content analysis and interviews, which are more advanced methods than the ones often used. This study's methods can be used by other researchers to improve their own investigations with different tools. Researchers may use this study's findings to create better ways of instructing professors, administrators, and academic leaders in the art of writing.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to get to the bottom of the writing challenges faced by GFP students at A' Sharqiyah University. The goal is to identify these problems and provide answers. The sample consists of 36 people in all. Instructors told their classes that "studying abroad is more beneficial for your attitude than studying at home." In your opinion, is this statement true or false?

Six English professors reviewed the replies. Students often faced cognitive, psychomotor, linguistic, and mechanical challenges when writing, according to the research. Previous studies on the same topic have confirmed same findings.

The following suggestions were made based on the presented results:

- Teachers of writing should give their pupils practice and feedback on paragraph construction if any of their students have trouble with it.
- Teachers of writing must ensure that their students receive feedback and guidance at every stage of the writing process.
- Students must make reading a regular part of their lives. Reading aloud to youngsters regularly helps them with grammar, vocabulary, and understanding, according to studies.
- Teachers of writing have a responsibility to see that their students turn in their daily writing prompts.Students should make writing a part of their everyday activity. Consistent practice can greatly improve one's writing abilities. The writing teacher would be better serving her students if she focused on their successes rather than their failures. Other teachers should review their students' work. Students' ability to think critically will be enhanced by this.

English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers, students, and curriculum creators are all anticipated to benefit greatly from this study's findings.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The investigation's data collecting and analysis phase included the use of qualitative description. The researcher's use of "content analysis" and interviewing methodologies makes the study's findings transferable to future quantitative research, which could lead to more trustworthy conclusions. On top of that, the small sample size means that the results might only apply to a select group of people. It is possible that more accurate results might be obtained with a bigger sample size that incorporates students from other universities. Improving your writing could also be as simple as taking a look at your receptive abilities.

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