

Chapter One: Approaches for Teaching the Writing Skill

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Introduction

This chapter aims at presenting the process writing approach. It first gives a historical view of it. Then, it proposes a definition of writing and its nature. The chapter also shows the new model elaborated by Hayes (1996) in the restructuring of the notion of cognitive process in writing research. The chapter closes with CL as efficient technique to teach the writing skill and its application to enhance students' written production.

1. Writing Skill: Historical Background

Dating back to the inception of the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Discipline Movements, it was defined in 1977 as, "Originating and creating a unique verbal construct that is graphically recorded" Emig (1977:123). Despite its importance, writing skill is still viewed as the "bête noire" by Algerian EFL student's written products (marks of students) (see appendix I, II). Writing requires employing a variety of strategies and activities. Hedge (2000:124) stated the different activities involved in the writing process:

"It involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organising information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing. It involves a complex process which is neither easy nor spontaneous for many second language writers".

It is this, the outcome of organized, systematic and interrelated procedures that any FL writer should follow in order to reach a successful piece of writing. The process of writing entails also three main stages. Davis & Widdowson (1974) assert that manipulating, structure and communication are vital. In this context, Broughton (1980:16) considered writing process as both individual and social activity or more accurately "private and public":

"When we write, unlike when we talk, we are engaged in an activity which is usually as the same

time both private and public. It is private because the act of composition is by nature solitary, but it is public in that most writing is intended for an audience..."

Foreign Language Teachers (FLT) are supposed to teach writing for many reasons: to provide students with appropriate and efficient ways, answer essay questions, write different writing genres (letters, reports, essays, stories etc) and also make them aware of writing's special conventions (punctuations, paragraph construction, style differences, etc).

1.1. Nature of Writing

Most teachers probably agree that the emphasis of the study of language has tended to concentrate on spoken language rather than the written one, due to the negligence of written production in language teaching. Brookes & Grundy (2001:01) report that

"The study of language in the twentieth century has tended to concentrate on spoken language, many linguists from de Saussure through to Chomsky, for what seemed like good reasons at the time, neglected the written mode in favour of the spoken. This, however, contributed to the fact that writing was for a long time a neglected area in language teaching".

1.2 Importance of Writing

The purpose of writing is to express ideas, thoughts and to convey messages to the reader in a very correct spelling, punctuation, grammatical structure and selection of vocabulary. Standard language always demands writing more than speech. In this context Ur (2001:163) states:

"[...] much higher standard of language are normally demanded in writing than in speech more carefully constructions, more varied and precise vocabulary, more

correctness of expression in general" .Besides knowing speaking, listening and reading, students need to know how to write, how to put written reports together, how to reply to advertisements. Many people think that the ability to write well leads to the ability to speak well also. Writers frequently spend hours of thought just to get exactly the right words onto paper. Kelly (1969:145) said that:

"By practicing writing, a person learns proper word usage to persuade the reader to listen to them. The writer does this by using "key words" at proper intervals, the writing process helps to develop the skill of critical speaking".

Moreover, Cumming (1995:148) states:

"The main importance of writing in that level is that it helps students to learn. Writing new words and structures help students to remember them; and as writing is done more slowly and carefully than speaking, written practice helps to focus students attention on what they are learning".

Teaching the module of written expression requires from students four steps to be good in this module. Harmer (2001:79) stated: "The reasons for teaching writing to students of English as a foreign language include reinforcement, language development learning style and, most importantly, writing as a skill in its own right"

1.2.1 Reinforcement

Harmer (2001:79) said that:

"The majority of students acquire language in a purely oral / aural way, most of us benefit greatly from seeing the language down. Therefore, written language can be traced greatly in the memory than in the oral way. Students often

find it useful to write sentences using new language shortly after they had studied it".

1.2.2 Language Development

The process of writing helps us to learn as we go along (rather like the process of speaking). Harmer (2001: 79) states that "The mental activity we have to go through in order to construct proper written texts is all part of the ongoing learning experience".

1.2.3 Learning Style

It may be found that students are very quick at picking up language just by looking and listening, but for others it may take a little longer. Harmer (*Ibid: 79*) reports "For many learners, the time to think things through, to produce language in slower way, is invaluable. Writing is appropriate for such learners".

1.2.4 Writing as a Skill

By far the most important reason for teaching writing is that it is a basic language skill, just as important as speaking, listening and reading. Students need to know how to write letters, how to put written reports together, how to reply to advertisements.

With the many uses of writing skills, it would appear evident that people should be made aware of its importance. Harmer (2001: 80) states that:

"We can get beginners to write simple poems, but we probably won't give them an extended report on town planning to do. When we set tasks for elementary students, we will make sure that the students have –or can get –enough language to complete the task".

1.3. Functions of Writing

Writing has traditionally been categorized into exposing, describing, narrating, and arguing; the division of writing is necessary for teaching purposes but it could be established on different bases. Gannon, for instance (1985) when dealing with teaching writing to native speakers (elementary and secondary levels) divided writing in terms of its functions such as recording ,instructional, narrative ,descriptive and explanatory. Nevertheless, he (*Ibid*) admitted that other ways of classifying writing activities are possible, such as subject-oriented divisions. Britton (1978) proposes other categories associated with functions of writing which are: expressive, transactional, and poetic .He (*Ibid*) associated function with what the writer intends to do with the piece of writing and how the reader is affected by it. This can be displayed as follows:

Transactional ←———— Expressive —————→ Poetic.

The expressive stage refers to personal feelings and ideas that the writer wants to express. These may either develop into transactional or poetic. The first category includes writing in order to achieve a particular purpose, the written form being a means for achieving this function; whereas in the poetic type, the important purpose is the writing itself.

The place of writing in the FL classroom according to Harmer (*Ibid:32*) is that he believes it should lead to learning, because it reinforces language use, by that means writing gives learners time to think and the opportunity to think about the language rules, and because they receive precise feedback.

These mechanical aspects of getting ideas and examples from texts need to be mastered to make progress in the more expressive and creative aspects of language writing. Most existing writing models focus on the writing process (Flower & Hayes, 1980, 1983; Hayes, 1996) on the development of writing proficiency (Bereiter& Scardamalia, 1987) more than on the characteristics of the cognitive and linguistic resources needed for writing. Process models do, however, acknowledge that writers need to have certain resources available. Flower & Hayes (1981:84) distinguish three levels in their description of the writing process:

"A resource level, a process level, and a control level. The resource level consists of linguistic and general knowledge that is called upon by the processes at the process level, such as translating and revising. The control level includes a task schema consisting of the goal and a set of production that govern the interactions among the processes. At the control level, other kinds of knowledge resources might be called upon, such as knowledge of writing strategies".

The question is which knowledge resources or component skills are essential to a successful writing performance (that is, effective writing and control processes), which make up the cognitively complex construct of writing ability. First of all, writers, who have the intention of expressing an idea or message to a reader, need to have some vocabulary knowledge of the language in which they are writing (Kaplan, 1996). Writers' lexical knowledge or vocabulary size is likely to influence the quality of their texts correlate substantially with holistic ratings of these texts (Engber, 1995). Also, in a study by Laufer & Nation (1995), it was shown that vocabulary size, use of words of different frequency bands (lexical frequency profile), and composition rating are highly intercorrelated. Limited lexical resources seem to reduce writers' possibilities for expressing their ideas. How to reduce writers' ideas are not just expressed in single words but need to be cast in grammatical structure that indicate the relationship between the constituents in the clauses containing those single words. Consequently, writers need to have some grammatical knowledge at their disposal to be able to connect the words into proper clauses and sentences (Kaplan, 1996).

In contrast to speaking writing requires knowledge of the orthography of the language that is, spelling (Abbot & Berninger, 1993). Depending on the language involved, the 'match' between spelling and spoken language varies in terms of transparency. The degree of transparency in a particular language affects the amount

of difficulty that writers experience in decoding their ideas in written form. In producing longer stretches of text, that is, beyond clause or sentence level, writers should be aware of the organization of their texts at discourse level. They should also be aware of the way their communicative intentions can best be expressed. In a broader, more paragrammatic and sociolinguistic perspectives, writers need to have knowledge of the addressed readership and also about the ways of ways texts function in their community in order to be able to write effective texts. Grabe & Kaplan, (1996).

Cognitive psychologists, such as Flower & Hayes (1980) proposed a working model for the linear writing process. Their model consists of three interacting sub-process: prewriting (planning what to write and how to write it), writing (turning plans into written text), and rewriting (revising what has been written). In addition to all this language-related knowledge, writers need to have (metacognitive) knowledge of what constitutes a good text and which writing strategies are likely to be successful in dealing simultaneously with all the constraints writing a text poses such as Flower & Hayes (1980) “juggling with constraints”). Grabe & Kaplan (1996) showed that proficient writers have more declarative knowledge about writing than proficient ones, as well as different perception of what is important for a text to be adequate: proficient writers focused more on text organization compared to poor ones. This could be distinguished by their metacognitive knowledge in each of three domains: knowledge about oneself as cognitive processor, task knowledge, and strategy knowledge. This kind of metacognitive knowledge, which is stored at the resource level in the Hayes’ model (1996), may be considered an important knowledge source for the task schema at the control level that orchestrates the writing process. Nunan (1991:87) explains writing as an often long and painful process in which the end products emerges through several drafts. He says (*ibid*) that the "focus in the first sentence is on quantity rather than quality, and beginning writers are encouraged to get their ideas on paper in any shape of form without worrying too much about formal correctness" .

Recently developed models of writing include working memory as a critical component mediating the successful coordination of writing sub processes (Hayes, 1996). Research has also demonstrated a significant relationship between the availability and efficient use of working memory capacity, on the one hand, and writing fluency and to a lesser extent quality. It can indeed be inferred that it is not enough to have linguistic and metacognitive knowledge available while writing; writers must be able to apply this knowledge efficiently and fluently. Fluent access to words and phrases or grammatical structures in memory may lower the cognitive processing load for a writer and enhance the writing process and possibly the quality of written text (Flower & Hayes, 1980).

1.4. Teaching Writing Success

Hyland (2002: 78) stated that:

"(...) fundamentally, writing is learned, rather than taught, and the teacher's best methods are flexibility and support. This means responding to the specific instructional context, particularly the age, first language and experience of the students, their writing purposes, and their target writing communities, and providing extensive encouragement in the form of meaningful contexts, peer involvement, prior texts, useful feedback and guidance in the writing process."

Many researchers like Engber (1995), Cumming (2001); Chenoweth (2001) who tried to find the best technique to teach the writing skill. A series of questions comes to one's mind as Richards (2002:303) said:

"Which theoretical trends are we going to adopt? Are we to use the process approach or the genre-based approach? Or an eclectic approach? What will the focus of our course be? What activities are likely to help students develop their writing skills? How do treat learners' errors?"

Richards (2002) described the process of approach to teaching of writing as having four basic stages-planning, drafting, editing final drafts.

1.4.1 Planning

Richards (2002:315) states that experienced writers plan what they are going to write. Before starting to write or type, they try and decide what it is they are going to say. For some writers this may involve making detailed notes, for others a few jotted words may be enough. Still others may not actually write down any preliminary notes at all since they may do all their planning in their heads. But they will have planned, nevertheless, just as the shopping list writer has thought-at some level consciousness-about what food is needed before writing it on the piece of paper.

Richards et al (2002:315) say that when planning, writers have to think about three main issues. In the first place they have to consider the purpose of their writing since this will influence (amongst other things) not only the type of text they wish to produce, but also the language they use, and the information they choose to include. Secondly, experienced writers think of the audience they are writing for, since this will influence not only the shape of the writing (how it is laid out, how the paragraphs are structured, etc), but also choice of language-whether, for example, it is formal in tone. Thirdly, writers have to consider the content structure of the piece-that is, how best to sequence the facts, ideas, or arguments which they have decided to include. Planning is not a unitary stage, but a distinctive thinking process which writers use over and over again during writing (Zamel, 1982).

1.4.2. Drafting

The first version of a piece of writing is referred as a draft. This first 'go ' at a text is often done on the assumption that it will be amended later. As the writing process proceeds into editing; a number of drafts may be produced on the way to the final version. Richards (2002:317).

1.4.3 Editing (Reflecting and Revising)

The earliest model by Flower & Hayes (1980:18) included two different reviewing processes:

"We distinguish between Reviewing and Editing as two distinct modes of behaviour. On the one hand, Editing is triggered automatically and may occur in brief episodes interrupting other processes. Reviewing, on the other hand, is not a spur-of-the-moment activity but rather one in which the writer decides to devote a period of time to systematic examination and improvement of the text. It occurs typically when the writer has finished a translation process rather than as an interruption to that process".

1.4.4 Monitoring

Monitoring is the function which allows the writer to move between processes; responding to the needs of the task. Significant individual differences (writing styles). The writing processes can be seen as tools to be "orchestrated" by the writer. According to Flower & Hayes (1980) production rule model of the monitor, once writers have produced a draft they then, usually, read through what they have written to see where it works and where it does not. Perhaps the way something is written is ambiguous or confusing. They may then move paragraphs around to write a new introduction. They may use a different form of words for a particular sentence. More skilled writers tend to look at issues of general meaning and overall structure before concentrating on detailed features such as individual words and grammatical accuracy. The latter two are important and are often dealt with later in the process. Reflecting and revising are often helped by other readers (or editors) who comment and make suggestions. Another reader's reaction to a piece of writing will help the author to make appropriate revisions.

1.4.5. Final Version

Once writers have edited their draft, making the changes they consider to be necessary, they produce their final version. This may look considerably different from both the original plan and the first draft, because things have changed in the editing process. But the writer is now ready to send the written text to its intended audience. Flower & Hayes (1980). The process can be diagrammed as follows:

Planning —————> drafting —————> editing —————> final draft

An early and influential model of the writing process was that of Flower & Hayes (1980) who described the writing process in terms of the task environment, which included the writing assignment, the text produced so far, the writer's long term memory, including knowledge of topic, knowledge of audience, stored writing plans, a number of cognitive processes, including planning, translating thought into text, and revising. Weigle (2002:23) states that:

"One of the important insights brought out in the Hayes – Flower model is the fact that writing is recursive and not a linear process: thus instruction in the writing process may be more effective than providing models of particular rhetorical forms and asking students to follow these models in their own writing".

Hayes' (1996) Model of writing sees the writing process as consisting of two main parts: The task environment and the individual. The task environment can be divided into the social environment and the physical one. The social environment consists of the audience (real or imagined) for one's writing, as well as any collaborators in the writing process. The physical environment includes the text written so far, which influences and shapes the writer's further efforts, and the composing medium, e.g. handwriting or word processing. Hayes' Model recognizes the important roles that motivation and affect play in writing. (Weigle 2002: 126).

"The cognitive process in the Hayes model includes text interpretation, reflection, and text production. Text interpretation, which includes listening, reading, and scanning graphics, is the process by which internal

representations are created from linguistic and graphic input. Hayes emphasizes the importance of reading as a central process in writing".

Figure 1. Hayes' New Cognitive Model of Writing (1996)

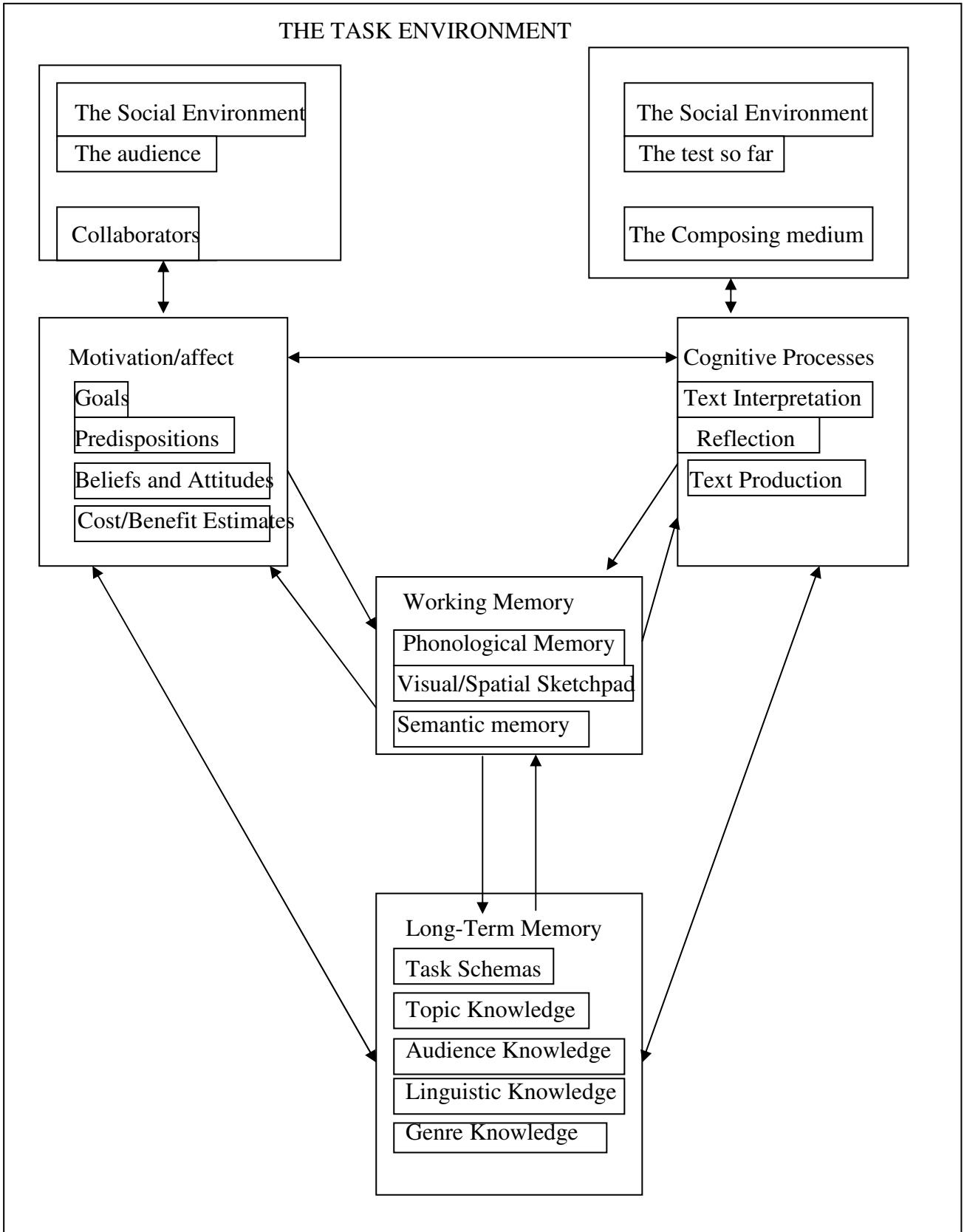


Figure 01 shows the general structure of this model, which includes two major components

- the task environment
- and the individual

The task environment incorporates a social component, which includes the “audience, the “social environment,” and other texts that the writer may read while writing, and a “physical component,” which includes the text that the writer has produced so far and a “writing medium” such as a word processor. The individual groups together motivation and affect, cognitive process, working memory, and long-term memory.

Another influential model of writing is that of Scardamalia & Bereiter (1987) who proposed two – model description of writing that addresses an apparent paradox the fact that, on the one hand, virtually everyone in a society can learn to write as well as they can, speak, while on the other hand, expertise in writing involves a difficult, labour – intensive process that only some people master. To resolve this apparent contradiction, Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987) proposed also a distinction between knowledge telling and knowledge transforming. Knowledge telling is similar to impromptu speaking in that it involves every planning or revision. This kind of writing is called ‘natural’ or ‘unproblematic’, as it can be done by any influential speaker of a language who has a grasp of the writing system. The writing of most adolescents falls into this category. It is a process that can be used to solve one of the fundamental problems of writing, which is to generate content without the benefit of a conversation partner. Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987: 9) reported that writing process ends when the memory probed to fail to find additional appropriate content. They (Ibid:85) describe this process quite aptly: "I have a whole bunch of ideas and write down until my supply of ideas is exhausted. Then I might try to think of more ideas up to the point when you can't get any more ideas that are worth putting down on paper and then I would end it".

Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987: 55) stressed the importance of interactive elements in conversation that are absent in writing.

"When people converse they help each other in numerous, mostly unintentional ways. They provide each other with a continual source of cues-cues to precede, cues to stop, cues to elaborate, cues to shift topic, and a great variety of cues that stir memory. They serve as text grammarians for one another, raising questions when some needed element of a discourse has been omitted".

2. Key Solutions to Writing Problems

Dissatisfaction has not faded away. It seems certainly that (a) the focus has been laid on training the teachers by adding to their “technology”; (b) by and large, teachers need strategies to raise their awareness of what may cause success or failure in their student’s writing; they need self-esteem and confidence. Nunan (1999) remarked, that “the former does not seem to trust the latter and academics criticize teachers for the superficiality of classroom applications of research findings.” The gap is real. The large number of variables in the teaching-learning process makes it so difficult to replicate that conclusions cannot be easily validated. According to Seliger & Shohamy (1989) “In spite of such infinite diversity [of variables] there exists the universal fact that human beings of all ages, attitudes, levels of intelligence, socioeconomic background, etc., succeed in acquiring L2s in a wide variety of both naturalistic and formal settings”.

FL teachers and students face certain problems in teaching and learning writing. As many teachers of English have noted, acquiring the writing skill seems to be more laborious and demanding than acquiring the other three skills (Zheng 1999). In fact, Nunan (1999, 271) considers as an enormous challenge to produce "a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing" in one’s second language. This is magnified by the fact that the rhetorical conventions of English texts—the structure, style, and organization—often differ from the conventions in other languages. It requires effort to recognize and manage the differences (Leki, 1991). Even though

these problems will persist, there are ways to improve the teaching of this skill to benefit all writing tasks and prepare students for the writing they will have to do after they graduate. Three main approaches to teaching writing have been advocated and used in the past few decades of English language teaching.

2.1. The Product Approach

With the product approach, teachers focus on what a final piece of writing will look like and measure it against criteria of “vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical considerations such as spelling and punctuation, as well as content and organization” (Brown 1989: 320). The normal procedure is to assign a piece of writing, collect it, and then return it for further revision with the errors either corrected or marked for the student to do the corrections (Raimes, 1983).

2.2. The Process Approach

In the mid-1970s, the process approach began to replace the product approach which identifies four stages in writing: (1) prewriting, (2) composing/drafting, (3) revising, and (4) editing (Tribble, 1996). These stages are recursive, or nonlinear, and can interact with each other throughout the writing process. For example, many writers return to prewriting activities during the stage of the revision process to develop a new idea or refine a viewpoint. The process approach emphasizes revision, and also feedback from others, so students may produce many drafts with much crossing out of sentences and moving around of paragraphs. The correction of spelling and punctuation is not of central importance at the early stages.

According to Badge & White (2000), the process approach has been criticized because it views the process as the same for all writers, regardless of what is being written and who is doing the writing, and also because it gives insufficient importance to the purpose and social context of the piece of writing. However, the process approach is widely accepted and utilized because it allows students to understand the steps involved in writing, and it recognizes that what learners bring to the writing classroom contributes to the development of the writing skill.

2.3. The Genre Approach

In the 1980s, the genre approach became popular along with the notion that student writers could benefit from studying different types of written texts. As Nunan (1999, 280) explained, different genres of writing "are typified by a particular structure and by grammatical forms that reflect the communicative purpose of the genre."

According to Cope & Kalantzis (2001), the genre approach to writing consists of three phases: (1) the target genre is modeled for the students, (2) a text is jointly constructed by the teacher and students, and (3) a text is independently constructed by each student. According to Badge & White (2000), the approach acknowledges that writing takes place in a social situation, reflects a particular purpose, and that learning can happen consciously through imitation and analysis, which facilitates explicit instruction. The genre approach has been criticized because it undervalues the processes needed to produce a text and sees learners as largely passive.

The genre approach succeeds at showing students how different discourses require different structures. In addition, introducing authentic texts enhances student involvement and brings relevance to the writing process.

2.4. A Process Genre Model

Today many writing teachers recognize that we need not rigidly adopt just one approach in the writing classroom. In some cases, combining the approaches results in a new way of thinking about writing. One example is a synthesis of the process and the genre approaches, which Badge & White (2000) termed the process genre approach. This approach allows students to study the relationship between purpose and form for a particular genre as they use the recursive processes of prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing. Using these steps develops students' awareness of different text types and of the composing process.

2.5. Application of the Process Genre Model

Gould (1980) points out that when using the process genre approach, teachers should be aware of the following three general guidelines. First, because writing is so difficult, the teacher should adopt the role of assistant and guide and work closely with students to encourage them, offering helpful feedback and suggestions. It is crucial for teachers to offer positive and constructive advice on what students have written. Teachers also can make efforts to arouse curiosity and self-confidence by matching student interests to the writing topic, and they should be sensitive to any individual differences that arise in the writing process. Second, teachers should directly train students about writing strategies. If teachers demonstrate how prewriting activates the schemata and outline strategies for the drafting and revision processes, students will be more successful in writing compositions. Yau (1991) stated that writing performance is as much a result of students' use of strategies in various processes of writing as it is of their handling of the language. Third, teachers should include the listening, speaking, and reading skills in the writing class. Integrating the four language skills promotes the expansion of the students' overall language competence. The process genre approach makes this feasible, as background material is read during prewriting activities, and speaking and listening occur during lectures and when giving or receiving feedback.

2.6. The Learner – Centered Process Approach

It is admitted that learner has an active part to play in the learning process and, for the first time, Vygotsky (1962) reported that psychological factors that affect learning are taken into consideration (motivation, for instance). As concerns the attitude towards teachers, it is agreed that they should not be trained for a specific function but educated and informed to know best, according to the context, what to choose among the various possibilities available. As concerns modern attitudes towards writing, more emphasis is put on writing as process and less as product. Zamel (1982:196) justifies this shift of interest in the following: "[Writing] involves much more than studying a particular grammar, analyzing and imitating rhetorical models or outlining what it is one plan, to say.

3. Making Decisions in the Writing Process

According to Trimmer (2001:07), stated that during the process of writing, learners may discover that they are constantly making decisions that are complex.

"As when we are trying to shape ideas; others are simple, as we are trying to select words. But each decisions , large or small, affects every other decision we make so that we are continuously adjusting and readjusting writing to make sure it is constant, coherent ,and clear. We can test the effectiveness of decisions by measuring them against this dictum: in every writing situation, a writer is trying to communicate a subject to an audience for a purpose".

3.1. Coordinating Decisions in the Writing Process

(Trimmer 2001: 17) states that:

"You need to understand how each of the three elements- subject, audience, and purpose-helps you measures your progress through the writing process. But you must not assume that these guidelines lock you into the fixed sequence of selecting your subject, analyzing your audience, and then determining your purpose. Subject, audience, and purpose are too interconnected to allow following such a simple formula. Indeed, they resemble the elements in a complex chemical formula".

3.1.1. Writing as a Cognitive Process

Flower & Hayes' Model (1981) was seminal to this approach. It suggested that the process of writing is influenced by the task environment and the writer's long term memory. Its main features are that:

- Writers have goals.
- They plan extensively

- Planning involves defining a rhetorical problem, placing it in a context, and then making it operational by exploring its parts, arriving at solutions and finally translating ideas on the page.
- All works can be reviewed, evaluation and revised, even before any text has been produced.
- Planning, drafting, revising and editing are recursive, interactive and potentially simultaneous.
- Plans and text are constantly evaluated in a feedback loop.
- The whole process is overseen by an executive control called or monitor.

Faigley & Witte (1986) point out that Flower & Hayes Model helped to promote a "science-consciousness" among writing teachers which promised a 'deep-structure' theory of how writing could be taught.

3.1.2. Planning Content

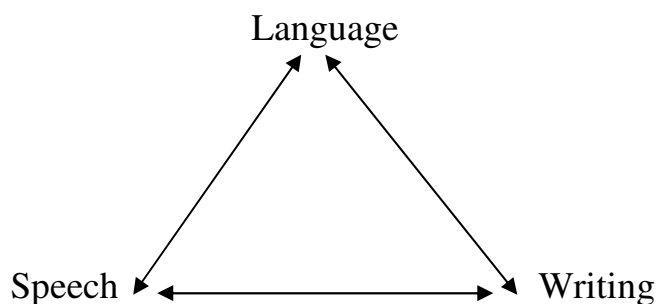
In order to make a plan of the content of the writing course, the following considerations have to be taken into account: personal experience, social issues, cultural issues, literature, or the content of other subject areas. Richards (2002: 309) confirms that:

"The content of a writing course takes a back seat to practice in prescribed models of paragraph or essay form; that is, that it doesn't matter what you write about as long as it conforms to an accepted rhetorical model. Why is that wrong? Because it misses the point about using writing as a unique tool for language learning. It turns to an early view of writing as one (and the least important) of the four skills to be used to test that other skills have been mastered."

3.1.3. Written Discourse

Many scholars (Raimes 1983; Gannon; 1985) have based their definition of writing on contrasting the linguistic features of speech and writing. Both of them do agree that writing is not speech written down. There is a speech system and a writing system, which may have similarities and relationships but are distinct. Both come from the language but different resources are called for when using one or the other medium. For example, native speakers of English pick up how to speak but have to go to school to learn to write and not all of them achieve the same scores. Writing is an activity restricted to some people, all people speak but few of them can write.

Speaking and writing involve different processes (Raimes 1983:18) "...the two processes speaking and writing are not identical".



By language, Gannon (1985: 23) "implies the abstract structures and relationships within what we call English". The fact that writing is lasting and that it can be planned in a certain way and changed if necessary makes it a quite demanding activity as compared to speaking (for example, the need for various kinds of connectors than the simple "and" very often used in conversation and which does not work in written discourse" Brown (1989:12) also tried to describe characteristics of speech and writing, stating that:

"Spoken language is made up as a speaker speaks, it tends to be much less well organised, much less densely packed with information, to contain quite a lot stops and starts together with occasional errors... is much rhythmically structured, with varying lengths and pauses, and is typically structured in

much shorter sentences and phrases than occur in the written language".

For example, if one reads aloud a written text, the hearer will have more difficulties working out the meaning because sentences tend to be longer than those of a spoken text.

3.2. Difference between Speaking and Writing

Harmer (2001:06) states:

"When considering how people write, we need to consider the similar and difference between writing and speaking, both in terms of their form and in the process that writers and speakers go through to produce language despite the fact that the difference between the two forms are often very marked, there are also occasions when speaking and writing look very much the same – and are done in much the same way".

Generally speaking, course books for instance are often devoted to one skill, and many teachers are assigned classroom roles which focus on either 'speaking' or 'writing'. And here are some commonly perceived differences, big and small, between writing and speaking presented by (Brooks & Grundy, 2001). They are developed below:

- a) writing is more 'attended to' than speech, i.e. we are more conscious of what we are doing and tend to attach more importance to correctness of every kind, knowing that our reader can return to our writing but we cannot, and that we can not easily rectify misunderstandings on the part of the reader,
- b) writing has text-types of its own, different from those of speech; an example that comes readily to mind is that the way we arrange what we have

to say in telephone or face -to- face conversations is different from the arrangement of material in letters or e-mail messages,

c) writing can make use of visual devices in a way which speech can not,

d) writing-systems may assist groups of people to communicate, as in the case of Chinese where 'dialects' are mutually unintelligible in spoken form but share a common written form ; the position is reversed in the case of Hindi and Urdu where the different written forms make it difficult for the speakers of those languages rather similar spoken languages to communicate in writing,

e) the spelling-systems of almost all languages that use alphabetic writing-systems are based to some extent on how the word is spoken, but only partly so: we can often trace not only the history of words including from which language they have been borrowed, but also their relation to each other in spite of differences in pronunciation example taken from English are anxious, anxiety; receipt, reception; and the grammatical endings of loved, kissed, and hated.

f) writing is more attended to than speech , we set higher and higher standards for ourselves as we get better at it ; so while listening , speaking and reading feel easier to please others.

g) up to now, there have been more varieties of acceptable spoken than written. English has so far been more uniform, except for relatively minor issues such as the differences between British and American spelling.

Brooks & Grundy (2001: 03) state that:" If we ask ourselves why we write at all, the answer may be to get information from someone we can't presently talk to. Thus writing allows us to transcend time (when we leave a note for someone to pick up a later) or space (when we send a letter through the post)". This means that writing is a very important skill through which we can get information to someone who is absent.

3.3. Learners' Problem in Writing

A big question that all of us ask at one point or another is: "what can I do to write?" and "why writing is difficult?" Coe & Rycroft (2000) presented the main reasons why learner's writing may be difficult to understand or defective in some other way:

- a) The sentence may not have clear punctuation: there may be commas and full stops without any good reason, there may be no punctuation where it should.
- b) The idea may not have been presented in an order that easily makes sense to the reader.
- c) The relation between the ideas may not be clear because of the absence, or inappropriate use, of linking words and phrases, such as although, for example, lastly, on the other hand, and so on.
- d) The writer's attitude to what he or she is writing may not be clear: is he or she describing, suggesting or criticizing something?
- e) The ideas may not be grouped together into distinct paragraphs , or the learner may begin practically every sentence on a new line .Again , a paragraph-or a longer text-may not begin with an introduction that leads the reader in the right direction.
- f) A text may contain ideas that are not really relevant to what the writer wants to express, or the writer may find it difficult to think of enough ideas.

To put it simply, it is important for learners to practise in combining the separate skills in one complete, well- written text.

3.4. Writing Correction

According to Harmer (2001 :84), most students find correction desparating if they get their piece of written work back covered with red ink, underlinings crossings-out .It is a powerful visual statement that their written English is very bad. One way for Harmer (2001) to avoid the 'over -correction' problem is for teachers to tell their students that for a particular piece of work they are only going to correct

mistakes of punctuation, spelling, or grammar etc. This has two advantages: it makes students concentrate on that particular aspect, and it cuts down on the correction.

4. Implications for the Teaching of Writing

The Audio-lingual Method relied heavily on the repetitive work in the language laboratory. Writing was regarded as a means of reinforcing what has already been learnt in the speaking phases of lessons. However, Brooks & Grundy (2001: 11) asserted that:

"Teachers who appreciate the importance of Communicative Language Teaching have found that successful learners need to master a variety of genres or types of writing .Each genre has its own conventions concerned with the type of information to include and the order to put it in .Discussing such conventions helps to provide a clear framework within which students can write effectively."

When we teach writing, we are not always rehearsing real-world writing, because we are dealing with early- stage learners, we are looking for types of writing which, in the real world, are brief.

4.1. A Basic Methodology for Written Work

Before going to teach, teacher of written expression should ask himself a series of questions concerning the kind of lectures he is going to teach, the level of students. Broughton (1980:121) stated:

"In writing, as in other aspects of language teaching, the questions for the teacher to ask himself are: Is the task appropriate for the needs of the students? Is the task within the reach of students? Is it only just within their reach, so that they will be really

challenged as they try to complete it? And they will find it enjoyable?"

4.2. Writing Activities

In "Experiential learning", Kolb (1983:38) defines learning as "The process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." and he also (*Ibid*) defines "reflective observation" as one of the four important steps in the transformative process. Writing activities are one means of facilitating reflection and learning because, as Easley (1989:11) explains, the process of writing "is active in the sense that it requires a recreation of an experience on paper and reflective in that it requires a conscious search for meaning ..." This digest summarizes a procedure for designing writing activities, and it describes six activities appropriate for outdoor education curricula: journals, free writing, descriptions, literary responses, letters and essays. Composition specialists agree the effective writing activities are planned in advance and integrated with experience (Lindemman, 2001). To facilitate the development of such activities, instructors might begin by asking themselves a series of question:

- Why am I asking my students to write? (to prepare for a discussion? to reinforce the teaching of a skill? to encourage reflection?)
- What type of writing is appropriate for my purpose? (Free writing? journaling?).
- How do I want the students to complete the assignment? (on their own? in groups? in a single sitting? in stages?).

Having answered these questions, the next step is to prepare a description of the writing activity for the students. This description should communicate concisely and in a language familiar to the students the purpose form, and audience for their writing during the activity. In this context Lindemman (2001) emphasizes the importance of providing written directions, which students can review through out the writing process. Students have to write about anything that comes into their minds. During this time, they should write continuously, in sentences, rather than lists

or phrases. After completing a free writing session, students can select a sentence or idea what they produced and use it as prompt for a second session, students might share what they have written in a discussion.

5. Collaborative Writing

Brooks & Grundy (2001.12) stated that:

"We often suggest that students should work in pairs or groups. There are two reasons for this. The first is to raise the students' awareness of the writing process by planning their work in the particularly conscious way that writing collaboratively involves. The second is to make writing a less lonely or secretive activity than it sometimes appears to be".

Harmer (2001) considered collaborative writing as a successful technique which allows students to learn from each other .It gives each member of the collaboration access to others' minds and knowledge, and it imbues the task with a sense of shared goals which can be very motivating. Finally the value of collaborative learning has been the focus of many educators like Bruffee (1984) who emphasizes the value of collaborative learning by providing students with an environment of mutual support within their 'zone of proximal development 'which is , the difference between what a learner can do alone and through cooperation with capable peers.

Conclusion

This chapter has described writing as an essential but difficult skill for EFL students to accomplish. Throughout the years, different theories have offered direction on how to teach writing. After the product approach was mostly discredited, it was supplanted by the more interactive and dynamic process and genre approaches. Although they have advantages and disadvantages, these two approaches have made valuable contributions to the writing classroom. Their techniques become even more useful when combined to create the process genre approach, which helps students use

their individual writing processes to construct a text in a familiar genre. It was interesting to mention CL as an approach to teach the writing skill. We favored a CL approach for its consideration of the hidden writing process. Some of the advantages of CL as an appropriate model for teaching the writing cited in this chapter, will be deepened in the next one.