

## USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS TO IMPROVE WRITING SKILLS.

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### **Abstract:**

*Students in the field of learning and in the professional life have inadequate proficiency in English language. The intention of this paper is to discover the authentic materials approach and validate how it may be useful in the development of writing skills. In addition to that it also searches that how authentic materials will kindle keenness in the students. The intentions of the research would be to mend the writing skills. Here, heterogeneous **data** collection methods employed throughout the development of study. No doubt this study would toughen the faith in the use of authentic materials for refining writing skills.*

**Key Words:** Writing skills, authentic materials, Language teaching.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Acquisition of language is based upon listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among them the art of composition is considered to be most important apportionment for learning any new language. Furthermore, this technique plays a vital role in discerning discussions and dialogues between people. So we can call it a language of communication. By dint of writing people communicate with others. However, the ability to write well is not inborn rather it is acquired via practice. It can be acquired with efforts. Indeed, writing is a very complex task which needs pre-writing activities, drafting, and redrafting and revision. It is an activity which may trouble both native and non-native learners. For decade the said activity was considered to an easy task which is now getting complex day by day. Effective writing arrests the attentions of the readers and remains appealing. Thus, writing is a artistic course which is the need of time.

### **The definition of writing**

Writing is one of the basic skills in learning English. Moreover, write means to communicate using written language. All information is delivered through text in writing. It also means producing or creating a piece of text. As, Harmer (2002). States, “language production means that students should use all and any language at their disposal to achieve a communicative purpose rather than be restricted to specific practice points.” Moreover writing is tougher rather than other language skills because it needs well knowledge and deep thinking while they are produce words, sentences and paragraphs with a grammatical accuracy. Harmer (2001:255) said, written text has a number of conventions which separate it out from speaking. Apart from differences in grammar and vocabulary, there are issues of letter, word, and text formation, manifested by handwriting, spelling, layout and punctuation. So, it is observed that good content of writing only is not sufficient. A writer must be equipped with the enough language components like grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling to facilitate communicate using written language. All information is delivered through text in writing. It also means producing or creating a piece of text. As, Harmer (2002). States, “language production means that students should use all and any language at their disposal to achieve a communicative purpose rather than be restricted to specific practice points.” Moreover writing is tougher rather than other language skills because it needs well knowledge and deep thinking while they are produce words, sentences and paragraphs with a grammatical accuracy. Harmer (2001:255) said, written text has a number of conventions which separate it out from speaking. Apart from

differences in grammar and vocabulary, there are issues of letter, word, and text formation, manifested by handwriting, spelling, layout and punctuation. So, it is observed that good content of writing only is not sufficient. A writer must be equipped with the enough language components like grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling to facilitate him/her in expressing his/her ideas, thoughts and feelings. In a simple sense, writing is a first and foremost an intellectual activity. It is a social process. It puts one mind (the writer's) in touch with other minds (those of the audience) and creates a

community (Been and Kopple, 1992:67). Writing, further explicated by Lado, (1983:143) as, "writing is the practical representation of units of language expression."

Keeping in view of above explanation, the researcher concludes that writing is the basic skill in the language learning process which enables students to express thoughts, ideas, feelings, message and views through words.

### **Types of writing**

According to Finnochiaro (1974:86), there are two types of writing.

- 1) Factual or practical writing.
- 2) Imaginary creative writing.

The factual or practical writing deals with facts. The writer can find it in the writing of letter and summaries.

The other type which is imaginary creative writing usually exists in literature, e.g. novel, romance, fantasy, science fiction, adventure etc.

### **The writing process**

It is not so easy to produce a piece of writing particularly academic writing. It takes a lot of study and practice to develop this skill. More important, writing is a process, not a product by Oshima (1999:3). Furthermore, a writing process has four components, i.e. inventing, drafting, revising and editing (Beene and Kopple, 1992:71).

- 1) Inventing is the crafting before write a first draft. Inventing, a pre-writing stage, includes choosing a topic or issue, finding out about the topic, narrowing and shaping ideas into a plan, and a framing a generalization that sets forth perspective on topic and suggest how the text will present perspective and ideas.
- 2) Drafting includes proposing a thesis statement, deciding on tone, and outlining ideas-everything involved in actually writing first draft.
- 3) Revising confines rethinking the content, organization and level of formality of text. Revising is the key to success because the process of

- 4) rewriting imparts work originality and substance.
- 5) Editing contains check revised draft for misspelling, grammatical confusion, clinches and putting text in a format appropriate for audience.

### **Purposes of writing**

The main aim of writing language is to convey information appropriately, effectively and accurately and to this written language has to be more explicit than spoken discourse (Richards, 1990:101). According to Oshima (1999:3) writing indicates the aim for which it is drafted.

### **The writing skills**

There are two forms of language, one is spoken and the other is written. The spoken form dates back and is not lasting. The written form is newer than spoken and is more permanent, and a process which is minded well. As Waseem (1999) states, “written communication is more permanent record of our language use, the writer is usually more careful about his choice of words and structures than he would be when speaking.”(p.10-11). Moreover, composed documents many remain preserved for years but spoken cannot be. The spoken can be useful only for those who listened to it but the written piece of work is beneficial for generation after generation. To transfer thoughts in a comparatively good and best form, people invented written form. Unfortunately, our nation is facing a lot of troubles in the field of learning English language, even a master degree holder doesn’t know about skills, the writing in particular. Now that it is a highly important skills and have a lot of importance in Pakistani context. All skills have its importance but in Pakistan English is almost covers and meets the official needs. To develop writing skills, the researcher chose authentic materials which have motivational force and can arouse students’ interest. It is a great source to amuse the students with interesting pieces of authentic materials in the improving of writing skill of the students.

### **Tactics for improving writing skills**

As Hemingway (1989, p.60), states, “we are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master.” It is generally believed that, it is more rigorous to write in a foreign language and is a delayed process than learning other skills. To improve writing skill, there are a number of techniques and plans. These may be reading authentic texts, pictures, practical writing, using other language skills, organization of ideas, TV and radio programs.

The writing teachers can find an important source in in pictures: drawings, photographs, posters, slides, cartoons, graphs, charts, maps and diagrams. So picture can be valuable which grants a shared experience in the classrooms, a variety of tasks and according to Raims (1999), “Picture provides a focus of interest for students.”

Another useful writing aid is Reading. As Raims (1999), states, “A short story, a newspaper column, an advertisement, a letter, a magazine article, a poem, or a piece of

Students writing can work the same way as a picture to provide shared content in the classroom. However, readings can do far more in the teaching of writing than simply impart subject matter for discussion and for composition topics. Through reading students engage actively with the new culture and language. The more readings make the students able to know more about vocabulary, sentence patterns, idioms, organizational flaw, and cultural assumptions of native speakers of the language.” (p.518).

Moreover, the reading, listening and speaking skills may serve to ameliorate writing skills. The students may communicate with other students and teachers and in this way they will be able to listen each other , so they become able to write what they listen from others. By reading their fellows writings which further improve and modify their writing works. The same phenomenon was explicated by Raims (1999), as, “if we want our language learning language classes to come as close as possible to real life communicative situations, then we have to organize activities that let students use all the language skills.”

Another way is to improve writing through practical writing like, form filling, instruction, invitations, letter writing etc. Raimes (1999), summaries it as, “ this practical writing has both a clear purpose and a specific audience-much of this everyday writing is, “writing to get things done,” upon arrival in the country, we might soon find it necessary to write a letter: reply to an invitation , an apology,an inquiry, a complaint, a letter of thanks, congratulations or sympathy. If our students experiments with these practical writing tasks in the classroom, they will be not only practicing writings in the new language but also learning about the conventions of the new culture.” (p.550).And authentic material is the most effective way of improving writing skills. The authentic materials like advertisements, films, cartoons, TV and radio programs, and newspapers are used to improve writing skills in the classrooms. These authentic materials set the minds of the students into thinking, arouse their sense of curiosity and motivates the students.

### **Fundamental Writing Skills**

Harmer (2007) suggests that writing is the skill that only literate people possess, because if they can write for particular goals, they become more reputable” (323).

Steele (2004) points to writing include organizing information, creating ideas which is the tool to facilitating the alteration from perception to paper” for Lombana (2002), writing is the hardest communicative skill to gain both the mother and target language” (p.44). Melgarejo(2010) argues that it should be considered the most complicated teaching task since it addresses to a language structure different from the mother tongue.

### **Writing Sub Skills**

The writers classified writing skills in sub skills. Which are based on the close relationship between productive skills speaking and writing which are needed for all learners in L1 and L2. Lindsay and knight (2006) divided in the headings like fluency, accuracy, complexity and appropriacy. Fluency is the sub art that permits the writer to use and adjust piece of language into an understandable message rapidly which maintain flow of discourse. The learners should adapt the strategies about what they need to express at their language level and writing everything which is difficult to say directly. Additionally, accuracy permits the learners to use message which is beautified with grammatical ornaments so that the recipient easily can pick the theme of message.

Moreover complexity is the potential aptness to flourish core language or background. With a broad range of utterances at the learner’s hand. (Wolfe-Quinterio et al, 1998). In the last it comes appropriacy which is determined by learner’s option. An accurate, complex sentence which is fully fit into the flow of the discourse free of hesitation must be motto of a learners. ( Thornbary 2005)

### **Why use authentic materials in the classrooms.**

Firth (1957, p.175) argues that language should be studied in actual, attested, authentic instances of use, not as intuitive, invented, isolated sentences. Furthermore, the need of authentic materials have ever more acknowledged by the researchers and teachers in the field of language teaching. Moreover, the studies, such as Miller (2005) and Thanajaro (2000), have shown the use of authentic materials which lead to aural language development. Not only this but also, Gilmore (2007) studied the effect of using authentic materials compared to textbook materials on developing the communicative competence of the learners during one year experiment.

The use of AM will familiarize the students with the language as well as culture and value system of the country concerned. Indeed, the AM mentioned above consulted worldwide. Thus, it may relate the instructor as to how best can he bring them in use.

#### **The sources of authentic materials.**

The sources of authentic materials are infinite. Moreover, the most common sources are, TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, literature and the internet. In these radio may easily be at hand. As Miller (2003), states that, “in order to use radio programs with learners, teachers need to....decide on some global listening tasks for the learners.”(p.16), due to the fact that all non-verbal information is missing. In addition to, internet is considered the most useful source (Berardo, 2006). While printed materials date very speedily, the internet is continuously updated, is interactive and imparts visual stimulation.

#### **Advantages of using authentic materials.**

There are a number of advantage using authentic materials in learning and teaching.

- 1 Authentic materials keep students well informed about daily happenings under the Sun.
- 2 According to Byrne (1995), authentic materials contain colorful and interesting pictures.
- 3 Authentic materials motivate students towards the practice of mini skills like predicting missing word (Martinez, 2002).
- 4 Teachers get inspired to improve their ability through authentic materials.
- 5 Authentic materials play a motivational role in the learning of students (Tanti and Yusuf, 2010: 473).

#### **Discussion In Favor Of Authentic Material**

The researcher appreciate the role of authentic materials in language teaching. On their point of view that authentic materials bound learner’s acquisition of (TL) effectively (Guariento and morley, 2001; Wilcox and Oaks, 1999; Weyers, 1999). According to them there are linguistic and nonlinguistic benefits of authentic benefits.

#### **Linguistic Benefits**

Authentic materials had a positive effect on learner’s attainment after examining same empirical studies. For instance, Otte (2006)

noticed a positive repercussion which is developed in listening comprehension skills when he studied the effect of aural authentic texts on listening comprehension skills at university of USA.

Many researchers confirmed that reading skills can be flourished by authentic materials through familiarizing new vocabulary and utterances. Harmer (1994) explicates three ways which helps probationers to gain positive effects through authentic materials. Firstly, it helps in the creating a better language. Secondly, it helps probationers in the acquiring language in faster. Thirdly, it helps learners in the confidence building and makes learners bold to face the real life circumstances.

### **Non Linguistic Benefits**

There are also some non-linguistic uses of authentic materials. According to Gilmore (2007) and Sherman (2003), authentic materials have a strong positive repercussion on motivation. Motivation is considered the main factor in the success of learning and especially in learning languages. Moreover, Thanajaro (2000) and Otte (2006) states that authentic materials have a very positive effect on probationer's learning and very encouraging for learning more better. Berardo (2006) used authentic materials and concluded that it enhances learner's motivation and he also showed for using authentic materials.

### **Appropriate Level for Using Authentic Materials**

The researchers always recommended the using authentic materials in teaching foreign languages but a teacher should plan that what level is suitable for all students at all level. The important thing is that the learner level should be in the minds of teachers and should acquire the best use of authentic materials in the classroom. If the use of authentic materials is failed to achieve the goal and the use of authentic materials are above the level or mind of probationers it will discourage and demotivate the students from target language. Taylor (1994) states that a text which was originally written is be fully authentic. According to Kim (2000) and Kilickaya(2004), authentic materials are more appropriate at intermediate level but Miller(2005) and Mcneil (1994) preferred the use of authentic materials for lower level probationers. Teachers must be sure about using the authentic materials which are more suitable and more beneficial for all kind of levels.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Back ground of study**

The study was conducted in Government inter college Kohlu .The main aim of researcher to choose this college was to fulfill the wish of principal of college. He suggested the researcher that in the history of this college no one came here for research and the even the students do not aware about research work. To see the interest of principal and ignorance towards the research by students, researcher decided to conduct research in the concerned college. Furthermore, the environment was relax there for the researcher's research.

### **Population**

The population which is summarized by Gay (2001) as, "The population is the group of interest of the researcher, the group to which she or he would like the results of the study to be generalized "(P.112) .The researcher chose 150 students of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years at Government inter college kohlu.

### **Participants**

In the research, the researcher selected 50 students from inter mediate class. The participants were selected through purposive sampling. Two groups were made, the experimental group was treated with the authentic materials as well as text books. The control group was remained untreated as they were taught through traditional methods by their teachers.

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### **Research Instruments**

The instruments used in the study are as follow.

#### **1 The pretest.**

The researcher conducted a pretest from both control and experimental groups. The pretest was consisted of one short essay and one short story. For the test 30 minutes time was given to the students. The pretests of both groups were checked and analyzed. There was not much difference in their results.

#### **2 posttest**

Again a test was designed for both control and experimental groups after treatment with authentic materials to the experimental group. The test

consisted of short essay and short story again. The time limit was 30 minutes. The test was checked and analyzed.

### **Lesson plans**

The researcher prepared two sets of lesson plans for both experimental and control groups. One lesson plan with explaining story writing skills and the other plans was about essay writing skills. The test book as well as authentic materials were also used in lesson plans the researcher taught the experimental group the writing skills and gave main tips of writing. The students taught through authentic materials the newspaper particularly. Students were give question are in which entertainment news, Actors pics, sports news, and editorial reports were included. The researcher taught them how to improve writing skills through using authentic materials.

### **Data analysis**

For the results of the pretest and posttest, the descriptive statistics were applied. The difference between the mean scores of the pretest and posttest under taken by students in the experimental and control groups was calculated using an independent t-test. The result oft-test indicated the effectiveness of improving the student's ability in writing skills. In terms of overall writing skills, the pretest and the posttest were analyzed separately the scores of writing test were analyzed in tables to determine the difference in the improvements of writing skills between experimental and control group students. The data were analyzed and interpreted in order to produce findings related to development of writing skills through authentic materials.

### **Summary of the research**

The researcher spent a month in the research and found it pleasurable and creative experiment. Moreover, the researcher enjoyed every movement of whole process of research furthermore, it was also observed that the entire population was showing interest. The most of them were dazzled to see the research process as they denied to have been through such exercises. It incited the curiosity of students about research and authentic materials usage. They inquired about the role of AM in improving writing skills. The authentic materials imparted them a bundle of information. They quickly acquired the skills of writing after deep and keen look at those pieces of authentic materials. Not only this but also, authentic materials stimulate their

minds working and planning on a variety of topics. Indeed authentic materials made them free from all dull and dry textbook materials. Now they felt and easiness choosing the topic of their interest .More important, authentic materials made the students mind so sharp that they produced a great diversity in writing. Now they were not limited to write in a particular direction. Thus, using authentic materials opened a new field for the students and made shine their writing as well. The authentic material usage not only polished the students writing but also motivated the teacher's authentic materials usage. They asked a lot of question about the use of authentic materials and its role in the improving writing skills. The authentic materials imparted them a bundle of information and interesting things such as cartoons, advertisements, weather reports, sports news etc. They quickly acquired the skills of writing after deep and keen look at those pieces of authentic materials. Not only this but also, authentic materials stimulate their minds working and planning on a variety of topics. Indeed authentic materials made them free from all dull and dry textbook materials. Now they felt and easiness choosing the topic of their interest .More important, authentic materials made the students mind so sharp that they produced a great diversity in writing. Now they were not limited to write in a particular direction. Thus, using authentic materials opened a new field for the students and made shine their writing as well. The authentic material usage not only polished the students writing but also motivated the teachers about using authentic materials in the future teaching methods. In the last, the study found that there were statistical differences in the performance of students between the pretest and posttest exercise in both the control and experimental groups. Moreover it was observed that the highest mean score was achieved by the students who were taught through authentic materials.

### **Recommendation for further studies**

The researcher spent a month in the research at college and he observed each and every movement of research exercise, student's behavior, teacher's interests and the effects of authentic materials on student proficiency. Keeping in view of the findings, the researcher recommends the following developing writing skills at college level.

**1** Authentic materials is the best tool to augment the proficiencies of the students regarding writing skills.

- 2 For motivational purpose, the textbooks should be added with felicitous authentic materials.
- 3 Teachers and instructors should use authentic materials in the class rooms so that understanding and interests of the students would be stimulated.
- 4 Teachers should use traditional method of grammar translation method but also make it possible the other techniques and styles of modern teaching methods.
- 5 The teachers should use the weapon of encouragement, as without encouragement, students never take interest in learning the language.
  - 6 The text books should be supplemented with some kind of creative writing activities.

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- 10 The text books should be supplemented with some kind of creative writing activities.
- 11 Cramming and copying should be discouraged and teacher should prefer those students who write their original ideas.
- 12 The class should be students centered, not teacher centered.
  - 13 The participation of the students should be made compulsory by the teachers and back benchers should be motivated in the participation and discussions.
  - 14 The writing skills should be taught practically and make the students to produce a piece of writing in front of teachers by using their minds and thoughts.
  - 15 Teachers should be trained in the all teaching methods of the modern age.
  - 16 Classes should be equipped with all sorts of facilities regarding study.

- 17** Writing skills should be taught in a manner by using newspaper and other pieces of authentic materials.
- 18** Writing competitions should be made necessary in the class rooms as well as college levels.
- 19** Good pieces of writing should be appreciated and students should be imparted prizes and gifts.
- 20** The students should be provided best performance certificates for producing good and impressive pieces of writing.
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