
Effect of the Process Approach on the Performance in Descriptive Writing of Students of Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu

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Abstract

The study investigated the effect of the process approach on the performance in descriptive writing of students of Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu. Four null hypotheses were employed here. The study adopted the experimental design and the survey method. The population for the study was drawn from third year students of the polytechnic. A class comprising 30 students was set up using the purposive, non-probability method of sampling. Pre-test and post-test were administered on the students. The instrument used for data collection was copora of Easy Writing Test (EST). The statistical tools used to analyse the research questions were mean and standard deviation while the null hypotheses were tested by the use of analysis of covariance and correlation coefficient. The findings revealed significant level in the performance of the students on the four null hypotheses.

Introduction

The key elements of literacy in any society are reading and writing. Essentially the two skills share a binary relationship which is at the same time mutually reinforcing and complementary. In hierarchy of language skills, reading and writing are often described as higher order language skills.

Writing, though a major component of literacy and communication, has proven to be difficult in acquisition both to native and second language learners. Scholars have attributed this problem of writing to these factors:

1. Stress in generating the ideas to be written on;
2. The labour of putting ideas into acceptable sentences and paragraphs;
3. Difficulty in complying with the rules of grammar and mechanical conventions of writing in the English language;
4. The problem of satisfying the audience;
5. The tiresome nature of the writing process.

These problems militate against the acquisition of all the forms of writing. They are however, more pronounced in the descriptive form of writing. The requirements of description such as keenness of observation, vividness and precision of language and the artistic dimensions make that form more laborious.

Statement of Problem

The statement of problem being investigated is that the standard of writing especially of descriptive writing among Nigerian graduates and undergraduates has degenerated immensely. It has remained disturbingly low. As an instance, a World Bank Report (2001) on Nigerian graduates and their employability observes among other things that, "Poor ability in oral and written expressions of English was mentioned almost like a chorus ... Some graduates who were recruited as senior managers cannot write a memo of three paragraphs".

Again, Dayo Adesulu (2014) reports that statistics unveiled at a forum of stakeholders to discuss the failure of students in English shows the average failure rate in English in West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) for four years as follows: 2008 (72%), 2009 (74), 2010 (74%), 2011 (75%). The implication is that for six years covering 2007 – 2013 less than 30 percent of candidates had credits in English.

The consequence of this gloomy performance in English and of poor expression in writing is that the approach to teaching and learning writing in our schools requires reassessment. The foundation of teaching writing in Nigerian schools is the product or controlled approach. This approach is concerned with the output or product of writing while the teachers are there mainly to assign tasks and grades. Students are taught in this method to apply imitation of good models of writing; thus they copy good works. Again, the approach is obsessed with error identification, accuracy and surface correctness. By this, the students are denied the opportunity of acquiring the skill and strategy of writing, the trial and error, corrections, improvements and toils involved in writing.

The failure of the control approach led to the emergence of the process approach in the 1970's. This new approach was pioneered in America by Janet Emig, and Flower and Hayes. It has recorded success among users in America, South Africa, Japan, China, Turkey, Malaysia and other countries of the world. The process approach has these advantages: it is student-centered; the approach lets the students to manage the writing following laid down process and to think as they write; the students are able to develop their language skill and to make new discovery of ideas and forms.

Significance of the Study

The ability to write descriptions offers a lot of benefits to students in polytechnics. The Nigerian polytechnics offer courses in engineering, technology and management sciences. These engineering and technology students must do practical works which must be reported. The laboratory reports are descriptions of the observations that will justify the findings. The performance of students who cannot describe their experiments will be meaningless and attract low mark. In the long run, the students may fail in their careers as engineers and technologists because they lack the skill of descriptive writing.

The students of management science will also engage in description. They will need to write proposals which are descriptions and analyses of prospective businesses. They will also describe the performance of the business to shareholders not only in figures but also in words. The students in Marketing will continue to describe their products from the formulation to the sale. In the market place while canvassing for

customers, they must describe their products such that their attributes will and endear them to the consumers.

As students and graduates, they must engage in other forms of writing such as exposition, argumentation and narration. None of the three can be successfully done without including description else the output will be colourless and abstract. Exposition especially is needed by students in explaining a process, classifying data, stating functions and answering examination questions. Embodied in every successful exposition is descriptive. In some cases, some expositions are descriptions.

The study again has far reaching significance on the students, policy planners and teachers of English, and on the entire nation. The outcome of this research will help the students in effective acquisition of the descriptive writing skill. These students who are the population of the research will form the primary beneficiaries. The acquisition of the writing skill will increase their confidence and certainty as writers. This cherished feat is the ambition and joy of many educated people.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This research set out to investigate the effect of the process approach on the performance in descriptive writing of third year undergraduates of Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Enugu.

Specific Objectives of the Study

The specific objective of the research may be broken down into the following:

1. To determine the effectiveness of the process approach in helping to develop the skill in descriptive writing of the third year students of Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Enugu;
2. To study the effect of the process approach on the output of students in description in the key performance areas of content, expression, organization and mechanical accuracy;
3. To examine the performance profile of the students at each stage of writing description through the process approach;
4. To assess how the process approach affects the attitude of students in the task of descriptive writing.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the effect of the process approach on the development of students' skill in descriptive writing in Institute of Management and Technology Enugu?
2. What is the effect of the process approach (pa) on the performance of the study population on the appraisal criteria of descriptive writing?
3. What is the performance profile of the students at each stage of descriptive writing through the process approach?
4. How does the process approach affect the attitude of students in the task of descriptive writing?

Hypotheses

Based on the research questions in the subsection above, these null hypotheses were used for the investigation:

1. H₀: Learning writing through the process approach has no significant effect on the writing outputs of the students in the key performance areas of descriptive writing;
2. H₀: There is no significant effect on the learning of writing through the process approach;
3. H₀: Learning writing through the process approach has no significant effect on the writing output of students at the stages of descriptive writing;
4. H₀: There is no significant positive relationship between the learning of descriptive writing through the process approach and the attitude of the students to the writing tasks.

Literature Review

This section examines the concept of process approach, the theoretical framework, and the empirical studies.

The Process Approach

The Process Approach to the teaching of writing had existed since the 1970's but became dominant in classrooms for English compositions in the 1980's. The approach emphasizes fluency and meaning above accuracy and form. Tribble describes the approach as:

Writing activities which move learners from the generation of ideas and the collection of data through to the publication of the finished text.

It focuses on the process involved in writing and the teaching of writing by stressing all the stages which a writer in active collaboration with his teacher must go through in order to produce a finished product. Here, both the student and the teacher are indispensable while the nature of involvement is collaborative and not solitary. The student does the writing while the teacher stimulates and facilitates the writing through the various stages.

There is agreement among scholars that this approach involves the movement from one stage to the other by the writer. Scholars however do not agree on the actual number and nature of the stages. We present here some of the different models on the stages of writing:

- i. Tribble (1996) identifies four stages: prewriting: composing/ drafting; revising; and editing. He observes that the process is cyclic whereby the writer may return to prewriting activities after some editing or revising;
- ii. Hoshoma and Hogue have three stages: Pre – writing -> planning (outlining) -> writing and revising drafts, (qtd. in Mao Minh Chau, (2007)
- iii. Ron White (1988) emphasizes that “writing is re-writing; that revision – seeing with new ideas – has a central role to play in the act of creating text”. their model of process writing is a list of interrelated and recursive stages which include:
 1. Drafting
 2. Structuring (ordering information, experimenting with arrangement, etc).
 3. Reviewing (check context, connections, assessing impact, editing).
 4. Focusing (that is making sure you are getting the message across you want to get across).

5. Generating ideas and evaluation (assessing the draft and/or subsequent drafts).
- iv. Steele prescribes eight stages:
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|---|--|
| Stage one – Brainstorming | Stage five – Peer feedback |
| Stage two – Planning/structuring | Stage six – Editing |
| Stage three – Mind mapping | Stage seven – Final draft |
| Stage four – Writing the first draft
teacher's | Stage eight – Evaluation and
feedback, (qtd. in Hassan, Md. Kamrul and Akhand, Mohd. Moniruzaman (2010)). |

The consensus, however, is that the process approach has these stages: pre-writing, planning, editing, and final version publications. A study of the models shows that writing is cyclic and recursive and not a “one-off” activity, (Pratt, 1990). It requires many revisions and drafts. Smith elaborates the indispensability of drafts, “One of the best secrets at school is that good writers produce multiple drafts and revise drafts constantly as they go through cycles of revision”(qtd. in Marcelle Harran 1993) The same statement on the inevitability of drafts is well-echoed by Watson (1980):

Writing is hard. It is not a single process. Those who say they cannot write, and give up too soon, usually mean they cannot write good prose in a single process ... Professional writers with years of experience behind them often regard three versions as bare minimum and five to seven versions are not uncommon.

The object of the redraft, Zamel (1982) states, is that “continual clarification and exploration may be necessary before their meaning becomes articulated.” The meaning manifests at half-strength unless there are many creative drafts. Perl conducted an experiment using five unskilled college writers and found that writers know more fully what they mean after writing, because it was only after they had seen their ideas on paper that they were able to reflect upon, change and develop these ideas further. The finding agrees with the observation of Flower and Hayes, (qtd. in Spack and Sadow, 1983), “discovery is hard work. Writers don't find meaning: they make it.”

Two concepts resound in these models of process approach stated above or in whatever models. These are drafts and feedback. Drafts imply the writer's effort to compose his ideas. The draft may range from first to any number satisfactory to the writer. Hence, Keh (1990) describes the process approach as the “multidraft process”. According to him, the first draft helps the writer to discover meaning or idea, second, third and more drafts to revise ideas and the communication. Meanings become detailed and clarified with increasing drafts while organization emerges naturally. While previous drafts concentrate on content and fluency, it is only in the final draft that correctness of grammar attracts attention.

The other concept is feedback. Keh (1990) describes it as the “fundamental element” in all the stages of the process that “it drives and steers the writer through the process of writing on to the product.” Zamel (1982) states that the ultimate aim of feedback would therefore be for pupils to develop the “crucial ability of reviewing their writing with the eyes of another.” The teacher's handling of the feedback will determine

the success or failure of the writing enterprise. Murray and Johnson, (qtd. in Marcelle Harran 1993) admonish that comments made by the teachers should “provide insights and information upon which the students can act to reshape and restructure the meaning.” Hyland (1990) recommends that teacher’s comments or responses should be “conversational and discursive rather than coldly abrupt and in red ink.” Moreover, on how the teacher should respond, Keh (1990) urges the teacher to communicate “in a distinctly human voice, with sincere respect for the writer as a person and a sincere interest in his improvement as a writer.” He also advises that teachers do not overwhelm students with comments and marks but should concentrate on fundamental problems as the students cannot pay attention to everything at once.

The advantages of the process approach to the teaching and learning of writing are (1) the process approach lets students manage their own writing by giving them a chance to think as they write, (Brown 2001); (2) it helps develop students’ language skill as well as help them focus on content and message and then the development of their own intrinsic motive. Raines observes that the approach is a process of discovery for the students: discovery of new ideas and new language forms; (3) the approach encourages collaborative group work between learners as a way of enhancing motivation and developing positive attitudes towards writing; (4) the approach enhances the students’ linguistic skill such as planning and drafting unlike the traditional approach that promotes linguistic knowledge such as grammar and structure of the written text; (5) it enables students to develop their writing skill unconsciously instead of learning it formally. The focus of the teacher, therefore, is to draw out the writing potentials of the students.

The criticisms of the approach are also relevant to be considered and these are:

1. That the process approach pays less attention to grammar and structure, and puts little importance on the final products,
2. That the process approach failed to consider majority of ESL students who fell outside the “advanced” writer’s category as many were “inexperienced” writers that needed to “develop their understanding of academic prose” (Reid 2001).
3. That the process approach is unrealistic as it puts too much emphasis on multiple drafts which may cause ESL students to fail academic exams with their single draft restriction; Leki, (1992).

Proponents of the process approach accept that the product and other approaches to writing have their roles in writing particularly in conforming the products to social needs. Badger and White, (2000) have suggested that it is a feasible solution not to view the two approaches (product and process approaches) as a dichotomy but rather as complementary to each other. But the process approach is unique because of its dedication to developing the skill, building and honing the language resources and redirecting the attitude of learners in writing.

Theoretical Framework

The mentalist theory of language learning which gave birth to the approach has its origin in the works of two scholars. Early in 1925, the German, Wolfgang Kohler, carried out a psychology-based study and out of it wrote a book, the Mentality of the Apes. His study discovered the new cognitive or “Gestalt” learning theory which is based on human insight and problem solving. According to Mueller (1975) cognitive theory demonstrates that, “a learner acts as intelligently as he can under the

circumstances that confront him so that insightful solution of problems is the typical solution.” The emphasis is on the importance of experience, meaning, problem-solving and the development of insight.

Noam Chomsky’s acerbic review of B.F. Skinner’s book entitled Verbal Behavior in 1960 was another major catalyst that led to the mentalist theory of language learning. Chomsky reacted bitterly to Skinner’s postulations and insisted that language is neither learnt by behavior modification nor by the learner’s response to external stimuli. Chomsky (1966) was the most vocal propagator of Mentalism and he lectured that every learner has an inborn capacity to acquire a new language and that, through rationality and experience, the learner masters the complex fabric of the language.

Chomsky (1966) reiterates:

Human knowledge is embodied as Language Acquisition Device (LAD) at birth via structures, process and ideas which are all mental developments. This innate property and nature and mode of operation are inviolable.

Wilkins (1972) itemizes the following as features of LAD:

- a. The power to differentiate speech sounds from each other;
- b. The capacity to organize linguistic events into various classes that can be easily redefined afterwards;
- c. Knowledge specifying the possible linguistic system and rejecting the impossible and inadmissible ones;
- d. Data-selecting ability, its constant evaluation in an advancing linguistic system and of the linguistic data that are encountered.

A belief of Behaviorist which mentalists disagree with strongly is the notion that language is learnt through habits. Equally rejected by Mentalists is the teaching that learning is by stimulus and response. Chomsky (1966) refutes these notions of language learning saying “language learning is of inborn nature for the most part, and therefore language is not a habit structure.” Specifically on stimulus-response, Mc Neill (1968) says, “the stimuli – response is therefore nonsense, for a kid uses his cognitive capacity to discover the structure of the language spoken around him.” Piling up arguments against habit, Wilkins stresses, “For the mentalists, language is far too complex a form of behavior to be accounted for in terms of features external to the individual,” he adds:

Creative use of language is quite incompatible with the idea that language is habit-structure. Whatever a habit structure is, it’s clear that you can’t innovate by habit and the characteristic use of language, both by a speaker and learner is innovative.

Mentalists, therefore consider second language learning as a problem that requires intellectual analysis, and not such that can be remedied by development of habits.

The Mentalist theorists believe deeply that the learning of a language is rule-governed. The rules are formulated following the analysis of data and they are meant to help learners in the acquisition of the language. Bell (1986) explains that this means “formulating hypothesis about the system to which he is being exposed and trying the rules he has worked out.” The rules drive the language learning. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) describe how rules work in the acquisition of language:

Thinking must be rule governed: a finite and fairly small set of rules enables the mind to deal with the potentially infinite range of

experience it may encounter. The mind here works by formulating a hypothesis of its experience. Then, the mind is not only used in response to the stimulus but it uses the individual stimuli in order to find the underlying pattern or system.

Chomsky (1966) also establishes that analogies and generalizations made by children are as a result of production and application of rules because ordinary linguistic behavior characteristically involves innovation, formation of new sentence and new patterns in accordance with rules of great abstractness and intricacy. The rules are useful in many ways: they serve as a measure for gauging the learner's performance and they help in the identification of errors. He further states that, at the level of competence, rules are learnt which are used by learners during performance.

Again, while errors are evils in the thinking of behaviorists, the mentalists welcome errors and channel them into the learning of the language. Wilkins (1972) states, "The making of error is now seen as an inevitable part of language learning process." In relation to the writing skill, he observes that the writing skill is a problem-solving process and therefore errors are bound to occur in the normal run of finding correct solutions. Bell (1983) reinforces this positive endorsement of errors by mentalist:

If errors are the result of hypothesis testing on the part of the learner, far from being a bad thing, they are the only indication for the teacher of the way in which the learner is trying to cope with the intellectual problem of making sense of the structure of the language to which he is exposed.

The errors become indicators informing a learner that he has deviated from the rules and the fewness of them showing that the learner is approaching perfection in the language. Thus, the mentalist theory is the theoretical base upon which the process approach evolved.

Empirical Studies

This section is dedicated to a discussion of previous researches which relate to our study on the application of process approach to the teaching of the descriptive writing.

A penetrating research on this issue was done by Md. Kamrul Hasan and Mohd Moniruzzaman Akhand entitled "Approaches to writing in EFL/ESL Context: Balancing Product and Process in Writing Class at Tertiary Level". Their study examined the effects of product and process approaches to writing on learners performances. Two classes of United International University of Bangladesh were used for the study. One class was instructed to follow the method of writing of the product approach while the other class received instruction in the process approach. Later a collaborative approach was adopted in both classes. The results of data collected from the learner's performance indicated that the performance of learners in the combination of product and process approaches was better than in product approach only. Furthermore, the collaborative result supported the view that the blend of both approaches tended to facilitate the learners to undertake a writing that can be developed. This research is significant because it focused attention on writing at the tertiary level. But, in relation to our investigation, the subject was comparative of approaches and did not concentrate on the process approach.

A joint research by five scholars Noriah, Ismail, Suhaidi Elias, Intan Safinas Mohd Ariff, Albakri, P. Dhayapari Perumal, Indrani Muthusamy from four universities in Malaysia studied students' attitude to writing. The study entitled "Exploring ESL Students' Apprehension Level and Attitude towards Academic Writing" seeks to discover ESL tertiary students from MARA University of Technology, Malaysia's level of writing apprehension and attitude towards academic writing as perceived by their writing instructors. The tools used were questionnaire and interview. Result indicated that many of the students manifest apprehension towards writing and have negative attitude towards academic writing. The study also highlights the instructor's suggestions for more effective and interesting writing modules to be included in the writing courses for ESL tertiary students. In the case of this research, it seeks to measure the change in attitude of our students to writing if the process approach is applied on them.

Some specific works have been done on the process approach to the teaching of writing. In a research entitled "Process Approach to Teaching Writing Applied in Different Teaching Models," Chunling Sun of North China Coal Medical University, Guoping Feng, identified the basic process of teaching writing through the process approach. He therefore focused his research on applying the process approach on the two classroom teaching models which are teaching models with minimal control and maximal control to different levels of English students. The findings showed that the students used for the experiment made significant progress in their writing skill. The research is commendable because it concentrated on the process approach applied to two models. The research centered on students of a Chinese University but our research is on students of a Nigerian polytechnic.

Another research on the process approach to the teaching of writing was conducted by Belinda HO of City University, Hong Kong. The dissertation was based on "Effectiveness of Using the Process Approach to Teach Writing in six Hong Kong primary classrooms". The study investigated how effective process approach to writing was in helping about 200 pupils in upper primary school level and the lower primary school level improve their writing skills and their attitudes towards writing. In this research, six primary school teachers conducted a two-month program on process writing. The study utilized questionnaire and observations. The finding was that the program brought about positive results across all the six classes investigated. While this research on the process approach centered on pupils at the primary school level in Hong Kong, our research is on students at the polytechnic level in Nigeria.

Related to that research was a study conducted by Serap Cavkaytar, Sefik yasar of Anadolu University, Turkey. The work was entitled "Using Writing Process in Teaching Composition Skills: an Action Research" and it investigated the efficiency of the Writing Process Approach in improving writing expression (composition) skills of 5th grade students in primary education. The study covered the 2007 – 2008 academic years in a primary school in a Turkish course with 5th grade students. Data were collected through video records, reflective diaries, teacher diaries, composition tests and balanced literacy control forms. The findings showed that students improved in their composition skills. In relation to our research, the study was on the application of the process approach to teaching composition skills to 5th grade students in Turkish primary schools. The concern of our research on the other hand is the effect of the process approach to the writing of students in Nigerian polytechnics.

In Nigeria, Obi–Okoye F.A. based her dissertation on “Action research into the use of writing process approach in Nigerian schools to teach English as a second language”. That study investigated the usefulness of adapting a Writing Process Approach (WPA) to TESL for Nigerian school Children. The research focused on theory development and 15 months of field trialing aimed at adapting the WPA to TESL in schools in Anambra State of Nigeria. Using classroom observation, questionnaire and interview, case studies of 111 teachers were developed. The result confirmed the value of using the WPA in TESL for Nigerians and showed that students who formally disliked writing improved in attitude and performance. The study is relevant to our research because it centered on the process approach to writing in Nigeria. But while the area of study is schools in Anambra State, our area of research is on a polytechnic in Enugu State.

Another research in Nigeria on the process approach was carried out by Akinwamide, Timothy Kolade of Ekiti State University, Ado – Ekiti, Nigeria. The title of his work was “The influence of Process Approach on Second Language Student’s Performances in Essay writing”. The research sought to determine how far this approach could be of assistance to the writing skill development of these bilingual speakers of the English language. The population of the study consisted of 80 senior secondary school final year students. The data which were subjected to statistical analysis revealed that the process approach had significant effect on students’ overall performance in essay writing. This research almost agrees with our study because it is on the process approach and the writing performance of Nigeria students. However, while the students in this study are secondary school students in the South-West Zone of Nigeria, our research focuses on polytechnic students in the South–East Zone of Nigeria.

Finally, this review of researches on the teaching of writing to ESL students by these researchers shows that our topic has not been investigated. This, therefore indicates a gap and a need for this study which is on effect of the process approach on the performance in descriptive writing of third year undergraduates students of the Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu.

Research Methodology

The study utilised the experimental design because of the nature of information required to determine the effectiveness of the process approach on the performance in descriptive writing of students of Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Enugu. The study also employed the survey method. In this regard, researcher – made – questionnaire was administered on the students to elicit information on their attitude to writing before and after being taught the process approach to writing.

The population of the study was the third year or HND I students of the polytechnic. Although 3,521 students constituted the population of all the third year students in the 2014/2015 session, a sample size a 30 students was chosen for the research. Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu was chosen for the study because it is one of the foremost polytechnics in Nigeria with international acclaim and because it attract some of the best staff, students and funding.

The non-probability, purpose method of sampling was used in selecting 30 students to form the class. The students were chosen from the departments of Business Management, Electrical/Electronic Engineering and Science Laboratory Technology. The

three departments represent the three dominant faculties in Nigerian polytechnics which are Engineering, Technology and Management Sciences.

The study used the quota method to allot 10 students to each of the three departments. This resulted in a class size of 30 students. This class size of 30 was adopted because it is the stipulation of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the supervising board of Nigerian polytechnics, on class size.

The instrument for data collection were copora observation and analysis, and researcher-made –questionnaire (RMQ). Observation and analysis of the corpora were done on the composition texts of the students. They were made to write on “A fight” or “A fire incident”. Data were extracted from the pre-test and post-test copora of the students. Pre-test were compositions written before they were taught the process approach while post-test were those written after being taught the process approach. The other instrument, questionnaire, was administered on the students to determine their attitude to descriptive writing. The questionnaire consisted of 30 evaluative statements that were arranged in the Likert Scale of 1 – 4.

Face and content validation of the research instruments was carried out by three professors of the Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their corrections and suggestions were used to prepare the final instruments. The reliability of the instruments was established by conducting a test experiment using 15 students from Departments of Marketing and Computer Science of the same polytechnic. Using the Crombach Alpha formula, the instrument showed a reliability of 0.92.

One of the technique of data analysis was collation and analysis of the questionnaire. This helped to answer research question four. The other technique involved collation of data from the pre-test and post-test compositions of the students. The latter data were presented in tables and analysed using mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses were thereafter tested by employing analysis of covariance and correlation coefficient.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The presentation of data follows the sequence in which the research questions and hypotheses were outlined.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1

What is the effect of the process approach on the development of students’ skill in descriptive writing in Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu?

To generate the answer to this research question, the students wrote a pre-test and pro-test composition on descriptive topics of “a fight” or “a fire incident”. The details of the evaluation of their works are shown below:

Table 1: Performance of Students Suggesting Level of their Development of cognate Skills in Descriptive Writing.

Group	N	Pre-test		Post-test		Gain Scores
		Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev.	
Process approach (IMT, Enugu)	30	55.93	10.46	75.17	4.55	19.24

Table 1 above shows the performance mean scores of these students who were exposed to the process approach. The group had thirty (30) students. The data shows that, at the pre-test, the performance mean score of the students was 55.93 while the standard deviation was 10.46. At the post-test the performance mean score was 75.17 and a standard deviation of 4.55. The gained score was 19.24.

Research Question 2

What is the effect of the process approach (PA) on the performance of the study population on the researcher-made appraisal criteria of descriptive writing?

To determine the answer to this research question, the researcher listed the following as the appraisal criteria for the evaluation of the students' texts: content, expression, organization and mechanical accuracy. The pre-test and post-test corpora of the students were evaluated along those criteria and the data generated are presented below:

Table 2: Performance Means Scores of Students of the Process Approach in the Key Appraisal Areas of Descriptive Writing.

Key Performance Areas	Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Gain Scores
CONTENT	N Mean Std. Deviation	30 18.0000 4.82808	30 27.433 3.61685	9.4333
EXPRESSION	N Mean Std. Deviation	30 15.8000 3.92516	30 26.2667 3.18329	10.4667
ORGANIZATION	N Mean Std. Deviation	30 9.4667 4.4008	30 14.8000 4.45978	5.3333

MECHANICAL ACCURACY	N	30	30	4.8
	Mean	3.8000	8.6000	
	Std. Deviation	2.74678	3.62558	
TOTAL	N	120	120	7.1
	Mean	11.7667	18.7750	
	Std. Deviation	6.88285	9.38662	

Result presented in Table 2 shows the performance of students of IMT, Enugu. The mark allocation of their performance on each criterion is content = 30marks, expression = 30marks, organization = 20marks, and mechanicals accuracy = 20marks. The total mark is 100marks.

On content, the class at the pre-test stage recorded a mean score of 18.0000 and a standard deviation of 4.82808 while, at the post-test, the group scored a mean score of 27.4333 and a standard deviation of 3.61685. In effect at the post-test, the experimental group achieved an additional differential mean score of 9.4333.

The performance of the group on expression at the pre-test indicates a mean score of 15.8000 and a post-test score of 26.2667 with the corresponding standard deviations of 3.92516 and 3.18329 respectively. The implication is that on expression, the group increased by a gained mean score of 10.4667 in the post-test.

On organization the group had a pre-test mean score of 9.4667 and a post-test mean score of 14.8000 with corresponding standard deviations of 4.47008 for pre-test and 4.45978 for post-test. The consequence of their performances under organization is that the group improved by a gained mean score of 5.333.

The performance of the class on the criterion of mechanical accuracy was again commendable. The class recorded a means score of 3.8000 in the pre-test stage and a mean score of 8.6000 at the post-test stage. The pre-test standard deviation was 2.74678 while the standard deviation for post-test was 3.62558. The variation in their growth rate indicated that it gained a mean score of 4.8 at the post-test.

To sum up, the total performance of the group, in all the criteria of descriptive writing was, a total mean score of 11.7667 with a standard deviation of 6.88285 in the pre-test. The performance in the post-test increased to 18.7750 and standard deviation of 9.38662. This result indicates, therefore, that these students taught the process approach perform creditably in all the appraisal areas of descriptive writing. It further shows that the process approach had a positive effect on the performance of the class in all the appraisal areas of descriptive writing at 5% level of significance.

Research Question 3

What is the performance profile of the students in each stage of descriptive writing through the process approach (PA)?

To answer this research question, the pre-test and pro-test scripts of the students were analyzed and scored according to their performances in each stage of writing through the process approach. The stages are pre-writing/generation of ideas, planning, draft, revising/editing and final version. The values generated from the analysis are presented in the table below:

Table 3: Performance Mean Scores of Students in the Process Approach in the Stages of Descriptive Writing.

Stages	Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Gain Scores
Pre-Writing	N Mean Std. Deviation	30 8.4000 2.35767	30 15.4333 2.47307	7.0333
Planning	N Mean Std. Deviation	30 10.1333 1.52527	30 17.2000 2.48305	7.0667
Draft	N Mean Std. Deviation	30 8.3667 2.37056	30 15.3000 3.24993	6.9333
Revising/Editing	N Mean Std. Deviation	30 7.6667 3.28354	30 15.333 4.30504	5.8666
Final Version	N Mean Std. Deviation	30 8.1000 2.60437	30 16.5333 3.58862	8.4333
Total	N Mean Std. Deviation	150 9.7333 2.91183	150 15.6000 3.48342	

Summary of results in Table 3 reveals the performance of the students in descriptive writing at the stages of pre-writing, planning, drafting, editing and final version. The maximum score assigned to each of the five stages was 20 marks which was a total of 100 marks.

At the pre-writing stage, the class recorded the mean score of 8.4000 at the pre-test and 15.4333 in the post-test respectively. The respective standard deviations were 2.35767 and 2.47307 for the pre-test and post-test. The consequence of the performance of the group at the pre-writing stage is that it gained a mean score of 7.0333.

The group at the planning stage, again recorded a mean score of 10.1333 in the pre-test and 17.2000 at the post-test with standard deviations of 1.52527 and 2.48305 for the pre-test and post-test respectively. In effect, the group gained an aggregate mean score of 7.0667.

The data of performance of the class at the draft stage indicated that it had a mean score of 8.3667 in the pre-test and 15,3000 in the post-test. The standard deviations of the pre-test and post-test were 2.37056 and 3.24993 respectively. Consequently, the group improved in performance at the post-test by a mean score of 6.9333.

At the editing stage, the class had a mean score of 7.6667 in the pre-test and 13.5333 in the post-test. The respective standard deviations were 3.28354 and 4.30504 for the pre-test and post-test. The implication of the performance is that the group improved by a gained mean score of 5.8666 at the post-test.

The performance of the class at the stage of final version showed a mean score of 8.1000 in the pre-test and 16.5333 in the post-test. The standard deviation for the pre-test and post-test were 2.60437 and 3.58862 respectively. The consequence is that the group improved by a gained mean score of 8.4333 in the post-test.

In conclusion, the total performance of the class at the five stages revealed a mean score of 9.7333 with a standard deviation of 2.91183 at the pre-test. The post-test mean score of the group was 15.6000 with a standard deviation of 3.48342. The high performance in total mean score of the group indicates that the process approach affects the performance of students at every stage of descriptive writing at 5% level of significance.

Research Question 4

How does the process approach affect the attitude of students in the task of descriptive writing?

To determine the attitude of the students of the group to the task of descriptive writing, the students responded by filling copies of researcher-made-questionnaire. The questionnaire was a set of 30 evaluative statements on what the students think or feel about process approach, and descriptive writing. Their responses were analyzed and the data presented in the table below:

Table 4: Effect of the Process Approach on the Attitude of Students in Descriptive Writing.

Table 4: Experimental Group

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Correlation Coefficient
Pre-test attitude score	65.1333	11.52810	30	0.695
Post-test attitude score	82.3833	19.23546	30	

Table 4 shows how the process approach affects the attitude of the students in descriptive writing. In table 4, the group recorded a performance mean score of 65.1333 and an attitude score of 82.3833 with corresponding standard deviations of 11.52810 and 19.23546 respectively. Thus, the relation between performance and attitude in the group indicates a positive correlative coefficient of 0.695. The implication is that when students are taught in the process approach, there is a positive attitude to writing. The analysis therefore, shows that the process approach affects students' attitude positively in descriptive writing at 5% level of significance.

At this point, our work selects to examine the hypotheses used in the study in order to validate our results.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I (H_0)

Learning writing through the process approach has no significant effect on the writing output of students in the key performance areas of descriptive writing.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance on the Effect of the Process Approach on Students' Performance in Descriptive Writing.

Scores	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between groups	8853.69	3	2951.23	209.87	0.00
Within groups	1631.23	116	14.06		
Total	10484.93	119			

Table 5 above shows the performance of students in the key performance areas of descriptive writing. The obtained value of $F(3,116) = 209.87$ is significant at exact probability value of 0.000 ($P < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is hereby rejected. The researcher, therefore, concludes that learning writing through the process approach has significant effect on the writing output of students in the key performance areas of descriptive writing at 5% level of significance.

Hypothesis 2 (H_0)

There is no significant difference between the learning of descriptive writing through the process approach.

Table 6: Analysis of Covariance on the Effect of Process Approach on the Performance of Students' Descriptive Writing.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	17071.647 ^a	8	2133.956	230.397	.000
Intercept	1860.694	1	1860.694	200.894	.000
PRE-TEST	1506.130	1	1506.130	162.613	.000
GROUP	704.083	1	704.083	76.018	.000
KEY PERFORMANCE	1214.002	3	404.667	43.691	.000
KEY PERFORMANCE* GROUP	164.662	3	54.887	5.926	.001
Error	2139.537	231	9.262		
Total	85014.000	240			
Corrected Total	19211.183	239			

a. R Squared = .889 (Adjusted R Squared = .885)

Table 6 shows the analysis of covariance on the effect of the process approach on the performance of students in descriptive writing. The obtained value of $F(1,239) = 43.691$ is significance at exact probability value of 0.000 ($P < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected and the researcher, therefore, concludes that there is significant difference in the performance of students who learnt descriptive writing through the process approach at 5% level of significance.

Hypothesis 3 (H₀)

Learning writing through the process approach has no significant effect on the writing output of students in the stages of descriptive writing.

Table 7: Analysis of Covariance on the Effect of the Process Approach on Students' Performance in the Stages of Descriptive Writing.

Test of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: POST-TEST

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1607.268 ^a	10	160.727	19.565	.000
Intercept	2119.568	1	2119.568	258.016	.000
PRE-TEST	533.665	1	533.665	64.963	.000
KEY STAGES	325.019	4	81.255	9.891	.000
GROUP	46.393	1	46.393	5.647	.018
KEY STAGES GROUP	28.395	4	7.099	.864	.486
Error	2374.102	289	8.215		
Total	63709.000	300			
Corrected Total	3981.370	299			

a. R Squared = .404 (Adjusted R Squared = .383)

Table 7 shows the performance of students in the stages of descriptive writing. The obtained value of $F(4,229) = 9.891$ is significant at exact probability value of 0.00 ($P < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected. The researcher, therefore, concludes that learning descriptive writing through the process approach has significant effect on the output of students in the stages of descriptive writing at 5% level of significance.

Hypothesis 4 (H₀)

There is no significant positive relationship between the learning of descriptive writing through the process approach and the attitude of the students to the writing task.

Table 8: Significance of Relationship between Learning Descriptive Writing through Process Approach and Attitude of Students to the Writing Task.

	Post-test	Attitude
POST-TEST Pearson Correlation		.695
Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.000
N	30	30
ATTITUDE Pearson Correlation		1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.695**	
N	.000	30
	30	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The analysis of results in table 8 indicates significant relationship between learning descriptive writing through the process approach and the attitude of students to the writing task. The obtained correlation coefficient of 0.695 is significant at exact probability value of 0.000 ($P < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected and the researcher thus concludes that there is significant positive relationship between the learning of descriptive writing through the process approach and the attitude of the students to the writing task at 5% level of significance.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed a variety of performance profiles of the students involved in the research. The results show that these students who learnt writing through the process approach improved significantly in their capacity of writing. The test of Hypothesis I as contained in Table 5 revealed that the group demonstrated significant improvement. It obtained the value of $F(3,116) = 209.87$ which is significant at exact probability value of 0.000 ($P < 0.05$). This high performance did not occur by chance. It is rather due to the treatment in the process approach given to the students. This implies that the process approach really improves students' knowledge of descriptive writing. This finding is in agreement with the results of the works of other scholars (Belinda Ho, (2006); Cheng, (2008); Goa, (2007); Frith, (2006); and Ming, (2006). Akinwamide, Timothy (2012), in a related experiment, observed that, "The students who were taught with the process approach performed significantly better than the control group (in his own research). The implication of this was that the process approach pedagogically empowers students by enabling them to develop writing and its attendant sub-skills in the course of learning to write". Belinda Ho (2006) stated in her study too that the process approach seemed to be an effective approach even as low a level as P.3 in primary school.

The result again indicated that the group performed creditably in the four appraisal elements of descriptive writing. To further confirm the authenticity of the result, analysis of covariance was used to test the result. In table 6, the test showed that the value was $F(1,239) = 14.691$ at exact probability value of 0.000 ($P < 0.05$). The implication is that there is significant difference in the performance in descriptive writing of the group at 5% level of significance. The improved performance of the experimental group was caused by the method of process approach which the members received. The analysis of covariance conducted on hypothesis two further revealed that the approach had positive effect on the performance of the students in the appraisal elements of writing. The result is consistent with the findings of Aldowan and Ibnian (2014) who examined "The Effect of Using the Process Approach to Writing on Developing University Students' Essay Writing Skills in EFL." They discovered that the process approach "provided the students with an opportunity to improve their writing in terms of ideas and mechanics of writing." Tyson asserts, "Some recent researches suggest that many of the techniques and activities associated with the process approach including group writing assignments, peer-editing and multiple revisions 'serve to demystify the task of writing in a foreign language.'" The view is also bolstered by the findings of Goldstein and Carr who examined the 1992 NAEP Writing Assessment administered to a representative national sample of approximately 7,000 4th grade students, 11,000 8th grade students and 11,000 12th grade students across the United States of America. The result of their study indicated that

process-related activities are strongly related to writing proficiency, (qtd. In Aldowan, T. and Ibnian, S. 2014). Those results, therefore, endorse our finding that the process approach affects the effectiveness of students in their handling of the constituent elements of writing.

Another revealing finding of the study is that the process approach improved students' performance in each of the five stages of writing as prescribed by the approach. To underscore the authenticity of the result of research question three, the analysis of covariance in Table 7 showed the class obtained a value of $F(4,229) = 9.891$ which is significant at exact probability value of 0.000 ($P < 0.05$). The analysis thus shows that learning writing through the process approach has significant effect on the output of students at the stages of descriptive writing at 5% level of significance. The finding, therefore, agrees with the view of Aldowan and Ibnian (2014) that the different stages of the writing process (pre-writing, planning, drafting, revising/editing and final version/publishing) provided students with an opportunity to improve their writing. The result is also in line with the findings of the researches of other scholars such as Alsoaqui, (2001); Danayseh, (2003); Elsaid, (2004) and Ibnian, (2011) who highlighted the importance of writing as a process based on different stages.

Finally, the study discovered that students develop positive attitude towards descriptive writing when exposed to the process approach. The testing of hypothesis four which applied the tool of correlation coefficient also indicates that there is significant positive difference between the learning of descriptive writing through the process approach and the attitude of students to writing. This finding concurs with the result of an investigation by Belinda Ho of City University, Hong Kong. Her research revealed that the process approach brought about positive result in the attitude and skill of pupils across all the six classes investigated. She concludes, "Process writing seems to be a feasible solution to heightening the writing abilities and confidence of students especially those who have higher proficiency and those at upper primary level. The finding is also consistent with the discovery of Obi-Okoye F.A. who observed that Writing Process Approach (WPA) in TESL influenced the students she investigated. These students who had formerly disliked writing improved in attitude and performance after their exposure to the process approach. Those observations corroborate that of Rodney Tyson that the techniques of the process approach not only helped students to produce better compositions but also increased their motivation and self confidence. They also align with the finding of Aldowan and Ibnian (2014) who affirmed that the orientation provided by the process approach helps students develop confidence and establish fluency.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the research findings:

1. Having discovered that there is a positive relationship between the process approach and students' performance in descriptive writing, it is advisable for English language teachers and lecturers to apply the process approach in teaching writing skill especially the descriptive type.
2. There is need to strengthen the application of this approach through effective and efficient supervisory framework and through observations of peer group and

- senior members of the teaching staff who have greater experience in the use of the process approach in the English Departments.
3. To reap the full gains of the process approach in the descriptive writing of students, the government should increase the capacity of institutions by assisting English language teachers to attend workshops or in-service training programmes to acquire the enabling skills for the use of the process approach in handling the writing skill in contemporary English language classrooms.
 4. Efforts should be made to introduce the process approach at the primary and secondary levels of our educational system in a manner that the children can understand.
 5. Education planners, policy makers, curriculum designers and the academic boards of departments of English in the tertiary institutions should build the principles of the process approach into the modules of teaching writing in Nigerian academic institutions.

Contributions to Knowledge

The results of the study have helped to establish the unacceptability of linearity in the planning of writing. The process approach has brought to the fore the principle that planning of writing should be done and altered many times going by the tenets of the process of writing until the message and communication are clear. This finding which is a canon approach to process approach has contradicted the assertion of the uniformity and linear nature of teaching methods in the acquisition of language skills, especially the writing skill and has, therefore, broken new grounds in the study of the writing skill in a second language environment.

Again, the study helped us to establish the centrality of recursion as an indispensable strategy in the writing process especially in a second language context. This finding agrees with Anthony Bennet (2005) that the core activity in the process writing is the multi-draft open-ended term. It also aligns with the view of Manzo and Manzo that recursion and multi-drafts help students refine ideas, discover new connections and explore them more deeply in an attempt to best communicate their ideas with an audience. To this extent, our study has also made a contribution to the scholarship of writing in Nigerian tertiary educational system.

The study, in addition, under-scored the importance of the teacher as a factor in the acquisition of the writing skill and noted the insistence of the process approach that there should be a shift in the responsibilities of the teacher towards greater involvement in the learning of writing. It rejected the postulations of the conventional approach which states that the role of the teacher in the writing process should be peripheral, restricting him to the duties of giving instruction/models, giving composition tasks and assigning scores. Again, our study revealed that the teacher should be an active partner and facilitator in the writing process. This supports the observations of Keh (1990) that the teacher is fundamental to the learning of writing as he drives and steers the learning through the process of writing on to the product. By helping uncover the serious and dual nature of the role of the teacher in the writing process, the study has opened some new vistas in the scholarship of ESL writing process. If teachers in our tertiary institutions implement this pivotal role in the writing process as assigned them by the process

approach, there will be improvement in the acquisition of the writing skill by our students.

Finally, other strategies for the teaching and learning of the writing skill in a typical classroom tend to place a lot of premium on the assessment of the writing production on error identification. From the literature review of this study and the results of our analysis, we agree with White and Arndt (1991) that the focus on errors improves neither grammatical accuracy nor writing fluency. The study has helped us to discover that the process approach regards errors as an integral aspect of the learning of writing in an ESL context but does not delineate and emphasize them as key issues in writing pedagogy as the product approach would always tend to do. Our finding here aligns with the tenets of the Creative-Construction Theory of language learning which emphasizes communicative fluency and learner autonomy in the writing process. It is common knowledge that too much emphasis on error stifles the creative potentials of the young ESL writer. Writing programmes in Nigerian institutions are riddled with teachers' sarcastic, and demoralizing comments about the errors that learners make in their texts. Little time is spent on teaching form, content and style to improve writing fluency. By showing that the students who received instruction in descriptive writing using the process approach did better than their counterparts who were taught the product approach, the study has provided a new template for the improvement of the acquisition of the writing skill in our schools.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effect of the process approach on the writing performance of students of Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu in South-Eastern Nigeria. The results of the study revealed significant differences in the performance profiles of the study samples exposed to the process approach in the key criteria used for the assessment of written compositions and the attitude of the students to writing. The results have provided grounds to conclude that students will develop communicative fluency in the writing skill if the process approach is used rather than any of the other approaches. Learner creativity and autonomy are enhanced through the use of the process approach in ESL writing training and acquisition.

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