

## Teachers' Perceptions of Implementation of Process-Oriented Methods of Writing in Selected Schools in Nyanza Rural, Rwanda

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### ABSTRACT

*English writing is the most valuable skill that students must acquire all over the world where English is L2, especially in Rwanda since it is the sole medium of instruction in all schools. However, poor writing skills were noticed in Nyanza District secondary schools in Rwanda based on the results of the English exam, second term 2022/2023 prepared at the district level. Given an essay writing question, it was found that a big number of learners lacked paragraph cohesion and coherence and showed careless writing mechanics and poor language use especially words choice. This issue is not a problem in Nyanza District only but also in most African countries and all over the world where English is L2. Process oriented methods of writing were claimed in literature to be one of the solution to poor writing in L2 context. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to investigate the teachers' role in successful implementation of process-oriented methods of writing in Nyanza District located in the Southern Province of Rwanda. Communicative language teaching theory by Richard (2006) anchored this study in a qualitative research design. The target population were seven English teachers from three different schools. The researcher also used total population sampling to involve all 7 English teachers in the study. A narrative data analysis was used to make sense of group interview. The findings suggest that owing to the short periods of English as subject, teachers neither applied process writing nor worked hand in hand with students for better learning environment and students received no help to develop process writing through pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing. From the findings of the study, it was concluded that teachers lack training in use of process writing yet there are resources in which English teacher can get the content of process writing such as online resources and Literature in English book senior five. The paper recommends teachers to adopt process writing and curriculum designers should plan for process writing in the English subject and make follow-up.*

**Keywords:** Drafting, Editing, Pre-Writing, Process, Revising, Writing

### I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a crucial skill for academic achievement as it shows how information and data are received, processed, conveyed, exchanged, and kept for later use in any learning scenario (Harris et al., (2019); Rhodes et al., (2024). Additionally, the majority of exams frequently assess students' writing skills to gauge their knowledge and ability to use a second language (Harmer, 2004). This scholar argues that students who learn English as L2 make an effort to compose quality essays, but they frequently make errors in their writing, particularly in the areas of cohesiveness, grammar, consistency, and the use of complex sentences. While adopting a product-oriented approach to writing which stresses grammatical and structural accuracy, teachers grade students' works at the end of the session and fail to provide appropriate guidance during teaching writing skills.

On another hand, the process-oriented approach emphasizes writing to make it meaningful step by step. In order to minimize the likelihood of mistakes, teachers actively interact with their students throughout the writing process and provide constructive criticism. According to Mushtaq, Taseer and Ghori (2021:2), writing is done in four phases using process-oriented methods: pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing. In the pre-writing stage, students strive to comprehend the core idea behind a given topic with the help of an authentic resource. In the drafting stage, they put down ideas in their own words. Then, students refine their ideas or opinions regarding the subject in the revision stage. Finally, students go over their writings throughout the editing phase, by identifying and fixing their errors and get the final text. The writing skills they acquire will aid them to navigate the writing process efficiently. This chapter focuses on the background of the study, problem statement, and objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study.

English has progressively replaced other languages as the preferred mode of communication in the age of globalization, both locally, regionally and internationally (Azman, 2018). As an essential part of second language learning, teaching English writing is considered as the best way of mastering the second language all over the world. However, many researchers reveal that there is a gap and much need in implementing process-oriented methods of writing as the best ways of producing a well written text for students from the countries where English is L2 (Zakime, 2018). Many researches were conducted globally, including study in Pakistan by Mushtaq et al. (2021) on undergraduate students' poor writing skills resulting from lacking process writing.

Research was conducted in Africa and showed that English writing proficiency is hindered by lack of process oriented methods of writing (Magaba, 2023). In East Africa, where Rwanda is located, English writing is facing the same problem mentioned above. From 2010, Rwanda adopted English as medium of instruction from primary to university level (Rosendal and Ngabonziza, 2023; Rhodes et al., 2024). Hence, it has become the task of teachers and students to do their best and develop a proficiency level in English writing. Mostly, writing as the powerful tool to help students achieve academic goals must be focused on especially in secondary schools so as to prepare them for advanced studies. Referring to the archive of end of term 2 English exam 2022/2023 prepared at district level, which included an essay writing question, the researcher observed essay writing results from three secondary schools in Nyanza District and noticed the problem of poor writing skills since a big number of students in those three secondary schools lacked writing skills. Indeed, these students wrote paragraphs with incoherent sentences and wrong grammatical structures.

Moreover, mechanisms and language use in the paragraph written by students did not match the level in which students were studying. It is very clear that the process-oriented methods of writing were not followed; otherwise, the written paragraph would have had no problems. As Kadmiry (2021) suggests, the process-oriented methods of writing equip students with creative ability and enable them to be competent in the writing field. The above-mentioned problem affects students negatively in their academic achievement of English as the medium of instruction, in their social life and hinders their professional development. This study was carried out in three selected secondary schools in Nyanza district.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The researchers observed poor writing skills in Nyanza District secondary school's students, based on the results of English exam term 2, 2022/2023 prepared at the district level. The analysis of essays produced by students showed a lack of paragraph cohesion and coherence as well as careless writing mechanics and poor language use especially words choice. Indeed, the students' sentences and ideas were not connected and did not flow together smoothly, and the use of vocabulary and grammatical structure did not make connections between ideas within a text. At school A, 27 students in S5 LFK sat for that exam but only 12% passed the essay writing. In school B, 107 students in S5 LFK sat for the exam but only 16% succeeded in the essay writing. In school C, 43 students in S5 LFK took the essay writing exam, but only 14% did well (Archive of English Exam term 2, 2022/2023). This case corroborates the previous studies that denounced the existence of poor writing skills in EFL context and the necessity of assessing the role of teachers and teaching methodology used (Niyibizi et al. 2024).

### 1.2 Research Objectives

- i. To examine teachers' perceptions towards process-oriented methods of writing
- ii. To identify challenges teachers were facing to implement process-oriented methods of writing

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical review

#### 2.1.1 Communicative Language Teaching Theory by Richards (2006)

Communicative language teaching theory insists on the contribution of both teachers and students to the learning environment and that teachers should assist students to use language creatively. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) suggests that students and teachers must contribute to the learning environment. The fundamental principle of CLT, according to Richards (2006), is that a lot of learners require English in order to use it in particular educational or vocational contexts. Therefore, rather than only focusing on more general English, it would be more effective to teach learners the specific language types and communicative abilities required for particular roles.

Moreover, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) claims that people usually acquire language as a tool to help them communicate and engage with others in their speech community. As Ahmad (2019) echoes, one effective strategy to achieve this is to encourage students to use language creatively. Language teachers should prioritize understanding and developing the best possible language learning environments. The author goes on to stress that as

language learning primarily stresses accuracy and appropriateness in its application in diverse contexts, teachers should create learning activities that give students opportunities to participate in a variety of circumstances. Therefore, CLT is trustworthy in this study about teachers' perception of implementation of process-oriented methods of writing in Nyanza rural schools in Rwanda, as process writing engage both students and teachers in learning environment and sharpen students' creativity.

## 2.2 Empirical Review

### 2.2.1 Teachers' Perceptions towards Process-Oriented Methods of Writing

A process-oriented method of writing is an approach which places more emphasis on how than on what is done and involves sticking to a set of procedures that produce the intended results (Din et al 2021). This approach focuses on processes aims to advance and enhance existing procedures as it inspires adherents to strive for attaining outcomes by conforming to a pattern (Mushtaq et al., 2021).

A study conducted by Albeshar (2022) at Saudi Universities revealed that teachers do agree that it is important to use process approach to writing in English classes. "Many English teachers worldwide believe that the fundamental purpose of teaching English is to prepare students to use and practice language effectively", he added, p.2. Yet, his findings confirmed that during writing activities, teachers do not give students enough time to practice process writing. Therefore, the best way to practice English writing academically is to apply process writing in teaching writing skills; although teachers keep in their mind that process writing is the best method to teach writing skills, it is not applied.

Different scholars have provided stages of process writing depending on the study made. Din et al., (2021) give four stages namely pre-writing, planning, drafting and post writing. The researchers did not appreciate these stages because both planning and pre-writing can do the same work. In the same vein, Graham and Sandmel (2011) proposed five stages, namely engaging in prewriting tasks as the first stage, creating an initial draft as the second stage, revising the text as the third stage, editing for conventions as the fourth stage and publishing or presenting a polished final draft as the fifth stage. The researchers did not adapt these five stages because of the level of the study in secondary school context; thus there was no need to involve the last stage, publishing, because when a text is edited all is done. Serravallo (2019) proposes other main strategies to employ when writing; these are planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Among other things, planning entails concentrating on the goal, target audience, concepts, and tactics to be employed. Though it usually happens before writing, some writers plan their compositions as they write. Writing can be planned more effectively by coming up with a few clue words and writing-related subjects in small groups.

According to Serravallo (2019), monitoring is keeping an eye on both the specifics such as grammar and mechanics and the general qualities of writing, including organization and content. According to the author, checklists are essential at this point in order to support young learners in directing their own thought processes and critically evaluating their own work. He goes on to explain that evaluating entails rewriting the material in terms of its structure, substance, and conventions after it has been written. Serravallo (2019) keeps on saying that using this method as a peer assessment increases its effectiveness.

In Graves' (2019) opinion, peer evaluation is a type of conference that teaches students to value their knowledge when they are discussing their work with peers or the teacher who has the responsibility of listening to them actively and assisting them in responding to their writing. The author goes on to say that showing the draft to a different peer enables students to understand how their audience interprets their writing. The researchers appreciated these stages of Serravallo (2019) since they are not many steps and none can be forgotten; however, these stages can be complicated to understand considering the level of secondary school students because every stage involves many activities and it can be better to the other advanced level which is not secondary school.

Thus, the researcher adopted four writing stages by Mushtaq et al. (2021) who proposed pre-writing as the first stage, drafting as the second stage, revising as the third stage and editing as the fourth stage. These stages are logically arranged and can cause no confusion to the secondary school students.

Zakime (2018) confirms that pre writing as the first this stage involves brainstorming ideas, planning, organizing and selecting ideas so that students come up with appropriate ideas and plan in order to start a writing activity. To brainstorm ideas depending on the topic, Zakime (2018) suggests that learners can collaborate and learn from one another in order to get ideas to include in their texts.

Drafting as the second stage, learners write their thought in their own words regardless writing errors, (Mushtaq et al 2021). Children do not have to worry about their spelling, punctuation or grammar because they will have time to go back and work on them.

According to Zakime (2018), revising as the third stage involves reorganizing ideas, changing or removing unnecessary sentences and choosing appropriate words suitable for the desired text. Zakime (2018) suggests that the

feedback from the teacher or colleagues plays a very important role at this stage where learners can exchange drafts and comment on each other's work.

Mushtaq et al. (2021) assert that editing as the final stage, the final copy is made as results of many revisions since students have corrected all mistakes and refined the written work.

### **2.2.2 Teachers Challenges to Integrate Process-Oriented Methods to Teach Writing Skills**

Integrating process-oriented methods into teaching writing skills can present various challenges even though these methods are valuable for developing critical thinking and effective communication. Zimmerman (2021), for example, considers time constraints as the main challenge that teachers face while using a process-oriented approach. Time limitations due to curriculum constraints or standardized testing might pressure them to focus on product-based approaches which considers writing as the result of combinations of lexical and syntactic forms and good writing as the demonstration of knowledge of these forms and of the rules used to create texts (Abas & Aziz, 2020) rather than the more time-consuming process-oriented methods. Since the writing process involves multiple stages like prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, effective use of each step thoroughly demands more time than simply assessing a final product.

In addition, Cho and MacArthur (2019) confirm that assessing writing as a process is more complex than grading a final product. Grading based on a process may involve evaluating multiple drafts, peer reviews, and individual conferences. This method can be subjective and time-consuming for teachers.

Student resistance is another challenge since some students may prefer a more structured, formulaic approach to writing as they may find the open-ended nature of process-oriented methods challenging. They might resist embracing the uncertainties and revisions integral to the writing process. Strategies like modelling and scaffolding as suggested by Bereiter and Scardamalia (2016) involve all seven steps namely brainstorming, outline, rough draft, evaluation, final draft and publishing which are all often needed to help students adapt to process-based writing.

Tompkins (2021) emphasizes that Teacher Training Educators might lack adequate training or professional development in implementing process-oriented writing instruction effectively. Therefore, providing ongoing support and resources for teachers to incorporate these methods into their teaching practices is crucial.

Technology Integration is another challenge. While technology offers opportunities for collaborative writing and revision (e.g. using Google Docs or online peer-review platforms), not all classrooms have access to appropriate technology or face barriers to its effective use (Warschauer, 2019).

To overcome these challenges, educators can adopt a balanced approach that combines elements of both process-oriented and product-oriented writing instruction. This could involve providing clear guidelines for the writing process, incorporating peer review activities, offering individualized feedback, and gradually transitioning students toward embracing the writing process.

### **2.3 The Reasons why Teachers should be Interested in Process Writing**

In order to respond to students' writing more on its content than its form, White and Arntd (2017) strongly argue that teachers must stop acting as markers and start acting as writers. Encouragement of students to consider their audience is necessary: For whom is the writing intended? What is important for the reader to know? Students must also understand that anything they write down is editable. They can add, remove, rearrange, and reorganize anything they write. Moreover, when feedback is given in between drafts rather than at the end of the assignment when students turn in their composition to be graded, it is more beneficial. Writing corrections made on compositions that are given back to students after the process is completed don't seem to have much of an impact on their writing.

## **III.METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research design**

This study used a qualitative approach to identify teachers' perceptions of implementation of process-oriented methods of writing.

### **3.2 Population**

This study was conducted in Nyanza District and involved all seven English teachers in senior four and five languages option: Literature in English, French, Kiswahili and Kinyarwanda (LFK); 2 teachers in school A, 2 teachers in school B and 3 teachers in school C.

### 3.3 Total Population Sampling Procedure

The researcher used total population sampling to involve all 7 English teachers from the three schools where the study was taking place in order to allow every English teacher to participate in the study via group interview. The research design was qualitative which is mainly interpretation-based, descriptive and relating to language.

### 3.4 Data Collection Tool

Data collection tool of this study was group interview, where English teachers who teach at the same school made a group; therefore, we had two pairs and one group of three. The researcher prepared questions to guide interview sessions. We chose to use group interview because it makes interviewees feel comfortable while talking and group interview allows comments of interviewees since one can stimulate another and give more reliable information.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

This study used narrative data analysis as the technique in which data is acquired and organized to allow the researcher to understand how the individuals experienced something. Instead of focusing on just the actual words used during an interview, the narrative analysis also allows for a compilation of data on how the person expressed themselves, what language they used when describing a particular event or feeling, and the thoughts and motivations they experienced.

## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Response Rate

The findings of this study, were presented respecting the objectives of the study. Data from group interviews were narrative presented and analysed. The study involved 7 English teachers who passed group interview. None of participants missed interview. This section is divided into 2 sub-sections: Teachers' perceptions towards process-oriented methods of writing and challenges.

#### 4.1.1 Findings on Teachers' Perceptions towards Process-Oriented Methods of Writing

Responses from group interviews really indicate that 5 English teachers appreciated process writing than any other methods of teaching writing skills. Even if it is not applies in teaching and learning writing skills they still recognize how process writing is useful to teach writing skills;

*"Process writing is the best methods to teach students to write essays appropriately as it widens critical thinking ability, however, it involves many activities. To make sure that every student has passed through every stage of process writing, in addition to the big number of students in the room, the teacher must be diligent because if students are not well facilitated, the process writing will not be achieved. Since it requires much effort, English teachers use to ignore this useful approach! I, myself, cannot lie that I apply this approach but it is a good approach that I learnt in university."* (Teacher 7, female, S4).

The same teachers claimed that despite the fact that the writing process was ignored, it helps students to develop the writing habit;

*"... even if we, as teachers, sometimes ignore to facilitate process writing in teaching writing skills, no doubt, when it is well done it helps students to improve their writing ability and produce well written works. This is something that I experience when I was in S5, I did not know where our teacher got the content because we did not get it in our English books. I remember we made a lot of practice and came up with well written texts. In fact, we, as teachers, should guide our students and involve them in writing practice especially process writing. When a learner starts writing an essay without making a draft and edit what is written, cannot produce a perfect work! It is impossible!"*

Moreover, one of interviewees declared that he did not know much about process writing, so, the implementation gets difficulties when the teacher does not know anything about the content except when the teacher works hard to understand the matter and get assistance when possible.

*"As far as I am concerned, I do not use process writing in teaching writing since I do not know much about it, however, referring to what my colleague has said, process writing can be the best way which can help our students to write successfully. Our students are writing poorly! I say this because when I am marking written works of my students, I feel disgusted and get bored. May be this approach is the best solution to help our children have writing proficiency."* (Teacher 2, male, S5).

The ideas above revealed that teachers have a positive ideas on using process writing even if application is still a problem in Nyanza rural schools. The students cannot be blamed for their poor writing skills since they did not get involved in process writing practices as the best ways to equip students with appropriate writing habit.

On another hand, 2 English teachers did not appreciate process-oriented methods of teaching writing as the best methods of teaching writing. As one of the teachers claimed:

*“...I do not care about those processes you said! No need! I simply ask my students to take drafts if they want and use it. I can take it as wasting time because I cannot teach and facilitate all activities you said, we have a little limited time of teaching and marking and recording marks, so, if you bring other activities, you cannot finish the program...”* Teacher 3, female, S4. Her colleague also addressed the similar statement *“...I do not remember what process writing is all about; the simple answer is that I do not use it in teaching writing skills and I do not get any problem. If process writing had been more important, we should have got trainings on how it works but we did get any. So I cannot confirm that this approach is useful, perhaps, I will know it later.”* Teacher 6, male, S4.

The statement of these 2 teachers revealed that some teachers do not know anything about process writing in Nyanza rural schools. This is the problem which can affect negatively students' academic achievement because writing skills are the main tools which help students to grow mentally as future writers, as well as improving ways of communication through writing.

#### 4.1.2 Findings on Challenges Faced by Teachers to Implement Process-Oriented Methods of Writing

To implement process writing, teachers are facing a lot of challenges. Five English teachers spoke out the challenges they face but two teachers did not want say anything about challenges. The time constraints was the major challenge to integrate process writing in teaching writing skills. For instance, one of the teachers said:

*“How can I succeed in implementing process writing during three scattered single periods of forty minutes per week in one class? English writing needs much time than we think since it is the medium of instruction. Imagine to facilitate 56 students and during 40 minutes and reach everyone to make sure if he has applied all stages of process writing? It is not possible! English should have been given more than three periods during a week so that we can involve students with many activities like process writing, otherwise, our children will leave schools with little skills on some important issues.”* (Teacher 4, male, senior 5).

In fact, this claim exposed that the successful use of process writing depends on the time given to the teaching and learning activities, because the students must be given freedom to write and cross all stages of process writing.

Not only did teachers face insufficient time for implementing English writing process, but also they were not trained on the use of process writing for English teachers. Teachers insisted on these challenges as obstacles to integrate process writing in teaching writing skills.

*“...I attended many trainings for English subject, but I have never attended any English process writing session; this is a problem because I cannot confirm that every English teacher is equipped with process-oriented methods of writing! So, REB should think of this important point because we need to be equipped with all required skills then we do the same to our students. Training on process writing can be a part of Continuous Professional Development that we attend once per a week, and it can help all teachers in general to improve their writing habit.”* (Teacher 1, female, senior 4).

This statement shows that teachers were hindered by lack of trainings on using process writing because it requires skills to apply process writing and teach students to do so.

English teachers focused also on shortage of teaching and learning resources especially English books; they claimed that process writing was not included in English program for S4, S5 and S6;

*“... we can bring you all English books for S4, S5 and S6, there is no writing process content planned to teach, I have seen it in the book of literature in English. So, I noticed that curriculum designers did not think how much process writing is very important. This content should have its own unit in English book, because when you think of how important it is, you wonder why it is not a part of the content that is in English curriculum, but, with internet we can find more online and every teacher can select what he/she can teach...”* (Teacher 5, male, S5).

There is a claim of shortage resources since S4, S5 and S6 English books do not contain process writing in their content. This is one of the causes why students fail to apply process writing. Thus, when teachers manage to get the content online they do not get the same content, it depends on the source they have accessed.

## 4.2 Discussion

English teachers showed positive attitudes towards process-oriented methods of writing as they appreciated how process writing expand the students' critical thinking ability. This statement complies with Pulungan's (2016) assertion that students who are well assisted in process writing are able to produce a good piece of writing since it was considered that these students already know and comprehend the basic principle of writing and the mechanics and

organization of sentences. Therefore, students who are well assisted in process writing came up with appropriate skills to produce well written essays.

Challenges revealed by English teachers included time constraint because of many activities involved in process-oriented methods like guiding and assisting students in all processes involved in the writing process as well as marking and giving feedback to the students (Abas & Aziz, 2020; Cho and MacArthur, 2019). In fact, process writing involves many activities. In pre-writing and drafting, all information relating to the content must be maintained and written regardless writing errors. These two stages give total freedom to the students to think and select all related ideas which can support the topic and write them on the draft. Therefore, during teaching and learning English, teachers must facilitate all these activities and be sure that a student has passed all stages.

Besides, teachers claim their trainings on using process-writing since some of them who are teaching English are not equipped with process-oriented methods of writing. These findings corroborate Tompkins' (2021) claim that teachers might lack adequate training or professional development in implementing process-oriented writing instruction effectively. Therefore, providing ongoing support and resources for teachers to incorporate these methods into their teaching practices is crucial. In fact, the claims of English teachers reveal that they do not know much about process writing, yet it is the content they should have studied in both secondary and university levels. This gap becomes an obstacle to the students who do not get what they deserve.

## V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

### 5.1 Conclusions

Findings discussed in the study indicated that English teachers show positive attitudes toward the use of process writing, however, they face challenges which prevent them from using process writing. The two research questions were posed to this study: (1) How do teachers perceive process-oriented methods of writing?; (2) What are the challenges teachers are facing to implement process-oriented methods of writing? Were answered as revealed in the findings that 5 (71.4%) teachers do appreciate process writing as the best methods to teach writing skills.

The findings showed that English teachers failed to implement process writing because of challenges they face such as short period of English session which cannot allow teachers to facilitate process writing. Teachers trainings do not include process writing in the content to help teachers get skills on using process writing.

Moreover, the findings discussed lack resources where teachers and students can get the content of process writing, English books do not have this content; as result, there is no time planed for teaching it. Thus, teachers who plans to teach process writing must arrange themselves to get the time in which the content can be taught.

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that teachers should do their best to get content and time to teach process writing since students need process-oriented methods of writing in order to be successful in writing activity as they sharpen their mind and help students to think critically and empower creativity as well as improving communication level of the students.

### 5.2 Recommendations

This study clearly shows how English teachers have decelerated their duties to facilitate the use of process-oriented methods of writing namely pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing to improve students' writing ability and widen thoughts. Thus, based on the general findings, the researchers recommend that English teachers should focus on the process-oriented method of teaching writing and plan for it before teaching. They should assist and guide students while doing a wring activity. In case the printed books are not available, English teachers can use online sources collaboratively to get the content, and after getting the content, it is better to agree one another on the appropriate stages to use in teaching writing skills.

Students should also exercise much in using process writing in any writing activity and collaborate as colleagues in order to be proficient in writing. Online sources are there to equip them with the required skills to apply process writing.

In addition, REB should organize trainings to the English teachers and equip them with skills required in teaching writing skills. Moreover, English as a subject in secondary schools should be given more than three periods per week so as to get sufficient time to deal with process writing. Finally, we recommend that similar research on other levels of education be carried out as this study was limited to secondary schools.

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