

Yazma Becerilerini Ölçmede Bazı Yeni Teknikler

Introducing Some New Techniques To Test Writing Skills

Nilgün YORGANCI*

* G. Ü. Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bölümü

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada yazma becerileri sınavlarında kullanılması amacıyla birkaç teknik önerilmiştir. Şu anda yazma becerileri sınavlarında kullanılan teknikler öğrencileri istenildiği gibi yazılar üretmelerini sağlamaktan çok uzaktır. Bu çalışmanın amacı yazma becerileri sınavlarında daha yönlendirici teknikler kullanma yoluyla güdüleri yüksek öğrencilerin daha güdülenmiş, kendilerine daha güvenli olmaları ve iyi organize edilmiş ve iyi geliştirilmiş paragrafların yanı sıra makaleler de üretmelerini sağlamaktır. Bu amacı gerçekleştirmek için verilen her yazı türü için bir teknik sunulmuştur.

ABSTRACT

This study provides some new techniques to be used in testing writing. The techniques that are currently used to test writing are far from motivating and/or encouraging students to produce written pieces as required. It is believed that if more directional techniques are used in writing tests, students will be far more motivated and confident beforehand, and will be able to produce well-organised and well-developed essays as well as paragraphs. Taking this into consideration a new technique is suggested for each type mentioned in this article.

1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary EFL teaching "Teaching Writing" has an important place. There are two major reasons for this emphasis. The first one can be clarified by the following slogan: **"Don't wait until learners have learned to write. Help them write to learn"**. That is, they should write frequently in order to improve their foreign language. The second is that writing involves not only vocabulary and grammar but the production and the organisation of ideas in the other language as well.

As the new emphasis is on content and organization, the contemporary teacher's task is to encourage students to produce well-developed and well-organised essays. In writing classes, students are taught various kinds of rhetorical patterns as well as techniques to achieve coherence and unity in writing. Hence, in testing writing students' products are expected to be well-developed and well-organised. The most fashionable way of testing writing is to give a few topics in relation with the rhetorical patterns and composition skills that have been taught during the class hours, and have them choose one of them and write a paragraph or an essay.

During those types of tests, students have two tasks to achieve; the first is to produce some ideas, and the second is to organise those ideas in order to achieve coherence and unity. This is unfair because in a limited depressing period of time, while feeling great anxiety, how can a teacher expect students to accomplish two challenging tasks? What harm could be done if they are given some help, at least while organising the ideas they are expected to produce? Writing takes place in every phase of people's lives and they are usually free of time limitation. Moreover, they get help from related books and dictionaries for formal writings. While this is the fact, what is the use of demotivating the students and making them hate the writing process?

As teachers we should encourage students to write freely, to write what they think and what they want to say, and help them develop confidence over the language they are learning.

Almost 100 % success is guaranteed if some help is provided for the organisation. Because of the points mentioned above, it is strongly claimed that if the teachers of EFL give more detailed instructions that help students organise their writings during the

process of testing, they will be far better-motivated, far better-enthusiastic and will thus be able to produce far better-sophisticated writings.

In this article several instruction techniques to test writing skills are presented. The instructions may seem extremely helpful and long but be sure that they will not mean a lot to the students, especially to the ones who are not good at writing even in their own mother language.

2. LET'S MEET A NEW TECHNIQUE TO TEST PARAGRAPH WRITING

2.1. The Traditional Technique

The most common way of asking students to write a paragraph is similar to the one given below:

INSTRUCTION

Choose one of the following topics and write a well-developed paragraph. It should include about 150 words.

Topic: Write a paragraph:

1. About a frightening or amusing experience you have once had (Narrative)
2. Describing the area you live in (Descriptive)

Some instructions are a little more detailed:

INSTRUCTION

Choose one of the following topics and write a well-developed paragraph. Before starting to write your paragraph, write the topic sentence, underline the controlling idea, and outline your paragraph.

2.2. A Suggested Technique

This instruction technique is far more detailed and guides students far better:

INSTRUCTION

Follow the steps given below and write a well-organised narrative or descriptive paragraph:

Topics: Write a paragraph:

1. About a frightening or amusing experience you have once had
2. Describing the area you live in.

Before Writing

1. Choose one of the topics above.
2. Produce a topic sentence with a controlling idea.
3. Make an outline
 - develop at least two major supporters that support the controlling idea.
 - develop minor supporters that support the major supporters if you feel necessary.

While Writing

1. If you write a narrative paragraph, pay attention to chronological development and show the time relationship between sentences by using time sequence expressions.
2. If you write a descriptive paragraph, pay attention to spatial organisation, and use adjectives and adjectival clauses for the descriptions.
3. Write a concluding sentence.

After Writing

1. Check to see if your paragraph is coherent and unified and tell why/why not.

Each type of paragraph requires a different organisation. The steps in the instructions are given according to the type of the paragraph the students are asked to write in the exam.

3. SOME NEW TECHNIQUES SUGGESTED TO TEST ESSAY WRITING**3.1. The Traditional Technique for "The Classification Essay" and****"The Comparison and Contrast Essay".**

The most common instruction is as follows:

INSTRUCTION

Choose one of the following topics. Make an outline and write a well-developed classification or comparison and contrast essay.

Topics:***Classification Essay***

1. Children
2. Transformation
3. Television Programmes

Comparison and Contrast Essay

1. Two Famous Turkish Politicians
2. Two Means of Transportation
3. Two Regions in Türkiye

**3.1.1. An Improved Technique for "The Classification Essay" and
"The Comparison and Contrast Essay"**

INSTRUCTION

Before Writing

1. Choose one of the topics given below and develop a thesis statement with a central idea (not implied)
2. Make an outline
For each developmental paragraph:
 - Write a topic sentence with a controlling idea.
 - Write the subtopics in the forms of words, phrases or clauses

While Writing

1. Write a standard introductory paragraph placing the thesis statement at the end or near the end of it.
2. In your "**classification essay**" clarify your "**principle of classification**" (make sure that one member that appears in one group should not fit into another one and that there will be three groups to be analysed.)
3. In your "Comparison and Contrast Essay" follow either "**Pattern A**" (Point-by-point) or "**Pattern B**" (All of One / All of the Other) [There should be at least three points of comparison and you should focus more on either comparison or contrast].
4. Write a concluding paragraph.

After Writing

Answer the following questions after completing your essay:

1. Is your essay coherent? Unified? Why? / Why not?
2. Is your introductory paragraph inviting? Why? / Why not?
3. Is your conclusion logical? Why? / Why not?

Topics:**Classification Essay**

1. Children
2. Transportation
3. Television Programmes

Comparison and Contrast Essay

1. Two famous Turkish politicians
2. Two means of transportation
3. Two regions of Türkiye

3.2. The Traditional Technique for "The Process Analysis Essay"**INSTRUCTION**

Choose one of the topics given below and write a well-developed process analysis essay.

Topics:

1. How to fix a flat tire
2. What to do in case of an accident
3. How to make a hamburger
4. How something is made

3.2.1. A Suggested Technique for "The Process Analysis Essay"

Instead of giving a number of topics to be chosen by the student, a completely different technique can be used. This kind of writing will be guided-writing because the process is presented to the student in the form of a dialogue and s/he is asked to write the process in the form of an essay. However, it should not be thought as a simple task since the student should be qualified enough to put the process into the form of an essay.

INSTRUCTION

Making use of the dialogue given below, write the process of making a hamburger in the form of a process analysis essay.

Before Writing

1. Make a list of all the steps in this process.
2. While planning, your essay, keep in mind the points given below:

- be aware of the audience
- order the steps chronologically
- make sure that the process is complete
- be sure to define new or unfamiliar terms
- warn your reader of difficulties in the process
- explain the purpose of a step when necessary
- try to make your thesis statement persuasive

(These pieces of advice are taken from Smally, R. L. & Hank, M. R. 1982).

3. Divide the actual steps of the process into three or four major sections and make an outline.

While Writing

1. Establish the purpose for writing the process in your introduction
2. Check to see if the process is complete.
3. Is your paragraph coherent? Unified? Why? / Why not?
4. Is your conclusion logical? Why? / Why not?

Note: The audience is a newly-married, inexperienced woman

How To Make Hamburgers?

A: Have you tried cooking Chinese fried rice?

B: Yes, I made it last Saturday, just the way you told me to make it.

A: How did it taste?

B: Not as good as yours, but we all liked it. All except my teenagers.

A: Oh., hamburgers! My children keep asking for hamburgers. I get so tired of hearing about hamburgers.

B: I know what you mean. I get tired of making them.

A: How do you make them? I suppose I should learn how.

B: They're very simple, compared to your food.

A: What kind of meat do you buy?

B: Some kind of ground beef. I usually ask for either ground sirloin or ground round steak. It's more expensive than ground chuck, but it has less fat.

A: How much do you buy?

B: A pound makes four big hamburgers.

A: What do you mix with the ground beef?

- B:** I just add a little salt, some pepper, and sometimes a little chopped onion. Some people don't like it with onions, but I do.
- A:** So you mix the salt and pepper and onions with the ground beef.
- B:** Yes, and divide the mixture into balls. Then make the balls into patties.
- A:** What is a patty?
- B:** You just press down on a ball and make it flat. Patties are flattened balls. If you want to get more than four patties out of your pound of meat, just make the patties thinner but don't handle the meat too much.
- A:** Why not?
- B:** Because it will make the hamburgers tough. They'll be hard and tough.
- A:** Then I suppose you cook them on top of the stove.
- B:** Yes, in a hot frying pan. Put some butter in the pan and let it melt. Then put the hamburger patties in.
- A:** How long do you cook them?
- B:** That depends on how you like them. Some people like them rare-red inside.
- A:** I don't like them rare.
- B:** If you like them medium or well-done, cook them longer.
- A:** Then you put them between pieces of bread.
- B:** Most people use special rolls. You put the hamburger inside the big roll, and serve it with ketchup and pickles. I let my family spread ketchup on their own hamburgers, if they want it.
- A:** Is that all you need to do?
- B:** That's all.

(Encores: Virginia French Allen United States Information Agency Washington D.C. 1984, page: 29)

3.3. The Traditional Technique for "The Causal Essay" and "The Effect - Analysis Essay"

INSTRUCTION

Choose one of the following topics and write a well-developed "Causal Essay".

Topics:

1. What causes poor people from rural areas to move to big cities?
2. What caused you to select the English Language Teaching Department?

3. Select a bad habit you have, and explain what caused you have that bad habit.

INSTRUCTION

Choose one of the following topics and write a well-developed "Effect Analysis" Essay.

Topics:

1. What are some effects of smoking cigarettes?
2. In what ways has entering your department affected you?
3. Discuss the effects of a political or social change in our country?

3.3.1. Producing Real Masterpieces with a New Technique for

"The Causal Analysis Essay" and "The Effect Analysis Essay"

INSTRUCTION

Choose one of the following topics and write a "Causal Analysis" essay.

Topics:

1. What causes poor people from rural areas to move to big cities?
2. What caused you to select the English Language Teaching Department?
3. Select a bad habit you have, and explain what caused you have that bad habit.

Before Writing

1. Select three causes for the effect
2. Make an outline
3. Write complete sentences for each cause

While Writing

1. Devote a paragraph for each cause
2. Use the sentences you have produced as the topic sentences of your developmental paragraphs.
3. Give good detail and support for your generalisation.

After Writing

Answer the following questions:

1. Have you discussed immediate and remote causes or the causes of equal importance?
2. Is your essay coherent? Unified? Why? / Why not?

INSTRUCTION

Choose one of the following topics and write an "Effect Analysis Essay".

Topics:

1. What are some effects of smoking cigarettes?
2. In what ways has entering our department affected you?
3. Discussion the effects of a political or social change in our country?

Before Writing

1. Select three effects for the cause.
2. Make an outline
3. Write complete sentences for each effect.

While Writing

1. Devote a paragraph for each effect.
2. Use the sentences you produced as the topic sentences of your developmental paragraphs.
3. Give good detail and support for your generalisation.

After Writing

1. Have you discussed immediate and remote effects, or the effects of equal importance? Explain briefly.
2. Is your essay coherent? Unified? Why? / Why not?

4. CONCLUSION

Some instruction techniques of testing paragraphs and essay writing have been presented in this paper. Because of the fact that "writing" examinations usually tend to increase the stress and tension of the students, those techniques will certainly guide them to organise their ideas about the topics they have chosen much more easily and lessen the test anxiety. Through detailed guiding, the teachers will be encouraging them to write far better and more enthusiastically. Furthermore, the most important point is that they will like to write; that is, they will be highly motivated to write to learn.

In order to make the students more productive, it is reasonable to simplify their tasks but not to show them deep dark holes with many canals and ask them to find the ways which lead to the surface on the other side.

Another strong claim is that even the teachers themselves will enjoy while reading the real masterpieces their students will have produced.

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