

Main Approaches to Teaching Writing in EFL/ESL Contexts: A Literature Review

YOUSSEF EL OUIDANI(Corresponding Author), SIDI YOUSSEF EL BAGHDADI
Ibn Zohr University, Agadir, Morocco

Abstract:- Effective teaching of the four skills has been the primary concern of research in the TEFL field. Yet, the importance of writing makes it one of the most useful and essential life skills for language learners and teachers alike. Due to its multiple uses and functions, the writing skill enables learners to constantly expand their personal horizons. In actual fact, mastering the writing process contributes to the learners' achievement of their immediate goals, while serving them in the classroom and beyond. Nevertheless, given the complexity of teaching writing skills, teachers have consistently found it to be one of the most difficult and challenging skills to teach, especially in the EFL/ESL contexts. This article aims to illustrate, summarize, and above all synthesize the main approaches followed in teaching writing in ESL/EFL contexts. The article gives an overview of the controlled-to-free approach, the free-writing approach, the grammar-syntax-organization approach, the paragraph-pattern approach, the communicative approach, the product approach, and the process approach, with a special focus on the two main approaches to teaching writing; namely, the process approach involving training student writers to follow the stages of the writing process through different activities. These activities include brainstorming, paired-student and small-group language problem-solving activities, free writing, multi drafting, structured peer feedback and teacher-student conferencing. Along with this, the article gives an overview of the product approach to teaching writing. This approach involves teaching writing primarily through model analysis, writing exercises, and structured teacher-student feedback sessions.

Keywords:- EFL; ESL;TEFL;Process approach; Product approach; Effectiveness;

I. INTRODUCTION

The writing skill is so particular in that it cannot be left to itself or just naturally picked up like the other language skills. It has to be consciously taught and learnt by doing, practising, and improving. As to how to teach writing, there is no one answer to this question for there are as many answers as there are teachers and teaching styles, or learners and learning styles. Researchers in the field have stressed different features of the writing process depending on how they think writing is best learned. As a result, they have suggested a variety of approaches to the teaching of writing.

II. APPROACHES TO TEACHING WRITING IN EFL/ESL CONTEXTS

A. *The Controlled-to-free Approach*

It is an approach that is based on the Audio-lingual method which emerged in the 1950s and early 1960s, a period known by a great emphasis on speech as the main concern in language teaching. Writing then, was considered only as a merely secondary sub-skill for reinforcing speech through mastery of language forms (Raimes, 1983). As a matter of fact, in this approach students are first given grammar exercises that focus on single sentences and only after having practiced this level, they copy, manipulate or change paragraphs (Hyland, 2003). This process is sequential and aims at achieving accuracy; writing instruction focuses on developing reproduction skills in fixed patterns and the ability to identify and correct problems using their linguistic knowledge (Hyland, 2003). In short, this approach fails to strike a balance between accuracy and fluency. For instance, the classroom activities are designed to develop the students' ability to produce certain structures correctly. Hyland points out the problems of focusing on language structure in the writing classroom. First of all, presenting patterns of short sentences is not authentic and can make it difficult to develop writing skills beyond a sentence level. The fact that students can compose accurate sentences does not necessarily mean that they can produce appropriate written texts for a particular communicative purpose. In addition, structure-oriented instruction does not take into consideration the knowledge of both writers and readers: writers decide what and how to write depending on the readers and purpose of writing. Readers also bring up their linguistic and contextual knowledge to infer the meaning of the texts(Hyland, 2003). Therefore, syntax, grammar, and mechanics are mostly emphasized instead of content, process, audience, and purpose of writing. The controlled-to-free approach expects writers to have error-free sentences, and this characteristic makes such an approach completely different from the other writing approaches.

B. *The Free-writing approach*

Unlike controlled methods, the free-writing approach introduced by Raimes (1983) emphasizes fluency and content, as it focuses on audience, ideas and originality, rather than form and accuracy. Students write on given topics or topics of their interest, which engage them in the writing process and consequently become motivated and on-task. Within the framework of this approach, students write freely without worrying about correct forms as their teachers do not correct the structural aspect of their productions but rather comment only on the content. Along with this, the approach encourages students to read their writings to the

class, which might constitute a communicatively- authentic audience (Raimes, 1983). In the free-writing approach, it is important that teachers allow students to express what they want to say and focus on the students' own creativity and self-discovery. That is to say, teachers should be more supportive than directive: they should try to provide a positive and cooperative environment to help students freely construct their own compositions to convey their meanings. Byrne (1988) argues that "many students write badly because they do not write enough," which subsequently makes them incapable of writing (p. 22).

The free-writing approach has also received its share of criticism. Practitioners in the field have reported that this approach is unlikely to consider the special needs of beginning-level learners. Those learners, especially in EFL classrooms, need more guidance on the part of the teacher. Likewise, Hyland (2003) points out that the approach is inappropriate to be in academic contexts where students have to write about certain topics that require researching instead of freely writing down what they want to express. Moreover, the errors in students' final products affect the students' grades as their compositions are judged in terms of organization, accuracy, as well as content. In a nutshell, the free-writing approach represents the complete opposite to the controlled-to-free approach in the sense that the former emphasizes content but de-emphasized focus on its accuracy related aspects.

C. The Grammar-Syntax-Organization approach

This approach was also introduced by Raimes (1983). Teachers adopting this approach emphasize the need to work simultaneously on more than one feature of the composition skills such as grammar, mechanics, organization, syntax, content, audience, purpose, and word choice all at once. Writing, for them, is not composed of separate skills which are learned separately one by one Raimes (1983). Writing is a skill that requires students to

pay attention to organization while working on the necessary grammar and syntax. For instance, to write a clear set of instructions on how to use a computer, the writer needs more than the appropriate vocabulary. They need the simple forms of verbs, an organizational plan based on chronology; linking words like "first, then, finally", as well as sentence structures like "When... then..." (Raimes, 1983, p. 8). Besides, this approach gives the student writer an essential aspect of writing; namely, writing with a purpose. In this way, students will see the connection between what they are trying to write, what they need to write, and why they are writing in the first place. Accordingly, this approach relates by implication, the purpose of writing to that a form rather than the communicative one which remains merely a pre-text whereby students demonstrate their mastery and ability to use the target structure or form correctly and accurately.

D. The Paragraph-pattern approach

This approach regards the organization of writing as the most important element in the composing process. It started with the claim that the organization of writing varies from one culture to another. In activities that are based on this approach students work on paragraphs; that is, they copy, analyze, or imitate model paragraphs. Exercises tend to include re-organizing and re-arranging scrambled sentences in the right order, identifying general and specific information, inventing a suitable topic sentence for a paragraph, and the like. The objective is to help students to learn English writing patterns that will enable them to write properly in English. Byrne (1988) describes this approach as "Focus on Text which is concerned with the paragraph work, its organizing and constructing, and in which students work on a higher level than single sentences". (p. 22-23). Robert Kaplan (1966) also supported this assumption that different languages have different patterns of written discourse. These patterns are described in the figure below:

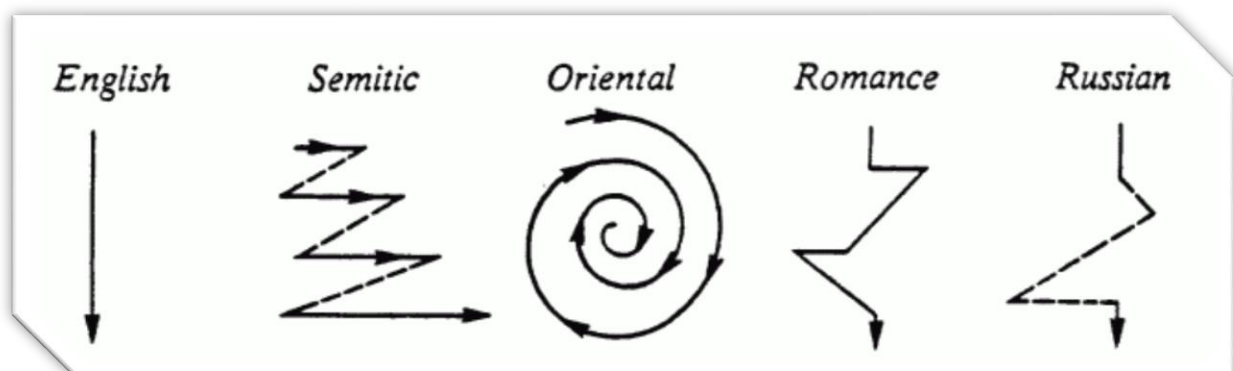


Fig. 1: The patterns of written discourse. (Kaplan, 1966, p. 14)

Contrastive rhetoric is the term used to refer to the idea of focusing on different rhetorical patterns among cultures. In Figure 1, English discourse patterns are described in a straight line, Semitic writing in a zigzag line, Oriental writing in a spiraling formation, and Romance and Russian in a digressive pattern (Kaplan, 1966). Yet, the idea of contrastive rhetoric has faced criticism in the sense that it is

viewed as too difficult to apply to a real writing classroom because students' ages and language proficiency levels are not taken into consideration. Also, contrastive rhetoric oversimplifies and over-generalizes the rhetorical patterns of each culture (Hyland, 2003). In short, the paragraph-pattern approach emphasizes the organization of the target language that varies and differs from one culture to another.

E. The Communicative approach (The Functional approach)

The communicative approach stresses the importance of purpose and audience (Raimes, 1983). Student writers are invited to act as writers in real life by considering the purpose behind their writing and audience they are writing to. It refuses that teachers become the only audience for their students' writings. The approach is based on the claim that "writers do their best when writing is truly a communicative act, with a writer writing for a real reader". (Johnson & Morrow, 1981, p. 151). Therefore, teachers adopting this approach have extended the audience to include other students or interlocutors in or outside the classroom, who do not only read them but also and most importantly interact and above all respond, as well as rewrite in another form, summarize, or make comments. Otherwise, the teachers can specify the target readership outside the classroom. In so doing, student writers are provided with a context that requires them to select appropriate content, language, and levels of formality (Raimes, 1983). In case students lack prior and background knowledge about a certain topic, data may be supplied in the form of facts, notes, tables and/or figures, quotations, documents and so on and so forth (Shih, 1986). Thus, in a functionally-oriented writing class, it is crucial that teachers carefully define and specify the context, purpose, and audience for all the writing tasks.

F. The product approach

The product approach is an approach to the teaching of writing that is based on the reproduction of writing models (Nunan, 1991). Before the 1970s, research into writing instruction was mainly product-oriented. That is, learning to write was viewed as an exercise focusing on form and practised inside the classroom. During the audio-lingualism era, the role of writing in language classrooms was mainly seen as a supporting skill to learn sentence structures and grammar. Therefore, adopting the product approach entails that students be told to write an essay imitating a given pattern. The focus was on the written product rather than on how the student should approach or see the process of writing. In the light of this approach, the discourse and rhetorical aspects of the written text such as purpose and audience are almost neglected in such contexts (Silva, 1990). Abu- Jaleel (2001) noted that the main assumption of this approach is that students have specific needs whether for instructional writing or for personal writing, with the emphasis here being on sentence structure, grammar, and the mechanics of writing such as spelling and punctuation. According to Badger and White (2000), "writing itself is viewed as mainly concerned with the knowledge about the structure of language, and writing development is mainly the result of the imitation input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher" (p. 154). Because of this, this approach is considered as teacher-centered whereby teachers become the arbiter of the models used (Brakus, 2003).

Modeling the correct language in the product approach is the main concern for students. Their attention is focused on studying model texts, and duplicating them. To reach this end, students need various exercises to produce a similar text (Jordan, 1997). As Pincas (1982) indicates, learning

better takes place while and through imitating and following the techniques previously determined by the teacher to respond to the stimulus he/she provides. The approach aims to help students learn specific features of the texts and practice the skills. Afterwards, they may be ready to write on their own without any help from the teacher. For this reason, the teachers' response to student writing will be limited to having students duplicate a model text and examine whether their language features are appropriate and correct in terms of grammaticality. In the product based approach, teachers merely judge, evaluate, give a final grade, and sometimes provide feedback in the form of such simple comments as "Good" which remains meaningless in the eyes of the students and hardly has any influence on the revision of the writing as well as on the targeted writing product.

a) Stages of the Product Approach

The product approach to the teaching of writing views the act of writing as "a linear model with three clear-cut stages (prewriting, writing, and rewriting) each of which contributes to "the growth of the written product" (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 367). The stages of this approach follow the following pattern:

- **The pre-writing stage:** In this stage, teachers select model texts, study them with students, and then help students to highlight the features of genre. For instance, in the case of studying an expository essay, the students' attention may be geared towards the importance of paragraphing, connectors used, and the language used such as tenses. Whereas when it comes to studying a story, the focus is on the techniques to be used to make the story interesting, and hence the students' focus shifts to where and how the writer employs these techniques. After that, students practise the highlighted features in form controlled practice exercises.
- **The writing stage:** In this stage, which is one of the most important stages for this approach, students focus on the organization of ideas. The proponents of this approach believe that the organisation of ideas is more important than the ideas themselves and as important as the mastery of language.
- **The rewriting stage:** This stage features the end product of the learning process. In other words, students choose from a couple of writing tasks. Then, individually, they use the skills, structures and vocabulary they have been taught to produce the product. In so doing, they show what they can do as fluent and competent users of the language.

b) Arguments in Favour of the Product Approach

The product approach is still the main approach used in writing classrooms nowadays across the world. Add to this, it is ranked amongst the most suggested approaches by curricula and syllabi in many EFL/ESL contexts. In Morocco, for instance, most of the textbooks used to teach English at high schools contain model texts in their writing lessons. (see Ticket to English p. 30, 46, 61, 76, 90, 106, 121,

150). Practitioners and researchers who favour this approach argue that it enhances students' writing proficiency. Badger and White (2000) state that "writing involves linguistic knowledge of texts that learners can learn partly through imitation" (p. 157). Arndt (1987) also argues that the importance of models used in this approach are effective not only for imitation but also for exploration and analysis. Myles (2002) adds that if students are not exposed to native-like models of written texts, their errors in writing are more likely to persist. Hence, according to its advocates and users, the product approach is key to developing students writing competence.

c) Arguments Against the Product Approach

The product approach, often referred to as the traditional approach (Matsuda, 2003; Pullman, 1999), has received a good deal of criticism that has led teachers and researchers to reassess the nature of writing and the ways writing is taught. The approach encourages students to imitate and reproduce a model text, which is usually presented and analyzed prior to students' writing. It emphasizes the "finished product" and not on "the subtle processes that occur in the process of writing" (Hinkel, 2002, p.35). Prodromou (1995) stated that one of the most serious fallacies of this approach is that it "devalues the learners' potential, both linguistic and personal" (p. 21). Besides, the approach is teacher-centered as it brings back the role of the teacher as the only source of information. Further, it is also criticized for not allowing sufficient room for students' creativity especially in a skill such as writing. As a result of this, students dislike writing activities as they become "a chore not a form of expression" (Tribble, 1996, p.18). Consequently, a movement calling for the re-evaluation of the approaches and practices used in the writing instruction led to a paradigm shift, which in turn, revolutionized the teaching of writing that subsequently gave birth to the emergence of the process approach.

G. The Process Writing Approach

According to Tribble (1996), the process approach is "an approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and which pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models" (p.160). It "arose ... as a reaction against product-oriented pedagogies" (Susser, 1994, p. 34). According to Bernard Susser (1994), from the early twentieth century, process began to appear in L1 composition literature, influenced by John Dewey's idea that learning is a process. Since then, the term has been frequently used for discussion of writing theories, writing pedagogies, and writing research. The term "process" is used to mean the writing process itself, which implies that writing involves a variety of other mini-processes and stages. Also, the product approach to writing, as Zamel (1985) argues, does not take into account the real act of the writing process itself. Therefore, the process approach helps students to write better by helping them during the actual process of writing. In this approach, teaching occurs during

the writing process, not only before and after. It is more about guiding learners through the processes of writing. The approach divides the process of writing into meaningful processes, stages, and activities instead of only analyzing and correcting the final product by the teacher. These processes include "prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing" (Laksmi, 2006, p. 145-146). Tompkins (1994) also points out that these processes, which are the same and exact processes that real writers apply when writing, are recursive and not linear. This means that any writer can go back and forth from one stage to another as they write. In addition, unlike the product-based approach to writing, the three elements of written discourse: audience, purpose, and context are all considered in the process model. In process writing classrooms, writing is viewed as a creative activity and a cognitive process-involving going through several recursive stages. Thus, writing is no longer viewed as a simple linear activity consisting of several stages that are independent and sequenced. Contrary to the product approach, writing has become viewed and recognized as a complex and integrated set of interactive and recursive processes. Al Souqi (2001) notes that writing involves the ability to generate ideas as well as the ability to express them cohesively, coherently, and logically.

For White and Arndt (1991), writing is a thinking process that necessitates conscious intellectual effort, and cognitive skills. To put it simply, since students require extensive language resources to call upon as they write, this approach considers writing also as a process of problem-solving which includes "generating ideas, planning, goal-setting, monitoring and evaluating what is going to be written and what has been written, as well as searching for language with which to express exact meaning." (White and Arndt, 1991, p. 3). By the same token, Hedge (2000) also emphasizes the view of writing as a "thinking" and "discovery" process consisting of a number of activities, and considering a piece of writing as the result of a series of complicated cognitive operations, study skills, and learning strategies such as "setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing." (p. 302).

Johns (1990) characterized the process approach as an expressivist and cognitivist one. Indeed, the approach emphasizes the individual's expression and cognitive process of writing as a self discovery, and creative practice. That's why it is necessary for teachers to assist and empower students in their writing act. They should also provide formative feedback during the process of composition, and devise writing activities that allow for a meaningful and purposeful interaction between teachers and students. More importantly, the process approach aims to supply useful support for writers with strategies for planning and revising, and "help students gain greater control over the cognitive strategies involved in composing." (Hedge, 2000, p.308). Furthermore, the revising and rewriting stages can help writers critically evaluate their writings (Jordan, 1997).

Viewed from another angle, Mahon (1992) sees “the process approach to writing as an enabling approach in which the writer engages in the creative process of shaping their raw materials into coherent message and work towards an acceptable and appropriate form for expressing them” (p.39). The process approach, then, takes the stance that language teaching should be concerned more with what the learner wants to say. The learner’s interaction or purpose becomes of paramount importance. Thus, the learner is seen to have a role of an initiator, rather than that of a mere responder or an imitator of other people’s intentions and expressions.

.Smith (2000) and Wyse and Jones (2001) summarize the main features of the process approach as follows:

- It includes a variety of expressive as well as expository writing models.
- It encourages writing conferences in which the teacher sits with the students as they are writing and scaffold them on how to progress.
- Writing involves going through a series of multiple drafts.
- It regards writing as a cooperative activity in which students assist one another while composing their writings.
- It considers errors natural and suggests that they are corrected in the final stages.
- Teachers respond to students’ multiple drafts with fewer judgment and more questions and suggestions.
- Grammar is learned in the context of writing for communication.
- It emphasizes revision as an essential stage in the writing process during which teachers give their students opportunities to review, clarify, and re-organize what they have written.

H. The Stages of Process Writing

As noted earlier, the process writing approach emphasizes that teaching occurs during the writing process itself, not only before and after. It stresses the importance of guiding learners through the processes of writing. The approach divides the process of writing into meaningful processes, stages, and activities instead of only analyzing and correcting the final product by the teacher. These processes include prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. (Laksmi, 2006; White & Arndt, 1991). Tompkins (1994) also points out that these processes are the same processes that real writers apply during their writing. The following is an in-depth examination of each of these stages.

a) Pre- writing:

In this stage students prepare to write by generating ideas. They determine the topic, the audience, and activate their prior and background knowledge through brainstorming, mind mapping and other activities of the like. Harp and Brewer (1996) argue that this stage is based on a number of steps such as determining the topic and the audience as well as activating student’s background knowledge through brainstorming and other activities. Also, as Richards (2006) emphasizes, the more time students spend on pre- writing activities, the more successful their

writing will be. Moreover, Al Abed (1992) also stresses that “the pre-writing stage encourages effective writing because it promotes originality, creativity, and personal awareness” (p. 83). In the same vein, Min (2006) considers this stage as “a good foundation for the entire writing process” (p.1-2), because it prepares the students for the actual act of writing. In the pre-writing stage, the focus is on stimulating students’ creativity and having them think about what to write and how to handle the chosen topic. Hedge (2003) suggests that during this stage teachers should remind students of two important aspects: the purpose of their writing and its audiences. To illustrate this, students should bear in mind the intended readers and content of the text when they plan and outline their writing. In an attempt to provide teachers with a more clear-cut guideline, Brown (2001) suggests the following classroom activities for the pre-writing stage:

- Brainstorming
- Listing
- Clustering
- Free-writing
- Reading a passage
- Skimming and/or scanning a passage (p, 348)

While White and Arndt (1991) add the following activities to the list:

- Fast-writing
- Loop-writing
- Making structured or unstructured notes
- Train of thought
- Using visuals such as pictures, readers, cartoons, drawings, maps ...
- Using role plays and simulations (p, 20-40)

The activities listed above aim at helping students generate ideas about a topic for their writing and allow them to start their writing in an informal way. These techniques are commonly used in the writing classroom thanks to their practicality, as they do not require teachers and students to prepare additional materials in advance and are so time-saving and easy to practice in the classroom. Barbara Kroll (1995) states that “while giving chances to practice all the techniques, teachers should encourage students to choose the most effective technique for them” (p, 223). In the process writing approach, the pre-writing stage is one of the most essential writing processes because it affects all of the next writing stages. Teachers should grasp and realize that although pre-writing activities are usually done before the actual writing, students can go back to this stage at any time. In a nutshell, the pre- writing stage is one of the most important stages in the process of writing as it aims at preparing students to write and generate ideas.

b) Drafting

In this stage students write down their ideas on paper as a first draft without focusing on mechanics but rather on content and elaboration. To help students transform their plans and ideas into first drafts, Ron White (1991) suggests the following:

- (A) Associate the theme with something else
- (D) Define it
- (A) Apply the idea
- (D) Describe it
- (C) Compare it with something else
- (A) Argue for or against the subject
- (N) Narrate the development or history of it (p. 55)

White (1991) suggests the following catch phrase “A DAD CAN” to enable students to remember the idea-generating process, which eventually helps students write their first drafts.

It is very important to note that, in the drafting stage, students focus on putting thoughts into words without worrying about grammatical and mechanical errors. In this regard, Fulwiler and Gaber (2003) recommend that instructors and students should not expect the first drafts to be error-free. Teachers should instead focus on more global issues particularly topic, organization, and content, and ignoring surface problems like spelling, punctuation, and capitalization because these can be resolved in the following stages. Hedge (2003) also highlights the importance of focusing on content in this stage: “Good writers tend to concentrate on getting the content right first and leave details like correcting spelling, punctuation and grammar until later” (p. 23). Thence, expressing ideas about a topic on paper is important in the first draft stage whereas refining content, organization, and polishing what students have written are more important concerns in subsequent drafts. To conclude, in the drafting stage students are supposed to write down their ideas on paper focusing on content not mechanics.

c) Revising

In this stage, students revise their writings by looking at organization, main points, support for main ideas, and connections between ideas. This stage is very important as it allows students to think critically and reflect on their writings in an attempt to best communicate their ideas to an audience. In the revision stage, students should understand that revision is not only about correcting minor grammar errors but also about focusing on content and organization of the whole text. Tompkins (1994) states that “Revision is not just polishing writing; it is meeting the needs of readers through adding, substituting, deleting, and rearranging material” (p. 83). Additionally, Brown (2001) suggests that during this stage teachers should provide students with specific directions for revision “through self-correction, peer-correction, and instructor initiated comments” (p. 355). In short, to provide adequate feedback on students’ first drafts, teachers should respond to the first drafts focusing on the overall meaning of the writing. Most importantly, teachers

should try not to rewrite a student’s sentences. Instead, teachers can ask students what a particular sentence means or give suggestions for helping students express what they mean in a better way.

Therefore, as Berkenkotter (2001) points out, “revising is considered the heart of the writing process, the means by which ideas emerge and evolve and meanings are clarified” (p. 47). In this regard, revising is a stage in which students re-read their first drafts, get feedback from teacher and peers, and revise them with an eye to better communicate their ideas to an audience.

d) Editing:

In this stage, students edit their writings by correcting them in terms of spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. Tompkins (1994) describes the editing process as “putting the piece of writing into its final form” (p. 88). Therefore, this stage is mainly about students proofreading their own writing or peer’s writing carefully to correct mechanics and grammatical errors. Tribble (1996) says that editing checklists can guide students to focus on specific points in the editing stage, and the checklists might vary depending on learners’ ability levels and needs. Moreover, teachers should only indicate grammatical and mechanical errors but not correct them. Instead, they can suggest further word choices and linking words to improve clarity and coherence of writing. Particularly in EFL writing classrooms, teachers should encourage students to write without worrying about grammatical accuracy until the editing stage. Therefore, the editing stage represents an opportunity for students to polish their drafts and come up with a final version of their writings.

e) Publishing:

After having revised and edited their writings, students can publish them in this final stage of the writing process. There are many ways students can publish their works. They can publish them in their classroom newspaper, school magazines, classroom bulletin board, or class blogs, or they can simply read them aloud to the class. In so doing, students learn to evoke the targeted audience and have confidence in themselves as writers. To this end, teachers should ensure an environment conducive to engaging students in authentic communication through their written texts. Tompkins (1994) elucidates that having students share their completed works with audiences such as peers, friends, families, or community, teachers can “promote real communication between writers and readers in the process writing classrooms since students can have real audiences who can meaningfully respond to their writing and develop confidence as authors” (p. 94). According to Tompkins (1994), “sharing is a social activity” that helps students develop not only sensibility to readers but also confidence as authors. In addition, Teachers also should not only read students’ writings to identify errors and give a grade but rather read for

information and enjoyment. To sum up, as Poindexter and Oliver (1999) affirm, the purpose of publishing is to share and celebrate students' finished products. In so doing, students develop an awareness of the audience as well as build confidence in themselves as writers; two of the numerous elements which help student writers approach the writing task in an effective way.

I. Arguments in Favor of the Process Approach

A number of studies have been conducted on the implementation of the process approach to teaching writing in different educational areas across the world, all of which highlighting its effectiveness in developing students' writing competence both in first or second/foreign language contexts. Zamel (1982) emphasizes that "it was the process approach which contributed to writing proficiently in English" (p.203). In a case-study approach, Zamel (1983) wanted to discover what skilled and unskilled ESL writers actually did during the writing process. Six advanced ESL students participated in this study. Observing her subjects while they were writing, and in accordance with the recommendations of the process writing approach, she found out that they followed a non-linear way of writing. Similarly, she concluded that skilled writers were concerned more about ideas and communication, unlike the unskilled writers who were concerned about language and spelling. This implies that in addition to the linguistic aspects, our students have to be encouraged to pay more attention to the discourse features while they are writing. In this regard, and following the principles of the process approach, Zamel (1983) suggests that issues of content and meaning must be addressed first and that language is of concern only when the ideas to be communicated have been presented. Besides, unlike other approaches that are known for the ineffective response of teachers to student writings, the process approach is acknowledged for using such collaborative techniques as peer feedback and teacher-student conference that are more attractive to students, more student-centered, and for empowering learners more in expressing their ideas. These activities are important in the sense that they represent opportunities for teachers and students to negotiate, interact, and communicate their ideas. Teachers could also save time and energy in this way (Raimes, 1983; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998). Moreover, multi-draft instructions become more important and effective for student composition and revision as they give learners more opportunities to develop the ability to examine their own writing critically and learn how to improve it (Raimes, 1983; White & Arndt, 1991). Therefore, in order to develop student abilities in revising and editing their writings, learners should be provided with guiding checklists (see appendix X) as well as be trained on how to put codes (see appendix Y) in the appointed place and to ask for teachers' help (Jordan, 1997; White & Arndt, 1991). Additionally, the students' reformulation of their writings, according to Hedge (1988), provides them with a chance to discuss and analyze the content and the organization of their own texts. This results in developing student autonomy and helps them accept responsibility for editing, correcting, and proof-reading their own texts (Jordan, 1997).

In the same vein, Jacobs (1989) points out that:

The key advantage of the process writing approach is to change the role of students in the classroom. The approach is seen to increase students' involvement and insight; that is, students are given another role of readers and advisors in the writing process. Gradually, learners can become autonomous and responsible in the learning process. (p, 69)

Furthermore, Ho (2006) investigated how effective process writing is in helping about 200 students at the upper primary school level and the lower primary school level to improve their writing skills and their attitudes towards writing. Six primary school teachers, three in the lower primary school level and three in the upper primary school level, each implemented an innovative two-month process writing programme in their schools. The effectiveness of the programme was investigated through interviews, questionnaires, a pre-test and a post-test, and pre- and post-observations of the strategies used by the students in both their pretests and post-tests. It was found that the programme yielded positive results across all classes and in both the upper and lower levels, though the results in each classroom differed slightly. Similarly, Goldstein and Carr (1996) examined the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing assessment administered to 7,000 4th graders, 11,000 8th grader, and 11,500 12th grade students across the USA. The results revealed that "process-related activities are strongly related to writing proficiency" (p. 45). Mahon and Yau (1992) also used a process-oriented writing program for two thirty-five students classes in a primary school. They state that by the end of the program, "students' writing ability improved by adopting the process approach to writing" (p.93). Likewise, Cheung and Chan (1994) carried out a writing programme in a primary school in Hong Kong. They also found that the process writing approach successfully helped the students develop their writing skills.

In summary, numerous studies that have been conducted in the field of teaching writing confirm that the appropriate use of the process approach is very effective in developing students' writing competence. As Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) state it, "the potential benefit of the appropriate use of the process writing approach is enormous even though it takes a great deal of effort and time" (p.189).

J. Arguments Against the Process Approach

No one can deny the fact that there is no such a thing as a perfect theory or approach, and the process approach is no exception. The following are some views against the process approach. First, many writing teachers have reported that the process approach is one of the most time-consuming methods used in the writing instruction (Ferris & Hedgcock 2005; Hanson & Liu, 2005; Rollinson, 2005; Wakabayashi, 2008). Indeed, as Tangpermpoon (2008) states it, using process approach "makes learners spend quite a long time to complete one particular piece of writing in the classroom" (p.103). Therefore, taking so long time to achieve a writing task can be considered as a shortcoming of the process-based approach. Besides, other teachers argue that it is

complicated both for them and their students. Having stated that, teachers pointed out that the approach is too demanding as it necessitates providing guidance, giving feedback, as well as devising cooperative writing activities at each and every stage. Moreover, this approach is said to be ineffective with young learners. Further, Horowitz (1986) argues that students can not apply the process approach to their academic writing. Just as Caudery (1997) argues, the process approach “might help skilled writers produce good products, but on the contrary, can low proficient writers make the best use of the approach to produce a good text?” (p. 21). Leki (1992) also indicates two main limitations. First, few ESL/EFL teachers receive specific training to teach writing. Second, many ESL/EFL teachers are not likely to abandon the traditional views dominating the writing instruction. All things considered, the process approach remains as one of the most promising approaches to the teaching of writing especially in ESL/EFL contexts despite the considerable criticism it has received.

III. CONCLUSION

Over time, different approaches have been introduced into the writing classroom. The product approach presents a writing model and suggests repetition. In the process approach, teaching takes place as learners go through the stages of the writing process. Also, while the former seems to be widely used by practitioners in the field, the process approach is viewed to have had the most positive impact on developing students’ writing competence in many ESL/EFL contexts (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2006). Therefore, since learners have different writing needs depending on their age, level of proficiency in language, learning style, and purpose of their writing, it is very important that teachers take all these into account before deciding on which approach to adopt for their writing lesson.

REFERENCES

- [1.] Abouabdelkader, H., Bouziane, A. (2016). *The teaching of EFL writing in Morocco: realities and challenges*. London: Macmillan.
- [2.] Abouabdelkader, M. (1999). The teaching of process writing. *Proceedings of the Sixth MATE Annual Conference*, 7, 3-86.
- [3.] Abu- Jaleel, A. (2001). *An investigation of the strategies of teaching writing for ninth and tenth graders in irbid schools*. Unpublished M.A Thesis. The University of Jordan, Amman.
- [4.] Al Abed, W. (1992). *The effect of selected pre writing activities on the quantity and quality of first year students' composition in vocational training center*. Unpublished M.A thesis. Yarmouk University. Jordan.
- [5.] Al Hussein, S. S. (2014). Academic writing skills demonstrated in university Students’ final year project reports, and implications on the teaching of English for academic purposes, in the Arab world. *European Scientific Journal*, 1, 378 - 386.
- [6.] Alsouqi, S. (2001). *The effect of using computers in teaching of L2 composition on the writing performance of tenth grade students in Amman private schools*. Unpublished M.A. thesis. University of Jordan. Amman. Jordan.
- [7.] Arndt, A. (1987). *Six writers in search of texts: A protocol-based study of L1 and L2 writing*. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 41, 257-267.
- [8.] Badger, R, & White, G. (2000). A process genre approach to teaching writing. *ELT Journal*, 34, 153-160.
- [9.] Barnett, M. A. (1992). Writing as a process. *The French review*, 63, 31– 44.
- [10.] Berkenkotter, C. (2001). *Writing and problem solving*. Michigan Technological University. Clearinghouse. USA. Retrieved March 12, 2019, from <http://tc.eserver.org/300061.html>
- [11.] Bernstein, A. (1978). *The school review*, 86, 292-294. Retrieved March 05, 2019, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1084613>
- [12.] Bourouis, A. (1995). *Process vs. Product Writing: between theory and practice in Moroccan high schools*. Unpublished B. A. Dissertation, Casablanca: Faculty of Arts.
- [13.] Bouziane, A. (2003). *Linguistic and rhetorical features in Moroccan EFL pupils' narratives: A longitudinal study*. Unpublished Doctorate Thesis, Rabat: Faculty of Education.
- [14.] Brakus, P. (2003). *A product/process/genre approach to teaching writing: A synthesis of approaches in a letter writing course for non-native English-speaking administrative personnel*. Unpublished Doctorate Thesis, University of Surrey.
- [15.] Brannon, L., & Knoblauch, C. (1982). On students' rights to their own texts: A model of teacher response. *College Composition and Communication*, 33, 157-166.
- [16.] Brookes, H., & Peter, G. (1990). *Writing for study purposes: A teacher's guide to develop in individual writing skills*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [17.] Brown, H. D., (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. White Plains: Addison Wesley Longman.
- [18.] Byrne, D. (1988). *Teaching writing skills*. London: Longman.
- [19.] Cameron, J., Nairn, K., & Higgings, J. (2009). Demystifying academic writing: Reflections on emotions, know-how and academic identity. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 33, 269 – 284.
- [20.] Caudery, T. (1997). *Process writing*. In Fulcher, G. (1997). *Writing in the English language classroom*. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall Europe ELT.
- [21.] Chaibi, A. (1996). *Investigating problems constraining the implementation of process writing in the Moroccan EFL classroom*. Unpublished Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of diploma of inspector of English, Rabat: CFIE

- [22.] Cheung, M. & Chan, A. (1994). *Teaching writing as a process*. Hong Kong: Education Department.
- [23.] Coffin, C., Curry, M. J., Goodman, S., Hewings, A., Lillis, T. M. S., & Joan. (2003). *Teaching academic writing*. London: Routledge.
- [24.] Darayseh, A. (2003). *The effect of a proposed program based on semantic mapping and brainstorming strategies on developing the English writing ability and attitudes of the first scientific secondary students*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Amman Arab University for Graduate Studies. Amman. Jordan.
- [25.] El Said, S. (2004). *The efficacy of some proposed activities for developing creative thinking of English learners at the preparatory stage- second year*. Unpublished M.A Thesis. El Azhar University. Cairo. Egypt.
- [26.] Ferris, D. & H. Hedgcock. (1998). *Teaching ESL composition: Purpose, process, and practice*. Mahwah, N J: Laurence Erlbaum.
- [27.] Ferris, D. (2003). *Responding to writing*. In B, Kroll. *Exploring the Dynamics of Second Language Writing* (pp. 119-140). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- [28.] Flowerdew, L. (2005). Integrating traditional and critical approaches to syllabus design: the what, the how and the why? *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 4, 135 - 147.
- [29.] Flower, L & Hayes, J. R. (1981). *A cognitive process theory of writing, college composition, and communication*. 32, 365-387.
- [30.] Fulwiler, M. (2003). *Reading the personal: toward a theory and practice of self narrative in student writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [31.] Gaber, A. (2003). *The effectiveness of a suggested program based on the whole language approach in developing student- teachers' essay writing skills*. Unpublished M.A Thesis. Ain Shams University.
- [32.] Gabrielatos, C. (2002). *EFL writing: product and process*. Retrieved January 10, 2019, from <http://www.gabrielatos.com/Writing.pdf>
- [33.] Goldstein, A. A. & Carr, P. G. (1996). *Can students benefit from process writing?* *NCE Report*, 01, 96-845.
- [34.] MacArthur, C. S., Graham, C. & Fitzgerald, J. (2000). *Handbook of writing research*. New York: Guilford.
- [35.] Halliday, M. A. K. & Hasan, R. (1985). *Language, context and text: aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective*. Geelong: Deakin University Press.
- [36.] Hammani, M., Ahssan, S., & Tansaoui, L. (2007). *Ticket 2 English, Second year Baccalaureate: student's book* (2013 ed.). Casablanca : D.I.O. El Hadita.
- [37.] Harmer, J. (2001). *Practice of English language teaching*. London: New York: Longman.
- [38.] Harp, L. & Brewer, D. (1996). *Reading and writing: teaching for the connections* (2nd ed.). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- [39.] Hasan, M. K., & Akhand, M. M. (2010). Approaches to writing in EFL/ESL context: balancing product and process in writing class at tertiary level. *Journal of NELTA*, 15, 1-2.
- [40.] Hedgcock, J. & Lcfkowitz, N. (2005). Feedback on feedback: assessing learner receptivity to teacher response in L2 composing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 3, 141-163.
- [41.] Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [42.] Hedge, T. (2003). *Writing*. New York: Oxford University Press
- [43.] Hedge, T. (2005). Responding to writing: Writing revisited plenary paper. *IATEFL Research SIG*. Cambridge.
- [44.] Hinkel, E. (2002). *Second language writers' text: Linguistic and rhetoric features*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- [45.] Ho, B. (2006). Effectiveness of using the process approach to teach writing in six Hong Kong primary classrooms. *Working Papers in English and Communication*, 17, 12-24.
- [46.] Horowitz, D. (1986). Process, not product: Less than meets the eye. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20, 14-144.
- [47.] Hughes, A. (1989). *Testing for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [48.] Hyland, F. (2003). Focusing on form: student engagement with teacher feedback. *System*, 31, 217-230.
- [49.] Ibnian, S. (2011). Brainstorming and essay writing in EFL class. Theory and practice in language studies. *TPLS journal*, 01, 41-45.
- [50.] Johns, A. (1990). *L1 composition theories: Implications for developing theories of L2 composition*. In Kroll, B. (ed.) *Second language writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [51.] Johnson, K. & Morrow, K. (1981). *Communication in the classroom*: Longman.
- [52.] Jordan, R. R. (1997). *English for academic purpose: A guide and resource book for teachers*. London: Cambridge University Press
- [53.] Kaplan, R. (1966). Cultural thought patterns in inter-cultural education. *Language learning*, 16, 1-20.
- [54.] Karen, R., Harris, B., Graham, S., Charles, A., MacArthur, R., Linda H., & Mason, B. (2011). *Self-regulated learning processes and children's writing from: Handbook of self-regulation of learning and performance*. Retrieved March 12, 2019 from <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780203839010.ch12>
- [55.] Keen, J. (2010). Strategic revisions in the writing of year 7 students in the UK. *The Curriculum Journal*, 21(3), 255 – 280.
- [56.] Kim, Y., & Kim, J. (2005). Teaching Korean university writing class: Balancing the process and the genre approach. *Asian EFL Journal Online*, 7(2), 69-90.

- [57.] Krapels, A. (1990). *An overview of second language writing process research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [58.] Kroll, B., & Schafer, J. (1978). Error-analysis and the teaching of composition. *College Composition and Communication*, 29 (3), 242-248.
- [59.] Kroll, B. (1990). *Considerations for teaching an ESL/EFL writing course*. In Celce-Murcia, M. (Ed.). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (3rd ed.). New York: Heinle & Heinle.
- [60.] Laksmi, E. D. (2006). "Scaffolding" students' writing in EFL class: Implementing process approach. *TEFL Journal: A publication on the teaching and learning of English*, 17, 35-60.
- [61.] Leki, I. (1992). *Understanding ESL writers: A guide for teachers*. London: Heinemann.
- [62.] Leki, I. (2001). Material, educational, and ideological challenges of teaching EFL writing at the turn of the century. *International Journal of English Studies*, 1(12), 197-209.
- [63.] Mahon, T. & Yau, R. (1992). Introducing a process approach in the teaching of writing in a lower primary classroom. *ILEJ*, 9, 23-29.
- [64.] Min, H. T. (2006). The effects of trained peer review on EFL students' revision types and writing quality. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 15, 118-141.
- [65.] Mina, P. (1977). *Errors and expectations: A guide for the teacher of basic writing*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- [66.] Murray, D. M. (1982). *Learning by teaching: Selected articles on writing and teaching*. Boynton: Cook Publishers, INC.
- [67.] Myles, J. (2002). Second language writing and research: The writing process and error analysis in student texts. *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, 6(2), 1-19.
- [68.] Nunan, D. (1991). *The learner-centered curriculum: A study in second language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [69.] Nunan, D. (1992). *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [70.] Oshima, A. & Hogue, A. (1991). *Introduction to Academic Writing*. Addison Wesley: Longman.
- [71.] Ouauouicha, D. (1980). *Contrastive rhetoric and the structure of learner-produced argumentative texts in Arabic and English*. Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis. Austin: The University of Texas.
- [72.] Pincas, A. (1982). *Writing in English*. London: Macmillan.
- [73.] Prodromou, L. (1995). The backwash effect: From testing to teaching. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 21(1), 1-25.
- [74.] Shih, M. (1986). Content-based approach to teaching academic writing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20(4), 617-642.
- [75.] Silva, T. (1990). *Second language composition instruction: developments, issues, and directions in ESL*. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second language writing research: Insights for the classroom*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- [76.] Susser, B. (1994). Process approaches in ESL/EFL writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 3, 31-47.
- [77.] Poindexter, C. & Oliver, I. (1999). Navigating the Writing Process: Strategies for the young children. *The Reading Teacher*, 52, 41-55.
- [78.] Raimes, A. (1985). What unskilled ESL students do as they write: A classroom study of composing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19, 229-258.
- [79.] Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in teaching writing*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [80.] Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [81.] Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. (2010). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics* (4th ed.). London: Longman (Pearson Education).
- [82.] Smith, M. W. (2000). *Reducing writing apprehension*. Illinois : National Council of Teachers of English.
- [83.] Tangpermpoon, T. (2008). Integrated approaches to improve students writing skills for English major students. *ABAC Journal*, 28(2), 103-150.
- [84.] Tompkins, G. E. (1994). *Teaching writing: Balancing process and product*. Columbus: Merrill.
- [85.] Tribble, C. (1996). *Writing*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [86.] Weisendanger, K. D., Perry, J.R., & Braun, G. (2011). Suggest-choose-plan-compose. A strategy to help students learn to write. *The Reading Teacher*, 64(6), 451-455.
- [87.] White, R and Arndt, V. (1991). *Process Writing*. Harlow: Longman
- [88.] Wyse, D. & Jones, R. (2001). *Teaching English, language and literacy*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- [89.] Zamel, V. (1982). Writing: the process of discovering meaning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 16 (2), 195-210.
- [90.] Zamel, V. (1983). The composing process of advanced ESL students: six case studies. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17 (2), 165-87.
- [91.] Zamel, V. (1985). Responding to student writing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19, 79-101.