

Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract: This article reviews that teaching the English language to students with different first languages, typically used to imply that the English Language Learner may have already learned more than one language, prior to learning English.

Key words: English, foreign language, world language, teaching of modern languages, English-speaking, bilingual.

We learn English as a foreign language. So far we have been considering English as a second Language. But in the rest of the world, English is a foreign language. That is, it is taught in schools, often widely, but it does not play an essential role in national or social life. In Spain, Brazil and Japan, for example, Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese are the normal medium of communication and instruction: the average citizen does not need English or any other foreign language to live his Daily life or even for social or professional advancement. English, as a world language, is taught Among others in schools, but there is no regional variety of English which embodies a Spanish, Brazilian or Japanese cultural identity. In foreign language situations of this kind, therefore, the Hundreds of thousands of learners of English tend to have an instrumental motivation for learning the foreign language. The teaching of modern languages in schools has an educational function, and the older learner who deliberately sets out to learn English has a clear instrumental intention:

He wants to visit England, to be able to communicate with English-speaking tourists or friends, to Be able to read English in books and newspapers. Learners of English as a foreign language have a Choice of language variety to a larger extent than second language learners. The Japanese situation is one in which both British and American varieties are equally acceptable and both are taught.

The choice of variety is partly influenced by the availability of teachers, partly by geographical Location and political influence. Foreign students of English in Mexico and the Philippines tend to learn American English. Europeans tend to learn British English, whilst in Papua New Guinea, Australasian English is the target variety. The distinctions between English as a second language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are, however, not as clear cut as the above may suggest. The decreasing role of English in India and Sri Lanka has, of recent years, made for a shift of emphasis to change a long established second language situation to something nearer to A foreign language situation. Elsewhere, political decisions are changing former foreign language situations. Official policies in, for example, Sweden and Holland are aiming towards a bilingual Position where all educated people have a good command of English, which is rapidly becoming an alternate language with Swedish and Dutch—a position much closer to ESL on the EFL/ESL continuum. It may be seen, then, that the role of English within a nation's daily life is influenced by geographical, historical, cultural and political factors, not all of which are immutable. But the role of English at a given point in time must affect both the way it is taught and the resultant impact on the daily life and growth of the individual. The place of English in the life of many second and foreign language learners today is much less easy to define than it was some years ago.

Michael West was able to state in 1953: The foreigner is learning English to express ideas rather than emotion: for his emotional expression he has the mother tongue.... It is a useful general rule that intensive words and items are of secondary importance to a foreign learner, however common they may be. This remains true for learners in extreme foreign language situations: few Japanese Learners, for example, need even a passive knowledge of emotive English. But Danish, German And Dutch learners, in considerably greater contact with native speakers, and with English radio, Television and the press, are more likely to need at least a passive command of that area of English which expresses emotions. In those second language situations where most educated speakers are bilingual, having command of both English and the mother tongue, the functions of

English Become even less clearly defined. In a second language situation, English is the language of the mass media: newspapers, radio and television are largely English media. English is also the language of official institutions of law courts, local and central government— and of education. It is also the language of large commercial and industrial organizations.

Clearly, a good command of English in a second language situation is the passport to social and economic advancement, and the successful user of the appropriate variety of English identifies himself as a successful, integrated member of that language community. It can be seen, then, that the Chinese Singaporean is motivated to learn English for integrative purposes, but it will be English of the South-east Asian variety which achieves his aim, rather than British, American or Australian varieties.

To be defined as a good English speaker, there are four major skills that should be mastered namely: listening, reading, writing and speaking. Among the four skills, writing is one of the most difficult skills to learn especially for foreign language students. It is because students need to consider many linguistic aspects such as grammar and vocabulary. However, writing is important for students. Besides as a form of communication, writing is a necessary activity in everyday lives such in business, creativity, and in scholarly pursuits. In EFL context, explains that writing skill stimulates thinking, compels students to concentrate and organize their ideas, and cultivates their ability to summarize, analyze, and criticize.

Along the process of writing, students have major writing difficulties in grammatical, cohesion and coherence terms. Moreover, they also identified students' minor writing difficulties such as paragraph organization, dictions, and vocabulary misspelling. they also identified students' minor writing difficulties such as paragraph organization, dictions, and vocabulary misspelling. This indicated that writing is not an easy task for students especially EFL students. Therefore, the present of teacher is very essential for students during their writing process. Teachers are required to teach writing to the students effectively. In teaching writing, the teacher's role is facilitator.

As a facilitator, the teacher offers guidance in helping students to engage in the thinking process of writing. However, the teaching writing is a very demanding task and there will be challenges for teacher. The challenges are related to: the linguistic and the cultural differences between the target language and the native language, the learners, the teachers, and the teaching context. In facing the challenges, suggests that teachers can use different strategies of teaching to achieve the teaching-learning goals. A correct and appropriate strategy may help the students along the process of writing. It can be said that in teaching writing, teaching strategies become a very important aspect in the teaching and learning process. Selecting the right strategy enables teacher and students to achieve the learning goals. In addition, the use of appropriate strategy can motivate students in the learning process of writing. There are many strategies that teachers can use in teaching writing. These strategies have their advantages and disadvantages. Seeing the importance of the role of teaching writing strategies, this research was conducted to explore teaching writing strategies used by teachers. In addition, this research will also explore the difficulties faced by teachers in teaching writing.

Given all of the possible knowledge sources teachers can access or experience, there is an abundance of information, recommendations, and teaching materials on how to teach writing that is available to teachers. This blessing experiences at least one serious limitation. Too often, there is limited, circumscribed, or no evidence that the proffered advice, know-how, or wisdom works. There are many claims about what is effective, but too little proof. Unfortunately, this observation applies to much of the lore that teachers acquire about writing instruction. Teaching lore mainly involves writing practices teachers experienced when they learned to write, instructional practices teachers develop and apply with their students, writing practices they see other teachers apply, and teaching practices promoted by experts. While we have no doubt that teachers and experts possess considerable knowledge and insight about how to teach writing, basing the teaching of this complex skill on such lore alone is risky.

Why is this the case? One reason is that it is difficult to determine which aspects of teaching lore are valid. For example, there are many things a teacher does while teaching writing. When their students' writing improves, they may attribute this change to specific procedures they applied. While this evaluation may be correct, it is also possible that this judgment is incorrect or only applies to some students or to a procedure in a given context. Teachers are not the only ones who can succumb to such selective bias. Specific teaching lore promoted by writing experts are also susceptible to misinterpretation in terms of their effectiveness. To illustrate, writing experts can overestimate the impact of favored instructional methods, forming judgments

consistent with their philosophical views on writing development or instruction. For instance, proponents of the whole language approach to learning to read and write believed that writing and reading develop naturally just like oral language.

Consistent with these beliefs, they championed an approach to literacy instruction based on the use of informal teaching methods, while at the same time deemphasizing explicitly and systematically teaching students foundational writing and reading skills and strategies. Instead, these skills are only taught when the need arises, mostly through short mini-lessons. Advocates for whole language frequently promoted the effectiveness of this two-pronged approach, without providing much in the way of empirical evidence that it was effective, or perhaps even more importantly, that it was as effective as other alternatives such as reading and writing programs that emphasized reading and writing for real purposes, coupled with systematic and explicit skills and strategy instruction. Even for fundamental writing skills such as spelling, there is considerable evidence that both informal teaching and explicit instruction are effective, while whole language approaches are fundamentally misguided about what is written language.

Whole language is not the only approach to teaching writing that has suffered from questionable claims about its effectiveness. Even the venerable Donald Graves was guilty of this to some degree with the process approach to writing that he supported and advocated. The evidence he offered in support of his favored approach to teaching writing relied in large part on testimonials and exemplar writing of selected students, presenting a potentially overly optimistic assessment of this approach. This is not to say that the process approach is ineffective, as there is now considerable empirical evidence supporting the opposite conclusion. Instead, this example illustrates that adopting whole cloth even highly popular and widely used teaching lore without careful consideration of its effectiveness and the evidence available to support it can be risky. The lack of evidence or the type of evidence provided can make it extremely difficult for teachers or other interested parties to determine if the testimonials or evidence used to support specific teaching lore in writing are representative or atypical.

A third issue that makes some teaching lore risky is that it may be based on the experience of a single or a very small number of teachers. As an example, this can occur for knowledge a teacher acquires as a result of his or her experience teaching writing. The teaching practice(s) may in fact be effective for the students in this teacher's classroom, but they may not be effective when applied by another teacher or with different students. Until this proposition is tested, there is no way to determine if this teaching lore will produce reliable results when applied more broadly.

As these concerns demonstrate, the validity, generalizability, and replicability of instructional practices based on teaching lore are uncertain. This is not to devalue what teachers or experts know, but to demonstrate the limits of this knowledge. Related to students' initial sentence, spelling, and reading skills. In another study focused on improving students' sentence construction skills, and her colleagues in Italy examined the effectiveness of an oral language intervention to improve the sentence construction skills of fifth and tenth grade students. This oral treatment did enhance the sentence writing skills of the younger fifth grade students. This study provides needed evidence that interventions aimed at improving oral language skills transfer to writing. Chung and his colleagues in the United States examined if sixth grade students' writing can be improved through self-assessment, planning and goal setting, and self-reflection when they revised a timed, on-demand essay. These students as well as students in the control condition were also taught how to revise such an essay. Treatment students evidenced greater writing gains, and were more confident about their revising capabilities than control students. Lastly, Graham and his colleagues in the United States examined if the revising behavior of fourth grade students experiencing difficulties with writing can be enhanced through the use of revising goals that focused attention on making substantive when revising stories. Applying such goals across four stories had a positive effect on the revising behavior of these students when these goals were not in effect, resulting in more text-level revisions, more revisions that changed the meaning of text, and more revisions rated as improving texts.

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