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THE EFFECT OF TEACHERS' WRITING APPROACH ON STUDENTS' WRITING ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to explore the different approaches teachers adopt to teach writing skills at university. This study aims also at finding the effect of the writing approaches used by university teachers on students' writing achievement. To meet these objectives, two research instruments were used, and four teachers and 158 students participated in this study. The findings reveal that teachers base their courses on three approaches; Genre Approach, Product Approach, and Process Approach. Teachers use Genre Approach to introduce the text structure in the writing course and then opt for either Product Approach or Process Approach to involve students in writing. The results indicate also that the approaches used by teachers do not affect students' writing achievement. More research should be carried out in order to know the reason behind using only three approaches. Indeed, this issue is rarely investigated mainly at the University although writing skill is considered as the backbone of the English department. Ultimately, a number of pedagogical implications were drawn from this research, which are geared toward encouraging teachers to adopt more recent approaches to teaching writing that seek to involve the learner in the process of writing.

Keywords

Teachers Writing Approach; First Language Writing; Second Language Writing; Process Approach, Product Approach; Genre Approach; Observation; Writing Test

1. Introduction

Throughout history, communication has been a goal to achieve and a medium through which other goals can be achieved. It is an essential component both of our everyday life and in our education. Communication is a process by which information is exchanged by individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behavior. In fact, we frequently communicate orally via the use of the written means. Writing, as such, is believed to be an important part of man's culture as it can be used to preserve their thought and ideas as well as communicate their accomplishment for future references that cannot be communicated verbally. In education, writing is a yardstick to assess students' knowledge mainly through exams. For this reason, it has been given a prominent place in the syllabus in Morocco, particularly. In fact, it is believed that writing is one of the most important and yet the most challenging skills to learn either in L1 or L2. Richards (1990, p.100) asserts that "learning to write in either first or second language is one of the most difficult tasks that a learner encounters and one that only few people can be said to fully master". It is a 'discovery' that drives students to find appropriate content to write and makes teachers discover their students' ideas, potentials, and weaknesses (Galbraith, 1999, p. 137).

Despite its importance, writing causes problems for teachers and students especially in a Foreign Language context. In this respect, FL writing is learned for multiple purposes shaped by various educational goals and values. Moreover, the sociocultural context is different from the L1 writing. EFL students' writing is affected by their L1 along with the educational context where they learn to write (Manchon, 2009, p. 23). FL writing, hence, is socially, culturally, and linguistically affected. These reasons stimulate the approaches to adopt and adapt to the teacher's own context (Manchon, 2009, p. 23).

Rivers (1981) views writing as a reinforcement to other language skills as it is a good activity in the classroom and a very crucial part of a programme test. Needless to say, writing as an activity involves both the students and the teacher. The teacher decides on the approach to use in order to teach writing depending on personal and professional standards. Meziani (1986) asserts that teaching writing in Morocco depends on two approaches; the controlled/guided approach, or

the product approach which requires from students to copy, imitate, and repeat a text (cited in Babni, 2002, p. 1)

1.1. Objectives of the Study

This study attempts to explore the different approaches used by University teachers in order to teach writing skills. Second, it aims at examining students' competence in writing skills. Ultimately, this study seeks to find the relation between the writing approach used by teachers and students' writing achievement

Obviously, the teaching of writing in FL context demands from the teacher to respect the goals set for the course. The present study attempts to investigate the writing approaches that teachers use through answering the four following questions:

1. What approach do teachers use to teach writing skills?
2. Does the approach adopted have an effect on students' writing ability?
3. Do groups differ in the scores of different tasks of the test?
4. Does the approach used by the teacher have an effect on the different tasks?

To answer the above questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- ✓ The approaches used by the teacher have no effect on students' writing ability.
- ✓ There is no difference in the scores between the four groups of this study.
- ✓ The approach used by the teacher has an effect on the different tasks of the test.

2. Review of Related Literature

As writing is an important skill that includes other skills and various subskills - such as linguistic knowledge, grammatical knowledge, choice of vocabulary-, it is given a huge importance not only in teaching but in research as well. In fact, various investigations were made by many researchers to examine the effect of approaches used by teachers on students' writing achievement and ability. In this respect, a study was conducted to explore the effect of text structure instruction on Middle-Grade students' comprehension and production of expository texts. It includes 114 seventh grade students from three combinations of English classes of junior high school (Wheatley, 1985). Two classes, actually, had the same teacher while the third one had a different teacher. The experimental instruction condition and the conventional instruction condition were randomly assigned to different classes while the third class which had different teacher served as a control group. Obviously, all classes were given pretest and posttest. The researchers used the California Achievement Test (1970) to measure reading ability. The test had been administered 6 months

prior to the beginning of the study. In addition to the regular curriculum, seven passages from two junior high school textbooks were included. A writing pretest about opinion/example was given to both groups in which students were required to read a text and answer questions. Later, they were asked to write about the same issue emerged in the reading passage and try to remember as much as possible about the passage. The experimental group, on the one hand, was given instructions on how to summarize the passage based on the text structure following the thesis statement, main ideas of the thesis statement, and the use of details. Students of the control group, on the other hand, were instructed to read the passage, reread it, and write how much they know about the topic. The seventh week all students wrote again an opinion/example essay. The results showed that there was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of the reading scores. However, after being exposed to a passage with the text structure instruction, the experimental group had higher posttest scores compared to the conventional and control groups. This study provides the evidence that awareness about the text structure is needed in writing expository composition and influences students' writing in the sense that they may incorporate text structure in their own essay and then have an organized product. Still, it is not always the case that being exposed to text structure would affect positively students' writing.

In another study conducted by Church and Breiter (1983) which was carried on high schools students to investigate what stylistic features they pay attention to, it was found that instructing students to pay attention to style has little or no effect on their writing. Though, making them compare passages raises their awareness about the differences of styles (Cited in Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1980, p. 181).

Another study was conducted at Islamique Azad University in Iran, which aimed at exploring the effect of Genre-Based teaching on writing achievement. In this respect, 54 female Iranian EFL students whose age varies between 19 and 25 were randomly selected from 104 English language students participated in this study (Meeampol, S, 2008). Control group and experimental group were randomly selected as well. Both pre-test and posttest were used in this study. The pretest was used to identify group's level and make sure that they have more or less the same level. Then, the posttest was used to reveal the progress of the experimental group which was taught through genre-based approach. The treatment lasted for 5 weeks (two hours a day, three times a week) which was based on genre based instruction in addition to the content of the curriculum. Both groups had the same teacher and worked with the same textbook. The results indicate that before the treatment both groups were homogeneous since they had an approximate



level and the means of the control group and the experimental group were almost the same. This was indeed analyzed through the T-test. After the treatment, the means were not always the same. The experimental group had a higher mean than the control group. Thus, there was clearly a significant difference between the groups. Therefore, it is concluded that genre-based teaching had an effect on writing achievement. The genre approach in this sense was found to be beneficial for Iranian learners since they were taught the construction of moves in different kinds of writing. Moreover, they improved in terms of linguistic knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary in addition to understanding linguistic forms and their functions, and organization. In a recent study, vocabulary and grammar was found to be improved through another way of teaching writing which depends on word card games. Limantoro (2018) investigated the effectiveness of the word-card games that he designed and developed to teach writing in students' grammar and vocabulary competence. This action research sample consisted of twenty-one students of Business English Study Program of Politeknik Ubaya Surabaya Indonesia whose most feedbacks were positive towards the word-card game. All participants enjoyed playing the game for several reasons such as having fun and being challenged. Indeed, participants appreciated enriching their vocabulary and grammatical patterns. This helped in improving their writing skills as the ultimate activity is to make sentences out of the words given in the game.

The Process Approach had a huge attention as well, and many researchers conducted several studies to reveal the effectiveness of this approach. A study was conducted at Bangkok University to investigate the effectiveness of Process-Based Writing in EFL classroom of second year students. In this study, 88 students took part from two EFL second-year classes who were selected through the purposive sampling out of 308 students. The experimental group and control group were randomly selected. The experimental group was taught through the Process-Based Approach, while the control group with the traditional teaching. Both groups were given the same pretest-and were found compatible for the study since there was no significant difference between their scores- and the same posttest which was provided after 14 weeks of treatment. Then, the means were scored by two raters and compared and analyzed using the T-test. As a result, the posttest showed a statistically significant difference of the mean scores between the two groups. In this respect, the experimental group outperformed the control group. The Process-Based Approach had then a positive effect on students' writing achievement and abilities. In the same vein, Zamel (1982) states that when students taught and understood the process, their written products improve (Cited in Kroll, 1990, p.41). Rorschach (1986) also discovered that students focus on the form more

than the content, which may call upon the way used to teach writing and the instruction used that may not develop L2 composing competence. Diaz (1985, 1986) and Urzua (1987) claimed that the process-oriented composition teaching for the L2 learners as beneficial which matches Johnes's (1958) conclusion (Cited in Kroll, 1990, p.79)

3. Methodology

This section is devoted to the description of the methodology used to answer the research questions. It includes the population and sampling, instruments, and the research design.

3.1. The Population and Sampling

The population considered for this study is Moulay Ismail university students and teachers. Thus, four groups of first year English department were included in this study which took place in Moulay Ismail University, Faculty of Art and Humanities of Meknes. Four teachers were observed in order to explore the approach they used to teach writing skills. After four weeks of observation, a test was administered to 332 students. Actually, quota-sampling was used to choose 158 papers out of 332.

3.2. The Instruments

To answer the research questions, two research instruments were used; Observation and a test.

3.2.1. Observation

Observation is one of the means of data collection that enables the research to explore what happens in the classroom and how the teaching-learning process occurs. In this study, four University teachers, who were teaching writing skills, were observed so as to identify the different techniques they used to teach writing. The first session in observation was unstructured so that the general idea about teaching writing could be established in order to highlight the different approaches that are used by Moulay Ismail University teachers. After that, a checklist was designed which consisted of 25 items along with a section that was used to take notes of any additional technique which did not belong to the items. The 25 consists of 3 major categories; from item 1 to item 6, the techniques included belong to the genre approach. From item 7 to item 20, the techniques included belong to the process approach. Finally, the last category is related to the product approach which is based on techniques from item 21 to item 25.

Actually, the observation was not only used to explore teachers' approaches to teach writing, but also to decide on the type of tasks to provide in the test that would be administered to

students. The test as such will be appropriate as it would tackle the same items that were seen in class. This test is the second instrument used in this study to meet its objectives.

3.2.2. Test

The writing tests are commonly used in order to measure students' writing ability. The test administered to the participants consisted of 4 tasks which the students were used to do. These tasks were part of the writing course. The first task was concerned with writing a topic sentence to a paragraph. It was the real focus of the writing courses. It will detect students who manage to write an appropriate topic sentence to the paragraph depending on the understanding of its different elements. The second task consisted of scrambled sentences that needed to be organized in order to formulate one paragraph. This task will elicit the students' ability to understand and organize the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and the concluding sentence along with their ability to infer the meaning out of the cohesive devices that would lead to the paragraph construction. The third task was a paragraph which was not punctuated and contained some mistakes. It was actually a way to examine students' ability of extracting the mistakes and correcting them as well as the mastery of punctuation. The last task was in a form of a statement that would trigger students' knowledge to write a paragraph. The paragraph should be written according to the norms that students have seen during the course. In other words, students had to write a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence that are clear and organized. Students took the exam seriously and the invigilation was insured. The four groups took the exam under the same conditions. This task was corrected analytically since it provides detailed information about the writer's ability. Thus, the focus was given to mechanics, vocabulary choice, grammar and usage, and organization. Two raters scored the same paper in order to maintain inter-rater reliability.

3.3. Research Design

The design used in this study is the mixed approach. The instruments used will be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Observation is to be analyzed qualitatively to deduce the approach that the teachers use in order to teach writing. The test is analyzed quantitatively as the scores are going to be compared. An independent t-test is used in order to compare the groups.

4. Results and Discussion

This section deals with the presentation of the findings of the observation and the test administered to the participants. Then, the results are discussed and interpreted. The section is

divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with the results of the observation, while the second part is interested in the scores of the test and the discussion.

4.1. Observation

Observation was one of the instruments used to collect data which aimed at revealing the approaches that teachers adopt as well as witnessing the interaction between students themselves and students and teachers. As a post-observation stage, teachers allowed the process of observation and agreed that it would last for four sessions. The total of the sessions observed were, in fact, sixteen sessions.

The first session of observation was unstructured, as it was mentioned in the previous section, in order to have a general idea about the different approaches that teachers use.

The first teacher used Genre approach and Process approach. Therefore, grammar was emphasized along with the cohesive devices and vocabulary use. In this respect, the teacher focused on diction and how students should choose the words that would convey the right meaning in the right context. Students practiced writing skills with increasing freedom. That is to say, students answered questions which would enable them to write. They were given the sign to start free writing. In fact, the teacher cared for students' interest when they had to choose a topic to write on. Moreover, they were given an idea of the most important elements in a paragraph-the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and the concluding sentence-. As a feedback, the teacher used peer editing; students exchanged their papers and corrected each other's mistakes.

The second teacher emphasized three main things; punctuation, the form of a paragraph, and the importance of the reader. A model was provided and discussed in terms of its components. The emphasis was on the characteristics of a good paragraph, the paragraph structure along with the function of each type of sentences –the topic sentence, the supporting sentences, and the concluding sentence-. Obviously, these techniques are carried out in Genre approach.

During the second session, however, the teacher used another set of techniques which belong to the product approach. The teacher, in this respect, provided a model which was analyzed in terms of structure and language. After being introduced to the model, students worked on exercises that contained grammar and writing sentences as well. They were asked, first, to choose an appropriate topic sentence among the choices that are provided in the exercises, and then generate a topic sentence for each paragraph while the paragraph writing was kept as a follow up activity. In fact, the feedback was provided by the teacher and it was oral.

The third session revolved around one simple activity which focused on exercises to write supporting sentences, or appropriate details, a topic sentence and concluding sentence for different paragraphs.

During the last session, the teacher used techniques of two different approaches. First, the focus was on cohesive devices and their importance in a paragraph. Then, a text was analyzed. Finally, students worked on exercises in which they had to write a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence along with the appropriate use of cohesive devices.

The teacher in this respect used two different approaches which are: Genre Approach and Product Approach.

As far as the third teacher is concerned, he also started by explaining the form of the paragraph, and then made students write and read their paragraphs. Feedback was provided by both students and the teacher as they evaluated the paragraph in terms of the form, the message, and language problems.

After introducing students to the narrative paragraph, they were asked to brainstorm ideas in order to write a story in the past. They were given a handout that illustrates the form of a narrative text. The teacher sensitized students about the importance of “sequence” and introduced questions that would help them write a paragraph. Cohesive devices of sequencing were also introduced. The teacher, then, made students brainstorm and organize ideas which are part of pre-writing activities. After outlining the topic, students wrote and read their products. Feedback was provided by both students and the teacher. The process approach was used by the teacher, indeed.

During the second session, less attention was given to grammar and structure since the aim was to outline and write the first draft. The teacher, in this sense, based the course on students’ interest while choosing the topic. Organization of the paragraph was also analyzed. Students were given time for re-writing, brainstorming, and composing the first draft. After that, oral feedback was provided from both teachers and students with the help of a checklist. Then, students went through the revising and editing phase and were asked to write a second draft. The final draft was read and oral feedback was provided again. The descriptive paragraph was introduced as well. In this session, however, techniques from two approaches were used which are Genre approach and Process approach. The focus was on vocabulary use and cohesive devices. An idea about the features and organization of a descriptive paragraph was set. Students were given time for pre-planning and were required to write a final draft.

The last session knew a combination of techniques as well. The teacher, actually, focused on grammar and cohesive devices. Students' background knowledge was taken into account while deciding for a topic which met their interest and needs. They were given time to generate ideas in order to write the first draft. Then, they revised their product and wrote the final draft. The sessions were manipulated by two different approaches which are Genre approach and Process approach.

The fourth teacher started the course by giving a general idea about the organization of the text. After that, students were asked to provide topic sentences to different paragraphs. They were given a model to analyze with emphasis on grammar. As soon as the model was analyzed, students practiced writing with increasing freedom. When students were introduced to the narrative paragraph, they were given an idea about the organization of the text with a focus on grammar and cohesive devices. After being introduced to all these items, students were engaged in free writing then refining the final draft. In fact, the teacher switched from Process to Genre approach.

As a matter of fact, teachers used techniques from the same approach when they want to introduce students to a type of writing. They actually use the Genre Approach. However, they use different techniques, and thus, different approaches in the following sessions.

4.2. Test

The aim of the test is to measure students' writing achievement and evaluate the effect of the writing approach used by teachers on these students' product. In order to achieve this aim, a T-test is used to test the research hypotheses. First, the results of the effect of writing approaches on students' achievement are presented. Then, the four groups are compared in terms of each task of the test.

4.2.1. The Effect of Writing Approach on Students' Achievement

Table 1: *The Effect of Writing Approach on Students' Achievement*

| Group Statistics | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|-----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| | Approach | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Scores | Genre & Process | 114 | 8,1633 | 3,24722 | ,30413 |
| | Genre & Product | 44 | 7,9205 | 2,74326 | ,41356 |

| Independent Samples Test | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|------|------------------------------|----|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig.(2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference |
| | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----------------------------|-------|------|------|--------|------|--------|--------|
| scores | Equal variances assumed | 4,158 | ,043 | ,439 | 156 | ,661 | ,24288 | ,55311 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | ,473 | 91,861 | ,637 | ,24288 | ,51335 |

To test the hypothesis that writing approach has no effect on students' writing achievement, an independent t-test was performed. As can be seen in Table1, there is not a significant difference between Genre & Process approach (M= 8.16, SD= 3.24) and Genre & Product approach (M= 7.92, SD= 2.74). Additionally, the homogeneity of variances was tested and satisfied via Levene's test that reveals a Sig. of (0.63) which means that the Writing approach has no effect on students' achievement. Thus, the Null hypothesis is accepted. Actually, Zamel (1982) and Rorschach (1986) reached different findings which state that when students are taught through the Genre and Process approach, their awareness about both the text structure and the process of writing raises. However, the table shows that there is no significant difference between the two groups [Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.63]. Teachers, in this respect, used different techniques from different approaches in order to attain their course objectives. Consequently, there was no focus on one single approach. Indeed, previous research studies suggest that Genre approach (Meeampol, S, 2008) and Process Approach Urzua (1987) have a positive effect on students' writing.

4.2.2. Group Differences in Terms of Scores

Table 2: Comparison between the Four Groups in the Test's Score

ANOVA

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 64.485 | 3 | 21.495 | 2.279 | .082 |
| Within Groups | 1452.503 | 154 | 9.432 | | |
| Total | 1516.987 | 157 | | | |

Descriptives

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | Minimum | Maximum |
|--------|-----|--------|----------------|------------|---------|---------|
| Group1 | 50 | 8.2600 | 2.88865 | .40852 | 2.75 | 15.25 |
| Group2 | 44 | 7.9205 | 2.74326 | .41356 | 1.75 | 13.75 |
| Group3 | 32 | 9.0703 | 3.57874 | .63264 | 2.50 | 16.00 |
| Group4 | 32 | 7.1053 | 3.22794 | .57062 | 1.25 | 13.25 |
| Total | 158 | 8.0957 | 3.10843 | .24729 | 1.25 | 16.00 |

In order to extract the differences between the four groups in the overall achievement of the writing test, ANOVA was performed. Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference between the four groups' scores ($p=0.08$). As can be concluded from the table, students from all groups achieved low means in writing. The highest mean, in this respect, belongs to Group 3 ($M=9.07$) which was taught through the Genre Approach and Process Approach. The highest score in this group is 16 while the lowest is 2.50. The teacher's approach was similar to a writing workshop as it included several activities that made students practice writing more often. Surprisingly, Group 4 which achieved the lowest score ($M=7.1$) was also introduced to Genre Approach and Process Approach. The highest score in the fourth group is 13.25 and the lowest score is 1.25. It is worth mentioning that though both teachers used the same approaches, they focused on different activities and techniques in the sense that Group 3 was trained to write during the course with the presence of feedback which was provided on a regular basis. Students used to share ideas and correct each other's mistakes. Peer feedback was highly used in this Group. By comparison, Group 4 rarely wrote during the class, it was rather a follow up activity that they should practice after the course. The focus was on the knowledge about how to write rather than the practice itself. Feedback was given once in while either from the teacher or the students themselves. These findings confirm that, in this case, teachers' approaches have no effect on students' writing achievement.

4.2.3. Group Differences in Terms of Tasks

As mentioned before, the test consisted of four different tasks that would elicit students' writing skills. Therefore, the four groups of students will be compared in terms of their performance in each task.

The first task in the writing test aimed at testing the extent to which students would manage to write a topic sentence. As a result, the four groups are to be compared, via ANOVA, so as to identify which group managed to outperform in this task.

Table 3: Comparison between Groups in the «Topic Sentence» task

ANOVA

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Squares | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|--------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 2.564 | 3 | .855 | 2.355 | .074 |
| Within Groups | 55.887 | 154 | .363 | | |
| Total | 58.451 | 157 | | | |

Descriptives

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | Minimum | Maximum |
|--------|-----|--------|----------------|------------|---------|---------|
| Group1 | 50 | 1.0100 | .69613 | .09845 | .00 | 2.00 |
| Group2 | 44 | 1.2841 | .51600 | .07779 | .00 | 2.00 |
| Group3 | 32 | 1.0469 | .57304 | .10130 | .00 | 2.00 |
| Group4 | 32 | .9609 | .58237 | .10295 | .00 | 2.50 |
| Total | 158 | 1.0839 | .61017 | .04854 | .00 | 2.50 |

Table 3 reveals the output of the ANOVA analysis and whether there is a statistically significant difference between group means. As can be seen, the significance level is ($p = .074$), which is greater than 0.05. Because of this, we can conclude that there is not a statistically significant difference between the mean of scores obtained from the first task. Thus, the approaches used by teachers have no effect on students' first task achievement.

The table also provides some useful descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, the mean of the groups (Group 1, group 2, Group 3, Group4), as well as when all groups are combined (total). In this descriptive statistics box, the highest mean belongs to Group2 ($M = 1.28$) which was taught through the Genre Approach and Product Approach. Students usually analyzed a model in terms the structure and the function of each type of sentences (Topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence). Choosing an appropriate sentence was one of the mandatory tasks that this group practiced. Moreover, the teacher spent one session to make students provide different topic sentences to different paragraphs. Since drills are the basic stages of the Product Approach, they were used mainly with this type of activity. It could be noticed that the teacher considered writing a topic sentence as one of the basic notions that the student should master. Group4, instead, achieved the lowest mean ($M = 0.96$). This group was introduced to Genre Approach and Process Approach. Though the teacher introduced students to the organization of the text and its different components, practice was not given a huge importance as far as the topic sentence task was concerned. Students were asked to provide topic sentences to different paragraphs but only once during the four sessions that were observed.

All the groups were actually familiarized with the concept of writing a topic sentence as teachers provided several examples of topic sentences which were analyzed. Obviously, writing a topic sentence was one of the clear objectives that teachers showed in their courses since they focused on it as it is the starting point of any piece of writing. Consequently, students practiced this exercise intensively and tried to write clear and concise sentences. In fact, this task took most of

the courses' time. It was considered as one of the important elements to train the students to master. It is worth mentioning that the approaches used by teachers have a shared objective which is the structure and the practice. There would be no minor differences between the users of these approaches mainly in this stage.

The second task aimed at identifying students' knowledge of the text structure based on sequence and cohesive devices. This task was given 6 points as a score. Students were expected to organize the given sentences in order to construct a well-organized paragraph. Indeed, all the groups were familiar with this type of exercises.

Table 4: Comparison between groups in the «Scrambled Sentences» task

| ANOVA | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Between Groups | 4.736 | 3 | 1.579 | .855 | .466 |
| Within Groups | 284.257 | 154 | 1.846 | | |
| Total | 288.992 | 157 | | | |

| Descriptives | | | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | Minimum | Maximum |
| Group1 | 50 | 1.5400 | 1.39181 | .19683 | .00 | 6.00 |
| Group2 | 44 | 1.8352 | 1.39031 | .20960 | .00 | 6.00 |
| Group3 | 32 | 1.6250 | 1.55543 | .27496 | .00 | 6.00 |
| Group4 | 32 | 1.3438 | 1.00352 | .17740 | .00 | 3.00 |
| Total | 158 | 1.5997 | 1.35673 | .10794 | .00 | 6.00 |

As demonstrated in Table4, there is no statistical difference between the four groups in terms of the scores of the second task which is concerned with « Scrambled Sentences ». The sig. Value is ($p= 0.46$) which is greater than 0.05 and means that teachers' approaches have no effect on students' achievement of this task. The descriptive box reveals the mean of the four groups. As can be concluded from the table, the four groups got low means in this task; Group1 ($M= 1.54$), Group2 ($M= 1.83$), Group3 ($M= 1.62$), and group4 ($M= 1.34$). The total mean is ($M= 1.59$) which is considered very low in accordance to the score which is given to the task (6points).

As far as the approaches are concerned, Group1, Group3, and Group4 were introduced to Genre Approach and Process Approach while Group2 was taught via Genre Approach and Product Approach. Students who were exposed to the same approaches did not practice this task on an equal

manner. Some teachers emphasized the importance of this task as it drives students to deduce the sequence based on the cohesive devices. The current task, in fact, elicited students' weakness to depend on deducing the sequence of the text from the content and cohesive markers which confirms that students found the task challenging.

The third task aimed at examining students' mastery of punctuation along with spotting spelling mistakes. Hence, a text with no punctuation and some spelling mistakes was provided to students. Indeed, the four groups are familiar with this exercise.

Table 5: Comparison between groups in the «Punctuation» task

ANOVA

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Squares | F | Sig |
|----------------|----------------|-----|--------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 26.294 | 3 | 8.765 | 9.556 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 141.249 | 154 | .917 | | |
| Total | 167.543 | 157 | | | |

Descriptives

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | Minimum | Maximum |
|--------|-----|--------|----------------|------------|---------|---------|
| Group1 | 50 | 1.5400 | 1.39181 | .19683 | .00 | 6.00 |
| Group2 | 44 | 1.8352 | 1.39031 | .20960 | .00 | 6.00 |
| Group3 | 32 | 1.6250 | 1.55543 | .27496 | .00 | 6.00 |
| Group4 | 32 | 1.3438 | 1.00352 | .17740 | .00 | 3.00 |
| Total | 158 | 1.5997 | 1.35673 | .10794 | .00 | 6.00 |

Concerning the « Punctuation » task, a comparison between the four groups is carried out. Table5 shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean of the four groups ($p= .000$). As a result, teachers' approaches affect students' achievement in the third task which deals with punctuation. However, it is not known which of the specific group differ from the other. Thus, a Post-hoc test is needed in order to achieve this objective.

Multiple Comparisons

| (I) Approach | (J) | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------|------------|------|
| Genre&Process Product Genre & Process Genre & Process | Genre & | ,12640 | ,19938 | ,921 |
| | Product | -,97844 | ,21702 | ,000 |
| | Genre & Process | -,25045 | ,21501 | ,650 |
| Genre & Genre&Process Genre & Process | Product | -,12640 | ,19938 | ,921 |
| | Genre&Process | -1,10483 | ,22381 | ,000 |
| | Genre & Process | -,37685 | | |

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------|--------|------|
| Genre & Process | | ,22186 | ,328 |
| Genre & Process | ,97844 | ,21702 | ,000 |
| Genre&Process | 1,10483 | ,22381 | ,000 |
| Genre & Product | ,72798 | ,23784 | ,014 |
| Genre & Process | | | |
| Genre & Process | ,25045 | ,21501 | ,650 |
| Genre&Process | ,37685 | ,22186 | ,328 |
| Genre & Product | -,72798 | ,23784 | ,014 |
| Genre & Process | | | |

In order to spot the exact groups that differ from each other, a Post-hoc test is conducted. As can be noticed in the table, there is a significant difference between Genre and Process Approach which was introduced to Group1 and Genre and Process Approach that Group3 was exposed to with a sig ($p=0.00$). For that reason, we can conclude that Group1 and Group3 are significantly different in terms of scores of the « Punctuation » task. In fact, Group1 was introduced to this task every session. It seemed that the teacher used punctuation exercises as a warm up. Group3, however, was not exposed to drills as in a direct way to make students master punctuation, but rather the teacher asked students to write their own product and check their punctuation. Moreover, students' used a checklist to correct the product of their peers, and punctuation was one of the elements they had to check and correct.

As far as the comparison between Genre and Product Approach and Genre and Process Approach is concerned, there a significant difference between the two conditions ($p=0.00$). Group2, which was taught via Genre and Product Approach, was introduced to punctuation every session. Furthermore, during the last session, the teacher provided a punctuation handout as a follow up activity. Group3, by comparison, which was introduced to Genre and Process Approach was not exposed to punctuation drills as mentioned before.

There is also a difference between Group4 and Group3 in terms of scores with a significance of ($p=0.01$). Both groups were indeed introduced to Genre Approach and Process Approach. Yet, Group4 usually had punctuation exercises along with cohesive markers to practice. The teacher considered cohesive markers as the key to make students aware of the importance of punctuation.

Obviously, Group3 outperformed the other groups in this task despite the lack of direct punctuation drills in the courses. As result, it may be concluded that drills do not make students improve their skills but practice does. To put students in the right context may raise students'

awareness of the use of punctuation. Thus, when students write their own piece of writing, they try to make it legible and try to use the right devices.

The last task aimed at examining students' ability to write a paragraph. Thus, students are required to implement a set of writing sub-skills that they learned during the sessions. Indeed, the previous tasks should be implemented in this exercise. That is to say, students are required to write a topic sentence, follow a sequence of events, and respect punctuation with the appropriate use of cohesive markers.

Table 6: Comparison between Groups in the «Paragraph Writing» Task

ANOVA

| | Sum of Sqaures | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| Between Groups | 32.492 | 3 | 10.831 | 3.919 | .010 |
| Within Groups | 425.560 | 154 | 2.763 | | |
| Total | 458.052 | 157 | | | |

Descriptives

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | Minimum | Maximum |
|--------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Group1 | 50 | 4.4700 | 1.23060 | .17403 | 2.00 | 7.25 |
| Group2 | 44 | 3.6591 | 1.74133 | .26252 | .00 | 6.75 |
| Group3 | 32 | 4.1250 | 1.88692 | .33356 | .75 | 7.00 |
| Group4 | 32 | 3.2813 | 1.88879 | .33389 | .50 | 7.50 |
| Total | 158 | 3.9335 | 1.70808 | .13589 | .00 | 7.50 |

So as to test the hypothesis that teachers' approaches have an effect on the different tasks of the writing test, ANOVA was performed which shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the four groups in terms of the scores of the fourth task ($p = .01$). The difference among groups, nonetheless, is not known which requires a Post-hoc test.

Multiple Comparisons

| (I) Approach | (J) Approach | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Genre & Process | Genre & Product | ,81091 | ,34362 | ,089 |
| Genre & Process | Genre & Process | ,34500 | ,37633 | ,796 |
| Genre & Process | Genre & Process | 1,18875 | ,37633 | ,010 |

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------|--------|------|
| Genre & Product | -,81091 | ,34362 | ,089 |
| Genre & Process | -,46591 | ,38621 | ,624 |
| Genre & Process | ,37784 | ,38621 | ,762 |
| Genre & Process | -,34500 | ,37633 | ,796 |
| Genre & Process | ,46591 | ,38621 | ,624 |
| Genre & Product | ,84375 | ,41559 | ,181 |
| Genre & Process | -,18875 | ,37633 | ,010 |
| Genre & Process | -,37784 | ,38621 | ,762 |
| Genre & Product | -,84375 | ,41559 | ,181 |
| Genre & Process | | | |

The significance ($p=0.01$) corresponds to comparison between the same approaches, Genre Approach and Process Approach, that were implemented in two different groups by two different teachers. Consequently, Group1 and Group4 are significantly different in terms of scores of the fourth task. Both teachers introduced the course with Genre approach in order to provide students with text structure. According to Taylor and Beach (1984), text structure knowledge is important as students may adopt the structure in their essays and then have an organized product. Then, both teachers used the Process Approach to familiarize students with the process of writing. The difference may be due to the way text structure is introduced. Church and Breiter (1983) found that instructing students to pay attention to style had little or no effect on their writing. Making them, however, compare passages raises their awareness about the differences of styles. Students might be exposed to the same approach but in a different manner which could affect their writing product.

Another reason that makes the same approaches result in different scores are the techniques used to teach writing. Techniques varied from one teacher to the other. Group4, in fact, focused on text structure as it was a kind of warm up in every session. It is true that awareness about text structure is needed in writing, students yet need also to practice and be familiar with other processes that go along with writing such as planning, writing the first draft, revising and editing, and writing the final version. In a study conducted in Iran, it was found that both Genre-based Approach and Process-based Approach have positive effect on students' writing achievement among Iranian learners. The Genre Approach enables students to improve their linguistic knowledge such as grammar and vocabulary along with understanding linguistics forms and their functions and organization. By comparison, the Process Approach enables students to practice writing repeatedly with different purposes and a focus on revising, editing, and rewriting. The difference between these groups that were taught via the same approaches may be due the frequency of using one

approach over the other. That is to say, teachers emphasized the analysis of the text, or the writing and rewriting of the same paper and providing feedback.

These results allowed answering the four questions upon which the study was built. Concerning Moulay Ismail University teachers, they adopt different approaches to teach writing skills. More importantly, they adapt the approaches to their objectives and their students' needs as well. They select the appropriate technique for each activity. Thus, no single approach was used in isolation, but rather a combination of techniques from different approaches. The basic question was, therefore, answered: the approaches had no effect on students' writing achievement. As for the different tasks of the test, there was a significant difference between Group 1 and Group 2, Group 1 and Group3, and Group 1 and Group 4. These differences reveal that the approach adopted by teachers affect students achievement particularly in the "Punctuation" and "Paragraph Writing" tasks which are the ultimate objective of the writing course. The difference occurred because of the approaches adopted by teachers– Genre and Process Approaches or Genre and Product Approaches-. Another reason behind this difference may be the frequency of using one approach over the other in a certain class. That is to say, teachers may adopt the same approaches but use one of them more than the other. They would prefer to give more attention to the text structure and follow the Genre Approach techniques, or emphasize the processes through which writing should go and provide more time to brainstorming, writing, revising, and peer editing, and rewriting the final draft.

5. Conclusions and Implications

This sections includes conclusions and implications for researchers and teachers.

5.1. Conclusions

This study investigated the effect of writing approaches used by university teachers on students' writing achievement. So as to achieve the objective of this study, two instruments were used to collect data; structured and unstructured observation and a writing test which contained four tasks. The study took place in Moulay Ismail University. Teachers actually opted for different techniques from different approaches. Yet, there was a massive use of Genre approach, Process approach, and Product approach. Surprisingly, other approaches which are agreed upon in the literature to be useful -such as the WAC model, EAP, ESP, and the Whole Language Approach- were not used. The results showed that the different approaches used have an effect on students'

writing achievement only in the scores of some tasks. As a matter of fact, the effect was obvious in one of the tasks of the test which was concerned with paragraph writing and punctuation.

5.2. Implications

Given the limited time provided to this research, several interesting questions are left unanswered. Thus, more field work is needed to find answers to the following inquiries. First, the reasons behind the low means students get in the writing test. Second, the objectives behind adopting certain approaches or selecting techniques from different approaches. Third, teachers' awareness of the different writing approaches that exist and can be implemented. Fourth, the extent to which teachers take into consideration both students' level and needs in preparing the writing course. Finally, the extent to which the university writing course supplement the high school objectives and thus students' level.

A number of recommendations related to the teaching of writing at university can be extracted from this research. First, more time should be given to the teaching of writing and the paralinguistic knowledge about writing, particularly during the first semester. In this respect, teaching writing is to be based on needs analysis. Hence, students' problems should be the starting point of the writing course objectives. Additionally, the teaching of writing can be implemented under a course of integrating skills which would be based on both reading and writing. Thus, students would enhance different competencies and strategies in both reading and writing. There might be an absence of coordination among teachers of writing themselves. It would enable teachers to create unified courses that respond to students' needs. The training would make the course more unified as well since the teachers would be exposed to the same approaches and share their students' needs. Teachers would benefit from this training and make students involved in the task of writing and rewriting more than the knowledge about writing. Students in this sense would be encouraged to learn by doing. Another issue that is worth mentioning is writing textbooks which should be carefully selected or designed with the help of syllabus designers. Teachers seem to be unfamiliar with the different approaches that exist to teach writing. Actually, only three approaches were adopted, Genre Approach, Process Approach, and Product Approach. In this respect, training on teaching writing should be available for teachers who plan to teach writing skills.

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