INTEGRATED APPROACH IN WRITING PEDAGOGY IN ENGLISH IN KENYAN CLASSROOMS

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Abstract: **Writing skills are at the heart of education. They are essential for composing essays, research papers, and assignments that demonstrate a student understands the subject. A well-written paper garners higher grades and also reflects a student's depth of knowledge and critical thinking abilities. Regardless of this importance, writing is typically more complex to learners and demanding especially when writing in another language different from the native or mother tongue. In Kenya, English is taught as a second language and therefore writing poses a great challenge to the learners. Besides, 60 % of teachers find it difficult to teach writing while 75% of learners find it boring. For effective development of writing skills, appropriate approaches are key in developing this skill. This study looked into the effectiveness of using integrated approaches to develop writing skills. The different approaches under exploration which were integrated are: process, product and genre pedagogic. The study was guided by Archer's theory of reflexivity (Archer, 2007) which provides a theoretical underpinning for engagement in writing. The study was exploratory which yielded qualitative data. The target population was 30% of the purposively selected primary schools. Both teachers and pupils were included. From Class 6-8, 30 lessons in 10 purposively selected schools were observed and 30 teachers whose lessons had been observed were interviewed. The instruments of data collection were interviews, observation schedules and document analysis. Data analysis was done through content analysis which was done at two levels: basic level or the manifest level which gives a descriptive account of the data and the higher level or the latent level of analysis which gives a more interpretive analysis. The key finding was: the use of mixed approaches enhanced the development of learners writing skills. The results are useful to educational institutions like Kenya National Examination Council in designing evaluation procedures in creative writing and Teacher Training Colleges in developing and reviewing curriculum in writing to the pre-service teachers.**

Keywords: **approach, integrated, learner, writing skills.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The ability to write is considered as the basis for improving and developing students' abilities at the next level. However, this transition is derailed by difficulties experienced by learners in writing. Writing skills are the most difficult to master and learners have a great difficulty in understanding what is required in continuous writing in English (Ahono, 2021). There are many activities that should be done at the same time during writing thus making writing complex and difficult. While expressing ideas, students need to think about the appropriate vocabulary, the spelling of the words, the mechanics, the style, as well as the correct structure to be used in arranging good English sentences. These activities have to be done effectively because in writing we do not get an audience and immediate feedback hence we have to get it right the first time (Hadfield, 2008).Besides the nature and complexity of writing skills, L2 learners' problem in writing skills can be caused by several factors: the curriculum, the approach used by teachers in writing instruction, and the teachers' lack of ability in writing instruction (Eliwarti and Maroof, 2014). The present study focuses on the approach. This was informed by Ochako

(2019) who argues that the instructional approaches are important variables in effective teaching to enhance the learning of writing. Approaches to writing pedagogy are unique in shaping certain aspects of writing like accuracy, fluency and creativity (Ibrahim, 2013).

These three dimensions of perceiving writing are embedded in the product, process and genre approaches to writing. Regardless of the shift and changes in viewpoints towards writing, CW still poses a challenge to L2 learners and many teachers of English are not confident to teach writing. Adas and Bakir (2013) argue that, achieving good piece of writing is a complex and difficult task for both native speakers and non-native speakers of English. Consequently, teachers need a systematic understanding of different approaches to teaching writing.

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES

Teaching approaches are key factors that determine the way a learner understands the lesson (Cheung, 2016; Ochako 2019). If the teachers fall short of the teaching approach, they end up with poor learning outcomes. The objectives for learning and teaching writing will not be attained by both the teacher and the student if appropriate approaches are not utilized. According to Eliwarti and Maroof (2014), students' problems in writing skills might be caused by several factors such as: the curriculum, the approach used by teachers and the teachers' lack of ability in writing instruction. The approach used in writing instruction is the factor this paper focuses on.

The Product Approach

This is a traditional approach to teaching writing. It focuses on the product; the emphasis is on the production of neat, grammatically correct written text. The emphasis is on grammatical correctness and adherence to given models or guidelines. Tribble (2009) claims that product approach, is a traditional text-based approach used in textbooks today. Regardless of the dominance of product approach in the teaching and learning materials, Kenyan learners still experience difficulties in writing (KNEC Newsletter, 2016). Grammar; an aspect of accuracy in writing, is a key component as one of the scoring areas in National Examinations. However, grammatical accuracy is problematic to L2 learners as revealed by Manian (2010) and Darus and Subramanian (2009). Looking at accuracy in writing, the examiners are expected to carefully assess tense, subject-verb agreement and grammar, use of right vocabulary, right flow and sequence of events, correct punctuation and spelling of words, legibility of hand writing and format and the right setting of the title, introduction, body and conclusion (KNEC, 2015). All the aspects under accuracy play a crucial role in making the writing aesthetic, readable and enjoyable hence the need to embrace the product approach to enhance accuracy.

The major limitation of product approach is imitating models which inhibit writers rather than liberating them (Widiati, 2016). There is little or no opportunity for students to add any thoughts or ideas of their own. The inevitable consequence is that little attention is paid to the ideas and meaning of student writing, what it communicates to the reader, the purpose and the audience (Klimova, 2014; Widiati, 2016). Over-emphasis on accuracy and form can lead to serious "writing blocks" and "sterile" and "unimaginative" pieces of work. The originality and creativity of the written text is compromised.

The Process Approach

Ibrahim (2013) argues that process approach shifted the attention from the traditional view of looking at writing purely as a product to emphasize the writing process. He further says that process approach depends on giving learners time to work on what they want to write, going from pre-writing activities to final drafts (Widiati, 2016). Process writing is one of the approaches that have been found to be effective in the teaching of writing by research reviews of international evidence (Clearinghouse, 2012; Gillespie and Graham, 2010). A process approach viewpoint in writing sheds light on the complexity of writing by highlighting the processes and steps the learners engages in and which are not usually in linear progression (Rao, 2016). Besides, the objective of the process approach is to make the student aware of, and gain control over, the cognitive strategies involved in writing. It operates at the level of the individual's specific needs (Harmer, 2007).

There is need to adopt the process approach in teaching writing due to its ability to enlighten learners on cognitive strategies involved in writing and its operation at the individual's specific needs (Hyland, 2003). This new trend in the teaching of writing mainly stresses writing as a process and de-emphasizes writing as a product. With the rise of the process approach, the central focus is no longer on the finished text, but on the steps that make up the act of writing (Durga & Rao, 2018). The steps used in the literature are setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, drafting, revising, writing, editing and publishing (Kroll, 2003). Some important stages and activities of the process approach to writing that take place in L2 classes such as pre-writing, drafting and revisions could be made through feedback from the teacher or from peers.

Genre Approach.

Genre approach is considered to be a recent development of the three approaches focused on in this study. There are strong similarities between genre and product approaches (Harmer, 2007). In some ways, genre approach can be regarded as an extension of product approach (Badger & White 2000). Paltridge (2004) explains that it focuses on teaching particular genres such as essays, assignments, and other pieces of writing that students need to produce in academic settings. For assignments and academic settings in Kenya, writing is examined and caters for 40% of the learners' Kenya Certificate of Primary Education score in English subject. Most importantly, regardless of some composition scholars (Andrew & Romova, 2012; Hasan & Akhand, 2010) claiming a wide applicability of genre-based approaches in various educational settings, there are still significantly limited studies (if any) conducted to empirically investigate the application of the genre-based approach in L2 writing classrooms. This approach looks at writing as a social, creative and procedural way of composing a text (Martin et al, 2003).

Ibrahim (2013) has argued that it is more effective for learners to advance their writing skills in second language since it helps free learners from their severe worries over writing. For a learner to imagine and compose an interesting piece of writing, they need to be free from any worry to enhance the flow of creative thoughts (Ibrahim, 2013). The view of language as occurring in particular cultural and social contexts is another important aspect of genre approach and thus, language cannot be understood outside its context (Kim & Kim, 2005; Ibrahim, 2013). The view is important in writing because the learner's writing is expected to be grounded in a certain social, cultural, political or economical environment.

Integrated Approach

Considering Ochako (2019) recommends giving updates on the teaching approaches to teachers because instructional approaches are important variables in effective teaching to enhance the learning of writing. This study focused on the combination of product, process and genre approaches. Eliwarti and Maarof (2014) and Ibrahim (2013), posit that the synthesis of these three approaches improves CW competence because they develop accuracy, fluency and creativity which are important to writing. Hasan and Akhand (2011) advocate for a marriage of the best aspects of appropriate approaches in order to limit the pitfalls of individual approaches. As a result, learners achieve the desired writing goals in each stage of writing and to eventually produce an excellent product. Similarly, Danyah Nadia & Wafa'a (2018) further advocate for the implementing a new approach to writing instruction that combines different approaches. A study by Badger and White (2000) based on the Process Genre Approach theoretical model for teaching writing skills recognized that effective teaching approach for writing needs to integrate the insights from product, process and genre approaches. Tangpermpoon (2008) claims that by integrating the three approaches, the strengths of each approach can successfully complement each other and help teachers to develop learners' written competence by providing appropriate input of knowledge and skills in the writing process. In addition, Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) say that integrated approach to language teaching aims at maximizing meaningful communication and classroom interactions in meaningful situations. It fosters holistic learning such as sharing of information, experiences and development of values. It gives language skills their most meaningful, practical and relevant application, while at the same time giving the student the necessary tools for full learning. The amalgamation of the three approaches is therefore seen as a solution to poor writing skills since they focus on the form, the writer and the reader which are instrumental in writing.

3.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of the present paper was fulfilled through a qualitative exploratory research design which, according to Burns and Groove (2001), is conducted to gain new insights, discover new ideas, and for increasing knowledge of the phenomenon. The paper explored the the effectiveness of integrating different approaches in teaching writing in Vihiga County primary schools. The study was carried out in Vihiga County in the Western Region of Kenya. Stratified purposive sampling was employed to select teachers of English from the 10 purposively selected schools from class 6, 7 and 8 for lesson observation during their teaching of writing. Teachers whose lessons had been observed were interviewed by the researcher in order to help the researcher corroborate the data that had been collected. The sample was stratified based on the level of upper primary classes hence the Class 6, 7 and 8 that were involved in the study.

All the 30 teachers of English from the 10 purposively selected schools were interviewed and 30 CW lessons; one from each class in the 10 selected schools was observed during CW instruction. The 30 teachers interviewed and the 30 lessons observed were informed by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) who advocate for saturation, the point at which a researcher

no longer receives any new information or insight into the phenomenon of study from each subsequent interview or observation, and it often occurs at around 12 for a homogeneous participant group. Oral semi structured interview schedules were administered to class 6, 7 and 8 teachers of English on the writing approaches and their effectiveness in developing writing skills because interview schedules are a feasible and adaptable way of finding out information (Cresswell, 2009). For classroom observation, according to Wragg (2011), they are used in a study and should suit its purposes. Stake (2006) explains that to give quality, credibility, and trustworthiness to a qualitative research, certain methods are used which include: triangulation, saturation, member checking and self-disclosure (Reflexivity). In qualitative research, validity entails the researcher checking for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent (Creswell, 2009). To ensure that the findings in this research are accurate and credible, a number of measures were taken. Validity strategies such as data triangulation and the use of thick and rich descriptions of the procedures and findings were used. By converging data from the two sources, conclusions were drawn from various angles making the research findings trustworthy. Secondly, the researcher involved peers and experienced researchers in reviewing key concepts, methodology and analysis and to help check the credibility of the research rationale, research process and report as suggested in research literature (Stake, 2006).

Regarding reliability, Richards (2009) explains that "dependability in qualitative research involves an interrogation of the context and the methods used to derive the data" (p159). Yin (2003) suggests that one way of enhancing dependability is to make clear and detailed descriptions of the steps followed in the study. To ensure dependability in this study, care was taken to make a thick description of the entire research process in a manner that makes it possible to carry out a similar study in another context, if necessary (Ponterotto, 2006).

Data analysis was achieved using content and thematic analysis and discourse analysis. Interview data was subjected to narrative while classroom observation data was analyzed using discourse analysis. Teacher-learner interactions from the classroom observation were used to corroborate the data from the interviews with teachers about the methods they employ to teach writing. Content analysis was used where qualitative data had been collected using documents. Narrative approach was used to present data from teacher interviews. In terms of ethics, according to Mason (2002), the researcher observed truthfulness and all participants were given accurate and detailed information about the research, their express consent, confidentiality and anonymity were assured, any sort of harm was avoided and the researcher show appreciation of the participants' support in any appropriate manner (Cohen et al., 2007). The researcher then wrote a detailed report using qualitative data that was thematically, interpreted and described in subsections under the three approaches in focus.

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The integrated approach was an emerging theme during lesson observation. Other than the product, process and genre approaches commonly utilized in classrooms, only two teachers out of the total sample integrated two of the approaches in Class 7 and 8. None of the teachers in class 6 utilized integrated approach. The process-genre approaches were the commonly integrated approaches as seen in the following discussions.

Integrated Approach: C lass 7 Lesson Development Episode

1   T: *We all know what compositions are all about. They entail imagined stories. These stories must be interesting and in this lesson, we want to look at how to make our compositions interesting. One is by using parts of speech such as;*

 i.*Using correct order of adjectives e.g. a heavy black leather jacket.*

ii.*Interjections e.g. wow! Alas!*

iii.*Using adverbs e.g. ate gluttonously, visited occasionally.*

2   T: *Can someone give us more examples of the same.*

3   P: *He is an excellent dedicated student*

4   T: *Good. For interjections?*

5   P: *Ouch! It hurts.*

6   T   *Good.*

7   T: *The next item is the use of verb substitution e.g. He was amazed*

He was flabbergasted.

iv.Using relative clauses- who, whose, whom e.g. I spoke to the man.

The man who was kicked out.

She is the lady whose child passed out.

8   T: Now in groups of five, can we discuss examples of verb substitution and the use of relative clauses. (Learners quickly move in groups and discuss for about 7 minutes). What have we come up with? Let's begin with verb substitution.

9   P: Astonished- shocked, mesmerized, dumb founded (more examples were given)

10   T: And relative clauses?

11   P: The girl whose mother died.

12   P: The car which over speeds.

13   T: The last one for now?

14   P: The man that left in a hurry.

15   T: The other way is by infusing emotions and feelings. This can be done in three different dimensions:

i.   Outwardly- how did you perceive/feel e.g. tobacco stained teeth, bulbous nose, melancholic mood.

ii.   The inside-the writer gets into the characters mind e,g. he was spoiling with rage, fear rose into me like mercury in a thermometer on a hot day.

iii. The action-reaction e.g. his hands were shaking uncontrollably

In a feat of anger, he punched the wall.

5. CONCLUSION

16   T: The teacher gave an input statement brainstormed together with the learners' one paragraph and asked learners to finish the rest. "Looking at his face, my heart skipped a beat. It was all written all over his face…."

In this extract, the teacher's lesson was clear and focused right from the introduction up to conclusion. The teacher's interest was on creativity, that is, how to make the writing interesting. There was a clear masterly of knowledge of good writing by the teacher as demonstrated by the use of different parts of speech together with relevant examples to make writing interesting. Learners were adequately guided using relevant examples and every aspect taught was well elaborated using relevant examples. The teacher was creative enough and led the class in generating relevant ideas as in portion 8 to 15. It was a collaborative, interactive and learner centered approach to writing as embedded in the process and genre approaches to writing. The class was generally interactive and learners keenly followed the lesson.

 This exemplary instruction is a clear indicator that the teacher's instruction and the approach to writing pedagogy have a bearing on the learners' performance in writing competency, a claim that is supported by Ochako *et. al* (2019) who argue that, "Teachers are very important tools of input towards effective learning of imaginative writing and that instructional approaches are important variables in effective teaching to enhance learning of imaginative writing." Gillespie and Gillespie & Graham (2010) argue that there is a way to impact positively learners' writing through product, process and genre approach. To achieve positive results through these approaches, the teacher has to teach pupils to write for a variety of purposes and effective composition, help 'inform' in a captivating manner.

Integrated Approach: Class 8 Lesson Development Episode

1   T: We want to look at how to achieve creativity in our compositions. One is by using parts of speech such as

i.   Using adverbs e.g. walked stealthily, cordially invited.

ii.   Using correct order of adjectives e.g. a dark blue Japanese Mercedes Benz.

iii.   Interjections e.g. wow! Alas!

(In every illustration learners were asked to give examples and they gave relevant ones e.g. for adjectives; he is an excellent dedicated student and for interjections, there was no example and explanation but learners gave it correctly.)

iv. *Verb substitution e.g. He walked into the room.*

   He stumbled into the room.

v. *Using relative clauses- who, whose, whom e.g. I spoke to the man.*

  I spoke to the man who was very mysterious.

  He is a man whose reputation was spoilt.

  The author whom you criticized has replied.

2 *The other way is by infusing emotions and feelings. This can be done in three different dimensions:*

i. *Outwardly- how did you perceive/feel e.g. tobacco stained teeth, bulbous nose melancholic mood.*

ii. *The inside-the writer gets into the characters mind e,g. he was spoiling with rage, fear rose into me like mercury in a thermometer on a hot day.*

iii. *The action-reaction e.g. her voice sounded hysterical.*

  Engulfed in shame, she sneaked out of the room.

6. CONCLUSION

3 *T: The teacher gave an input statement, brainstormed together with the learners' one paragraph and asked learners to finish the rest. "How dare you betray me, John bellied. I trusted you." His hands were shaking uncontrollably…*

The Class 8 lesson extract was similar to the Class 7 lesson episode discussed above. The reason for this similarity was because the same teacher taught English in Class 7 and 8 implying that some teachers have the skills of developing writing and could mentor their peers on effective pedagogic approaches. Lee and Schallert (2008) and Cheung (2011) argue that many teachers of English are trained as English Language teachers, rather than writing teachers. Therefore, competent teachers in CW can mentor their peers in CW pedagogy to enhance CW performance in line with Cheung (2016) observation that many teachers learn how to teach writing through imitating favourite writing teachers, or through mentorship by senior colleagues in the workplace.

The study revealed that the integrated approach encouraged collaborative and highly interactive lessons. The teacher gave relevant examples and allowed learners to make their contribution individually and in groups. An approach that is covered in the process and genre approaches to writing. The limitations of process approach being covered by genre approach and vice versa. The class was generally interactive and learners keenly followed the lesson. This exemplary instruction is a clear indicator that the teacher's instruction and approach to writing pedagogy is important in developing writing skills. The process - genre approach to teaching writing was proposed to overcome the pedagogical shortcomings of both the genre and the process approaches in developing L2 students' writing skills (Badger & White, 2000; Hasan & Akhand, 2010). These researchers further observed that process genre approach is a hybrid; the combination of the process models and the genre theories which takes into consideration the development of the writing skills and the conventions, concept of which not only draws from the genre approaches such as knowledge of context, the purpose of writing and certain text features but also retains the process philosophy such as writing skills development and learners' response.

For the integrated approach, which was an emerging theme, the Class 8 lesson extract was similar to the Class 7 lesson episode because the same teacher taught English in Class 7 and 8 implying that some teachers have the skills of developing writing and could mentor their peers on pedagogic strategies that work. The integrated approach enhanced the development of writing skills. The lesson was very interactive and learners produced better creatively written texts compared to the classes which singly utilized either of the three approaches. Many researchers (Andrew & Romova, 2012; Yasuda, 2011; Cheng, 2006; Kim & Kim, 2005) who successfully adapted genre-based teaching in L2 classrooms argued that the fundamental issues underlying the genre-based approach can be improved by incorporating process-focused instruction.

In a follow up interview with teachers whose lessons had been observed, the researcher wanted to corroborate classroom data with interview data and seek clarification. From the teachers' narration, they partially employed aspects of product,

process and genre approaches. The teachers who used process approach argued that through corrections, the teacher gives the rubrics of good imaginative composition and helps learners improve in subsequent compositions as they know the rubrics and it gives learners confidence since they are aware of the stages and know what to do under every stage. The genre approach was utilized because it is interactive, learners develop creativity and learners are confident when writing. The integrated approach which was the best in developing writing skills though barely used built learners creativity and imagination, contributed to fluency and coherence and made learners confident as they knew what to do. Therefore, the three approaches are rich in developing writing skills when properly integrated. Thus, since English is taught as a Second Language in Kenya, the integration of the three approaches is encouraged in teaching writing skills. The product approach ensures the production of a neat, grammatically correct written text while process approach enlightens learners on cognitive strategies involved in writing, steps in the writing process and caters for the individual's specific learner needs. The genre approach helps free learners from their severe worries over writing by teaching them systematically specific genres thus making writing pedagogy collaborative and enjoyable.

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