Artikel

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A CONTRIBUTION OF ICT FOR TEACHING WRITING

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Abstract:

Writing is considered as not an easy skill to acquire, since students as non-native speaker students of English should have in advance the acquisition of basic English vocabulary, grammar and textuality in FL. Beside that, the difficulty in developing ideas, limited knowledge, including genres' characteristic writing are the strong reasons for students for not liking the course. There should be a help for students and teachers as well to solve this problem. This paper aims at reminding teachers the possibilities of teaching using internet as a media to enrich the subject to enhance students' writing ability. Teaching writing with ICT gives students lots of resources, good software, up to date content and a full-time availability. Teachers at any level of ICT knowledge can take advantage of learning with ICT, because proposed use of ICT in various forms ranging from simple, to the ready-made software has been aggressively launched and available in cyberspace. It may really help deficiencies in teaching writing in classrooms.

Key words: writing, ICT, FL, non-native speaker students

Introduction

There is a controversy over teaching methodology of writing with the world demand. The world needs a product of any process of writing, which is perfect in language and interesting. While learning to write needs a certain methodology which consists of a series of process to create a competence before producing a product. Process-based methodology of writing puts process as the main core, where coherence discourse is important and some errors in language use does not become a major problem. It emphasizes that students have their own experience in each step of writing. The world demand, on the other hand emphasizes on the product, it is product oriented, since the function of a text as a product of writing is giving information or transferring knowledge to others. Just like the controversy of the need of a rhetoricist in the old times, writing was mainly the discovery of ideas, finding the right language, memorizing and delivery (Clark, 2008). As it is used to approach audience, no language mistake is accepted, or else this would greatly hamper, because the knowledge transfer does not occur. It may be the reason why there are many people offering instant skills in writing, with 'steps in easy writing' or 'tips to make your essay works or such kind of offer. NNSs will have difficulties to adapt to the product-based writing, because they face with two fundamental cases: the language proficiency and the writing itself, not like NS students where lexis and grammar has been acquired before. For NNSs they need an explicit, focused and consistent instruction to acquire a significant and highly developed FL ability in vocabulary and grammar (Hinkel, 2004:7). They need time to experience on how to write with its complexity.

In college-based language, FL skills are shared responsibility, because the skills are broken down into sub skills which are interrelated, interdependent and mutually influenced. So the responsibility of the FL proficiency is distributed to the custodian of the respective subjects. But behind this system there are many variables that should be taken into account, namely how much they really learn, how many books they read, review, present, how much they experience to use the language to communicate with others and many other variables that determine their level of acquisition of each students. Logically foreign language majors' learners gain far more exposure than non-language students. But according to research of Bialystok, 2001 and many others in Stern (2005) there a lot of factors that affect the acquisition of FL, and the utmost ability of FL will not be like the native-like mastery, even after many years of exposure to FL usage, in its environment. Obviously they need many years to be able to obtain FL and to come close to the capabilities of a native speaker.

Based on this phenomenon, should teachers stop teaching a skill, such as writing before they acquire the FL? When are they going to master FL? Is it possible to do programming or an estimate of when they master FL, so that Writing course can begin? So far, what has been done is a process of making a piece of writing, learning procedures for writing, while improving lexeme and grammar. It is definitely a hard work for lecturers and students. The burden does not stop at the various problems in writing class alone, but there's say an 'additional task' for teachers, namely to make students able to write articles in scientific journals, and write their thesis which should be written in the foreign language being studied. It is not an easy task at all, given lectures are as short as 8 semesters, would there be an assurance that short time covers the FL acquisition and students may begin to follow the writing course with the above requirements and objectives? Would students be able to accomplish this arrangement in writing class?

Speeding up the intensive teaching of lexeme, grammar and writing practice is at its urgent need to solve the problem. Intensive teaching means advance any possibility for its planning and implementation of the subject. In planning a media for writing instruction, ICT is probably one of a very helpful compared to other media since it helps students with different kinds of variations, under different levels and approaches of teaching writing. From simple, to the ready-made software has been aggressively launched and available in cyberspace. So, anybody can take advantage of for any purpose in teaching writing. It has function to not only promote the acquisition of the knowledge and skills for the students, but also enable new ways of teaching and learning for teachers (Tinio, 2003:9).

Teaching writing with ICT gives students lots of resources, good software, up to date content, a full-time availability that may really helps deficiencies in writing classroom teaching. The use of the technology, especially ICT in writing class is a prospect. However, would it be right that the use of technology simply replaces teachers so that students can learn independently? And students' dependence on teachers can be reduced and replaced with more useful activities or indeed the technology has advantages at classroom to reduce weaknesses? This paper is meant to elaborate the possible contribution of ICT towards the teaching of writing in college.

Writing Approaches

Approaches to writing instruction as cited from Raimes (1991) has moved and evolved starting from *Form-focused Approach* which focuses on sentence-level linguistic forms. The term "form-focused instruction" (FFI) is defined by Ellis (2001:2) as "any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form". The instruction is in the form of Grammar-based instruction informed by a strong boundary view that parts of a grammar should be taught as discrete units, because of their linguistic complexity. This instruction is then developed into controlled discourse in Discourse structure-based instruction focusing on the form of sentence combining and controlled compositions.

The form-focused approach led to the emergence of other approaches, namely *Process-focused instruction* which is against the form-domination instruction. It focuses to the learners' freedom to write more importantly than linguistic correctness. As Clark (2008) says, it gives more attention to the writers and their activities when they write, how they produce, develop the writing and how teachers facilitate the writers to find their own way to write. So far, we see most literatures in fact as a product of writing. In writing class lecturers' wishes to the students may often be product-oriented. It is often the students hurt by criticism which is more often negative, such as 'unclear'; not connected, etc towards students' work. Students frequently feel frustrated because of the criticism, and lecturers are also frustrated because the students do not soon write a good writing product. And unfortunately adjustment to the students 'errors' does not improve students' ability to write because of the desire to have immediate results.

This approach believes that writing is the process of discovering through language (Murray, 1972). It is the process of using language to understand, learn, and communicate something we learn about the world. Who will say it is accepted or not? Not the books nor rules but the audience, the life, the world. Writing process is divided into three steps, they are prewriting, writing, rewriting. *Prewriting* : is everything related to the first idea comes into mind, how to

obtain and organize various, mass unrelated ideas, so prewriting may include research and wishes which is formatted in generating ideas until outlining. The second step is *Writing the draft* : this is the producing of the first draft of writing by elaborating the outline into more ordered writing which is still rough, unconfident, doubt, unfinished. And *Rewriting* : this is the process of arranging all into better writing, the words, sentences, paragraphs, ideas are all observed by taking into account the audience who may read the text.

The excessive attention to students in process-based approach causes the birth of the *Content-based approach*, which focuses on the content of the writing and academic expectation towards students. Its main concerns is its topic or subject matter (Jones and Palmer, 2012:42), although it is usually given in FL students learning not the language but the content. Students learn the FL in authentic language under content context. Thus students acquire the content while enforcing the FL acquisition. Enriching the content-based approach, *the Audience-dominated approach* established by giving greater attention to the reader expectations in the academic community. This approach emphasizes both form and content. It includes practices in recognizing and using basic elements of well-written essays, such as introductory and concluding paragraphs, topic sentences, supporting details, and transitions. Attention is given to the organizational patterns and forms of different types of written text, such as expository, descriptive, and narrative.

In relation with writing instruction for NNSs there are some assumptions stated by Hinkel (2004: 6) on the teaching of writing for NNSs. The assumption is that in learning to write in FL learners have to acquire an advanced linguistic (FL) foundation, to acquire this NNSSs should have an explicit, focused and consistent instruction, which may take years to achieve this competence. The second assumption states that the writing pedagogy for NSs with highly developed language proficiency does not mean that they are ready to join writing instruction, so the teaching of writing should include procedures for writing, the organization of ideas and attention to the quality of the language (grammar and lexical accuracy). And the dominant requirement is that an intensive and consistent instruction in FL vocabulary and grammar is essential. As some research found that an intensive instructional program for vocabulary and grammar significantly raised the capability to write.

Writing is an important activity but difficult as well. It is important because writing is the process of communicating thoughts and idea, so students in college would write their reports, research paper, take essay tests and even write thesis or final project. The difficulty lies in the fact that writing for NNSs in FL means the process of passing on intention using symbols (letters, punctuation and spaces) with the basic system of FL including knowledge of grammar, punctuation, sentence structure and also vocabulary, spelling and formatting. No matter how is the level of FL proficiency they have to accomplish those tasks. For language-based students not only have they to accomplish the above mentioned tasks, but as they should train their FL skills, they should finish any tasks or assignment using FL. Writing subject, for example, should be started whether or not the students are ready with the basic system of FL, because there is no guarantee of when these students are ready to write with standard proficiency of FL. These difficulties drive teachers to utilize any effective, useful media which increase students' writing skill.

ICT for writing instruction

Our current students are included in the category of ICT native community, because they were born at the time when Internet use is already widespread in almost all facets of life. By the time they enter college, they must be ready to use the Internet for anything, especially learning. The research of Stern in 2002 towards American freshmen in a public university found that they feel they are medium or experts Internet users (87%), most of them (92%) use the internet for information on academic tasks, including important tasks such as projects, however (35%) of those taking information without considering its reliability. About the use of the library found the results by The Pew Foundation in 2002 found that (73%) of college students use the Internet more than the library, while only 9% use the library more than the Internet for information searching. The survey stated that 16% of the freshmen at a public university had never used their school library in their senior year of high school, 25% used it only one or two times, 28% used it only 3 to 5 times, 15% used it six to ten times, and only 15% had used it more than ten times in the past year (Stern, 2004:445). This research may imply that our students are not library users but native-internet users and they are as ready to be involved in any kinds of ICT activity.

Tinio (2003:7) on the other hand states that ICTs help improve the quality of education through increasing learner motivation and engagement and facilitating the acquisition of basic skills. It motivates and engages students' learning through its various and fast-developing-software which is interesting and challenging as well. Basic skills and concepts that can also be facilitated by ICTs through various activities learners may use. Butler-Pascoe & Wilburg (2003:29) also argues that today's ICT are ideally contributes to language teaching. It can be multimedia, email, discussion board, electronic databases, chat rooms, and teleconferencing application. The facility like the World Wide Web makes it possible for FL learners to contact with native speakers or people from other countries and to acquire authentic materials. These practices provide a view that language primarily as communication in real-world settings with a focus on communicative competence.

English in college, especially related majors, such as language, has focused more to the mastery and use of academic English writing. According to (Hinkel (2014: 12) emphasizing learning in academic English writing means writing activities is more on obtaining and transforming rather than telling knowledge. Knowledge transforming requires thinking about an issue, obtaining the information needed for analysis, and modifying the information. It leads students to expand their knowledge by developing new information. Knowledge transforming is cognitively complex as it derives from reading and is integrated with already available knowledge. Therefore learning model that supports this principle is a writing activity, combined with reading for analysis. It required considerable material and media for students to acquire reading material, in addition to language skills and procedures for writing. Internet may facilitate this need as Ibrahim (2010:212) mentions ICT has rapidly fulfill the need of teaching strategies to suit the goals of the materials and the needs of students. ICT has given the students many opportunities to practice English in and out the classroom by giving them time and freedom to understand. ICT proposes an efficient education in a blended teaching method. ICT also gives students experience to study the language through content it brings and the authentic texts it delivers.

The Use of ICT for Teaching Writing

Effective use of technology in teaching writing depends on the focus and content of the materials used and how it interacts with each student's learning experience. The present generation of

students as digitally-literate finds anything to do with the internet attractive. These interests can be used to apply a variety of language learning purposes with a good motivation. The focus of teaching writing as mentioned earlier, whether it is Form or Process-focused, Content-based, or the Audience-dominated focus is usually broken down into several subjects such as Writing 1 to 4 or similar to this categorization. As the emphasis remains on the principles of Academic Writing, the Form-focus approach may not be the priority. This is also with the reason that forms as part of language acquisition has become a shared responsibility with other mutual supporting and related subjects.

For Form-focused instruction, the training model forms a sentence with an emphasis on cohesion, for example: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction is a major concern. There are various programs or learning software based on grammar from the easy to the difficult in the form of drill, practice or in a more meaningful, for example : Writing resources and instructional suggested material in https://owl.english.purdue.edu/; Guide to grammar and writing http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/; Writing : ACE Practice Test http://college.cengage.com/devenglish/resources/writing_ace/students/. While the writing instruction with the emphasis on Discourse structure is focused in activity in constructing topic sentence, supporting ideas, concluding sentence, transition signals. In essays the writing instruction emphasis lies in the construction of introductory paragraph with its general and thesis statement, also the broken-down ideas paragraphs and its conclusion. Some teachers' experience stated that generating ideas is one of students' problems in writing class. Various programs or software that can be used to support these needs, among others are: The Writing Den (The site is designed to assist students to write creatively. Online examples assist students in their abilities to write sentences, paragraphs, and even essays); Purdue University's OWL (Online Writing Lab): Essay Punch Online: An Interactive Writing Tutorial. The site provides online interactive exercises that guide users step by step.

For process-based writing the processes ranging from pre-writing, writing a draft, revised to the final draft writing become the major focus. Students often have difficulty on the steps in this process, from finding ideas, write the outline, writing the draft and so on. Therefore the use of appropriate ICT is to help solve the difficulties of these students. Some of the online applications on the Internet that can be used included: **write**.ctdlc.org/ this is an online writing tools for college students to develop capability to write. It is a dynamic, interactive multi-media learning module in writing.

If the focus of writing instruction is on the Content-based approach, it thus needs lots of examples on texts. Texts might derive from various disciplines like psychology, social or sciences, but some teachers prefer related discipline texts to enrich students with texts within their fields. For language majors in teachers' college related texts preference will be on language teaching disciplines like the application of teaching media, techniques, methods, approaches. These texts are of authentic texts which are goods for students' academic writing improvement. The use of class blogs will be of sufficient contribution to writing practice, for more advance students may write on Wikipedia as an open content and also as a community-built encyclopedia with thousands of articles on various topics.

For Audience-based writing students learn develop their academic writing capabilities in various genres. They learn not only the forms, like the sentence cohesion, discourse structure, but also the content of the writing they create. ICT may help with various kinds of ways to help students such as http://writing.usu.edu/htm/services/eslNNSs-students Utah University Department of English. Writing Center at http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/ index.html [20] l The Write Place, St. Could State University's online writing center Writing Center and http://www.unm.edu/caps/caps-handouts/writing-center/gram.html UNM Center for Academic support.

Based on the explanation above, the learning with ICT naturally begins. In conjunction with the writing instruction, the use of ICT as a support is very beneficial. Of course, as has been discussed earlier mastery of FL would be the priority for NNSs, and to obtain good results it is necessary to set out the steps lectures, namely planning, implementation, evaluation.

Planning :

In starting the lecture with ICT, a good syllabus needs to be constructed. The first thing to be prepared is the students' English language proficiency. At the college level this ability has generally been distributed into some subjects from basic to higher levels, such as Intensive Course, Structure, Syntax, Vocabulary, Pronunciation Practice, Phonetics, and Writing ability has been given in graded writing subjects. At the beginning of the term FL proficiency tests and writing ability test need to be made. For proficiency tests TOEFL, IELT or other similar tests might be appropriate, and for the ability of writing, students can be asked to write an essay with an evaluation using a standard assessment rubric available in various writing books and websites. The result of FL proficiency test becomes the standard course materials of the starting point to prepare the teaching learning. And the result of the writing ability test becomes the basic information to prepare the writing teaching and learning. So after all these tests are given, it is expected that there will be a pre-learning activities in order to obtain a [22] neral similarity in the basic FL and writing abilities. This diagnosis should be given in the early stages of Writing courses, so that the test results can be used to further Writing courses, including extended Writing courses like Creative Writing or Business Writing. Based on the results of diagnostic tests the course syllabus is then determined. If in case that the pre-learning activities cannot be done the results of diagnostic tests which is very likely to show the different FL proficiency and writing abilities, will be used to set up the syllabus. This syllabus will mention clear focus of writing instruction, including reinforced materials and forms that will be used with ICT implementation strategy. The name and web address of the related internet application or any software are mentioned, and definitely with its manual.

Implemention :

In implementing activities, technical matters that need to be prepared are the assurance of availability of internet connection at the location of learning. The Internet connection can be either wifi or often provided by students on their own with their modems or smart phones, including learning media such as sufficient LCD projector and screen for the whole class. Effective but simple sound system can be prepared when needed. For writing instruction ICT contributes to rich exercises, prior [26] scussion on the main material needs to be done with the students. What really important is to ensure that students know how to operate the ICT facility chosen. This will greatly help the students' mental readiness to learn with ICT, other than that

this readiness is necessary for the implementation of learning that will not be disturbed by the problem of FL use and principles of writing, the expected question will be more about the use of ICT applications. Although for certain application like Facebook and twitter students generally understand to operate them, nevertheless clear instructions should be noticed, so that later such explanations do not need to be repeated. When students work on activities, field notes on student reactions, questions, interests or problems are recommended.

Reflection :

In evaluating the results of students' work is observed by making use of a writing evaluation rubric. If the result study meets the indicators of learning outcomes, then the contribution of ICT might be proved beneficial. Activities can be resumed in the next material with the development of the ICT media. If the study result does not correspond to the learning outcomes indicators, the writing instruction needs to be analyzed based on field notes taken during the activity, colleagues collaboration and an IT expert advice can be considered to work on the problems. For overall result students might give their impression towards the IC-enriched material.

As an example there is a web that prepares a program for writing an Argumentative Essay, from Hongkong Polytechnique University. The university prepares a website for students' writing activity by discussing and sharing ideas among them about a particular topic. They can determine the topic for discussion and formulate their own arguments. This website thus helps students write argumentative essay in a very practical way, in group or individual under teacher's supervisors. In group, members of the group will help give ideas, approve ideas and giving comments. The website prepares the facilities from putting down ideas, making outline, writing draft, revising the draft until presenting the result in power point. The page name is such like the page of a list of points, the pros and cons tables, maps or topics slideshows.
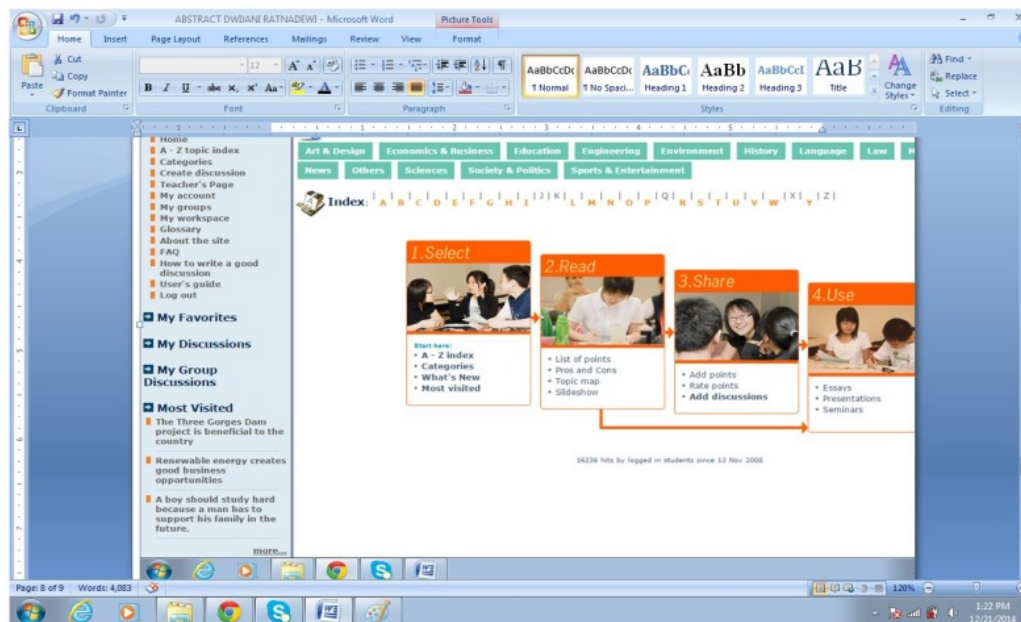
Conclusion

Writing courses in FL in language-based college may mostly be considered as a difficult subject. The FL acquisition and the principles of good writing prevent NNSs to write well. FL acquisition for these students in the college is a shared responsibility through interrelated and mutually supportive subjects, but the ability of FL students are generally still not enough to be able to start learning to write. Instead of this fact Writing courses must be given. Thus accelerating the FL acquisition should be performed together with Writing. The acceleration with ICT as a support seems quite promising with the availability of a variety of ICT facilities, from low-level to a high level writing exercises with higher-order and critical thinking. However lecture with ICT must have some preparation like proficiency tests, diagnostic tests, preparation of syllabus, to technical matters such as: teachers' IT abilities and the internet connection availability.

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