

Teaching Practices Used for Developing Writing Skills at Secondary School Level: A Qualitative Exploration

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Abstract

Teaching practices for developing students' writing skills perform a great role at every level of education. This paper explores and compares the teaching of English writing skills at secondary education streams i.e. Matriculation and O level in Pakistan. Sample was selected from private schools of Lahore city conducting Matriculation and O level concurrently. Twelve private schools were selected through random sampling technique. From these twelve schools one teacher of Matriculation and one teacher of O level were selected to collect data. Interviews were conducted from teachers of these schools to explore the teaching practices for developing writing skills at secondary education streams. The comparison between the views of teachers at Matriculation and O level resulted that the teachers at O level perform more proactively with their students on their engagement in English classrooms and choose the appropriate method of assessment for their students. There are more brainstorming practices, feedback practices, extensive reading and process oriented writing at O level. On contrary, for developing writing skills teachers of Matriculation mostly use written clues, memorization without developing creativity, criticality and generating ideas. They rely on text books for teaching writing. The recommendations are made to the relevant authorities.

Keywords: *Writing, Teaching of English, Secondary Education.*

Introduction

Writing is an important part of communication with others. Through writing individuals convey their messages and read others text. It has great contribution in persons' personal and professional field because it allows to communicate with clarity to a larger audience. Since this study is based on responses of teachers from two streams one is Matriculation run by both public and private sector secondary schools whereas O level is run by private secondary schools in Pakistan.

Matriculation examinations are conducted by Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISEs) in respective provinces of Pakistan whereas O level examinations are being conducted by Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) UK. As the future prospects the students graduating from both the streams are almost same in Pakistan for continuing their education in Higher Secondary Schools. They have to compete each other for admission into higher secondary education. It is obvious that if they have the same future prospects then they need the same type of knowledge and skills to be imparted at Matriculation and O level.

The curriculum aims to develop creativity, enquiry and problem solving Under revised curriculum of 2006, English remained compulsory with marks of 150 (Government of Pakistan,2006). There are two papers of English at SSC (for 9th and 10th classes). Each paper contains reading and writing simultaneously. Weightage of each papers is 75 (19 marks for objective paper and 56 for subjective paper. So the total marks for the subject of English is 150 for both 9th and 10th class.

Curriculum of Cambridge O level for English language consists of two papers of “Reading” and “Writing” with 100 marks in total. The aims of the O-level curriculum of English are to enable candidates to communicate effectively in Standard English ability to communicate with clarity and variety; creatively; critical skills and cross-cultural awareness related with issues inside and outside own community (University of Cambridge,2019). The comparison of the curriculum of Matriculation and O level show that apparently there is no difference in the intended learning outcomes of both streams for developing writing.

Teaching practices includes the knowledge and skills in order to make teaching effective (Carrington, Deppler& Moss, 2010).It is considered the art and science of arranging knowledge so that it may easily be grasped in a continuous process (Berstein, 2000). Although selection of teaching practices includes teacher, curriculum, students and suitable learning environment but teachers have a key role in selecting suitable practices. Through practice writing learners are given opportunities for the development of writing skills. Traditional practices are not acknowledged because it leads to less concentration on the writing process. Teaching rules of capitalization, punctuation, spellings are included in traditional practices (Richardson, 2002).

Graham and Perin (2007) highlighted the importance of group work. They discussed that when students work with their peers it results in effective writing. Similarly, they identified that more teachers’ direction develops lack of independence because they do not rely on their own work. Cole & Feng (2015) and Fareed, Jawed and Awan (2018) suggested that feedback is an indispensable tool for improving writing. Writing skills can be enhanced by providing information to students on the performance of their work. Through feedback the writer learns where he or she has mislead. Vocabulary plays a great role in any writing text. Appropriate use of words plays a charismatic role in any writing. Vocabulary of second language learners is not enriched because of little exposure to the English language. They do not feel at ease during writing. Complete the writing assignments is another practices in which students get information from books, internet and participate in discussions to complete the tasks. It is noted that inspite of recognizing the importance of English in Pakistan very little efforts have been made for teaching of English more effective. There may be many reasons for low proficiency in English as most of the classrooms are under resourced, and teachers use grammar translation method. Mostly in classrooms teachers use Urdu to teach English (Naeem, 2011; Akhtar & Fatima, 2015).

Mirza, Nosheen and Nasir (1999) and Nirmla (2008) examined teaching styles of teachers and found that teachers of O level were better than SSC in lesson planning, communication skills and providing opportunities for student participation. It was also found that SSC teachers were neglecting students’ participation in classroom. Lecture, recitation and translation methods were also used mostly in class as claimed by teachers of SSC for teaching prose, poetry, and grammar and composition. Teachers of O level claimed the use of deductive method with recitation and discussion supplemented by drill. By considering the factors responsible for the achievement of English writing skills, this study was designed to determine teaching practices at secondary school level for developing writing skill.

Purpose of the Study

Research shows that students of O level have much better language skills in terms of communication in English, level of knowledge and understanding. They are creative, critical and analytical as compared to Matriculation. Although both are having almost same objectives but there is difference between their achievement and the use of teaching practices therefore, the focus of the present research has been on the

use of teaching practices for developing writing skills of students of Matriculation and O level in English writing classrooms.

Research Approach Used

Qualitative research was used to get in-depth investigation about the effectiveness of the teaching practices at Matriculation and O level. The current study is qualitative in nature. It deals with the exploration of teaching practices at secondary level. The study used interview protocol for teachers to determine teaching practices in English writing classes at Matriculation and O level. Purposive sampling was used to select the schools. After the selection of schools, one section of SSC and O level was taken from the same school. For selection of sample. Construct validity of semi structured interview protocol was ensured by the experts. The interviews were conducted with English teachers, teaching Matriculation and O level for developing writing skills.

In the piloting phase of the study, four teachers were interviewed, in accordance with the interview questions, two from Matriculation and two from O level. Each interview took 20 minutes to complete and all participants were agreed to participate in interviewing. The purpose of the pilot study was to refine the procedure and questions clarity for ensuring the wording and sequence of questions and to check that how well the particular research instrument will go and how much time it will take to complete the interview. In the light of the teachers' responses and expert opinion some questions were modified. For final data collection 24 teachers were selected (12 from Matriculation 12 from O level) through purposive sampling. Recorded interviews were listened several times to transcribe in an accurate way. The transcription provided initial picture of interview data and findings shed light on the emerging themes from interviews. Interview transcripts were read and reread to find the meanings and clarify the themes emerging from the interviews. After transcribing, interview transcripts were given to individual teacher to check and inform anything could be edited further.

The following key was used for analysing the teachers' responses on qualitative data.

10 to 12 Almost all the participants

7 to 9 Most of the participants

4 to 6 Some of the participants

1 to 3 A few participants

Findings

According to the interview data, interviewees were of the views that generating and organizing ideas by students are very important for developing writing skill. Furthermore, teachers emphasized that they use different practices in English writing classrooms for improving vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Generation of Ideas

According to the interview data, teachers of Matriculation (TMs) and teachers of O level (TOs) use different practices in English writing classrooms which help students generating ideas for their writing. Teachers said that for development of ideas they involve their students in their own observation. They also use brainstorming, extensive reading and discussion. Moreover, they provide written clues to students regarding the topic to get help while writing. Sometimes they assign topic one day before so that they can come up with their ideas.

Observation

TMs (5 out of 12) reported that they give topic one day before, involve their students in observing things around them so that they can come in class with variety of ideas. TM2 articulated, 'for developing writing skills, i provide an idea or thought to the students one day before. Then we come to the writing side like they can take help from observation, or some of the information which is already in their knowledge. If they generate ideas from their routine life then they are more motivated in writing.

Five teachers of Matriculation claim that they involve their students frequently in 'observation' of things for generating ideas. According to them this is very useful practices for students. However teachers of O level do not use these practices for generating ideas. They consider that observing the things is less important rather they use other practices for generating ideas.

Brainstorming

TMs, 5 out of 12, said that they engage their students in brainstorming ideas. Through brainstorming they capture different ideas by using their own thinking. It also helps in developing creativity among students.

TM6 described 'Through brainstorming, students tell me about their personal experience. They also use their imaginations regarding a particular topic and ideas'. TOs (8 out of 12) as reported in interviews use different practices of getting the ideas for students' writing. Teachers involve their students in brainstorming and encourage them to discuss their ideas with one another and with the teacher.

TO2 clarified, 'i normally discuss the topic in the class and give students an opportunity to brainstorm and share different ideas. I encourage their ideas so that more ideas come into their minds. Students prepare list by gathering variety of ideas'.

Teachers of both streams (five teachers of Matriculation and eight teachers of O level) prefer 'brainstorming' as a useful practices for generating ideas. They make an outline through brainstorming ideas by using personal experiences, imaginations, and discussions. However, there is more use of this practices at O level classrooms as compared to Matriculation.

Extensive Reading

Teachers of both streams realize the importance of extensive reading but teachers of Matriculation do not involve their students in process of extensive reading due to examination format.

'I motivate students to cultivate the habit of reading but there is prescribed format of examination which we have to follow'. (TM5)

TOs (6 out of 12) articulated that reading is very important so that students feel free to write on any topic.

'I try to inculcate the habit of reading in students. I motivate them to read a lot. If they are good in reading their exposure becomes broader and definitely they would be good in writing'. (TO7)

Five teachers of O level use this practice for bringing up their students with good writing skills. Students are supposed to engage themselves in 'extensive reading'. Teachers ask them to read novels, magazines and newspapers for getting ideas so that their exposure may be broader about the things around them which also helps in getting ideas about a topic assigned to them. Teachers of Matriculation, however, do not use this practices for generating ideas. They rely on other methods for their students in gathering ideas i.e. Observation, written clues.

Written Clues

TMs (7 out of 12) described that they provide written clues to students for formulating an outline. Those words and phrases help students to plan their writing. In this way, they convey students about different ideas on which they can write about.

'I like to give them certain hints and clues regarding the topic assigned to them. If they have to write an essay on My Hobby, I would like to give them special words or sentences and inform them that you can use these sentences and phrases in their essays or any genre'. (TM6)

One teacher of O level, TO11, explained that he/she provide a prompt or thinking word to the students. Students think and gather their ideas. After collecting ideas they discuss their ideas for getting more clarity and become able to write about something.

'I provide them a prompt and sometimes thinking words or sentences then we discuss about it. Students share their own ideas. In this way they list variety of ideas'. (TO11)

Seven teachers of Matriculation and one teacher of O level reported that they use 'written clues' in English writing classroom for generation of ideas. Teachers of Matriculation use 'written clues' regarding the topic assigned to them. They expect from their students that if they provide written clues to them then their students will not feel any difficulty while writing about particular topic. On the other hand, one teacher of O level reported that I provide them a thinking word/phrase or sentence and ask students to share their ideas with each other.

Organization of ideas

According to the interview data, TMs and TOs use idea map and involve students organizing the outline by keeping in mind the logical sequence. They engage their students in group work and also emphasize the importance of extensive reading to understand the sequence of writing.

Teaching logical sequence by giving assignments

TMs, 7 out of 12, told that they encourage their students to follow a logical sequence for organizing ideas and give them assignments. They encourage their students to give reasons why they have arranged these points in order of importance.

For example:

if they are writing a creative essay on a topic like 'My Hobby' or 'My School' so I tell them that first you are supposed to give the little introduction of that topic, after that you just giving the detail of topic and at the end you must conclude with your point of view. I ask them that there should be connectivity between the events so that empty holes in the story can be filled. (TM10)

TO (9 out of 12) reported that they involve students to arrange the points according to the degree of importance and students elaborate it in a logical sequence in their work assigned to them.

For example:

'In O level, every writing has a particular format. Students have to drill the format. We give them different practice sessions for particular genre. If they are writing I teach them how to write introduction, main body and conclusion. I also monitor them when they are sequencing their ideas'. (TO12)

Interview data regarding 'organization of ideas' revealed that some of the teachers(six teachers) of Matriculation and nine teachers of O level follow the logical sequence for organizing ideas depending upon

the learning styles of the students. Teachers of Matriculation teach their students to arrange the points according to the degree of importance. It is important to note that one teacher said he/she involves students in creative writing but the essays which he/she used to give to students were 'My hobby' or 'My school' which was taken from their book and usually students memorize it and there is no creativity involved. On the other hand teachers of O level give them complete steps they need to follow. They teach their students about introduction, main body and concluding paragraph. They teach their students when and where they have to make paragraphs and how many minimum sentences should be in paragraph. They also conduct practice sessions for organizing ideas.

Group Work

Only TM11 reported that they rarely help their students organizing the outline through discussion in groups.

I am not in the position to arrange group work in classroom because I am teaching to 9th and 10th. In Matriculation there is very short time for other activities so we focus on prescribed syllabus. (TM11).

TOs (3 out of 12) considered group work a key practices for organizing ideas. They involve their students in discussing concepts, their organization and number of paragraphs in their writing.

TO2 pointed out, 'I ask students to form groups, discuss points and arrange it. During discussion whenever I get a new point, I chalk it on board and ask them to list it in a proper place'.

It seems that teachers of Matriculation do not conduct 'discussions' in groups about the organization of the content. Three teachers of O level reported that students arrange the prepared outlines in groups. During discussion new points are also added in the outline to make it more enrich. In the same way students also come to know with the help of teacher which points should come first.

Extensive Reading

Two out of 12 teachers of Matriculation stated that they understand the need of 'extensive reading' for students. According to them 'extensive reading' is important for students to organize ideas but due to shortage of time sometimes teachers ignore this practices because they have to learn the important concepts given in text books in prescribed time.

Although extensive reading is very important to help students organizing ideas but in Matriculation we ignore this practices due to shortage of time. Students organize ideas themselves according to the degree of importance. (TM5)

Two out of 12 teachers of O level thought that extensive reading is very important for students to clarify their concepts of organization.

TO7 articulated, ' Well, for organizing ideas we ask the students to read as much as they can, so that when they read the essays, articles or stories of the professional writers, then their writing improves. '.

A few teachers of O level (two teachers) reported that they engage their students in 'extensive reading'. Through reading they are able to develop sense to organize their ideas. Teachers of Matriculation prefer other practices over 'extensive reading' due to shortage of time because in textbooks there are no such tasks that deal with extensive reading for organizing ideas.

Language facility and Conventions

Developing Vocabulary

TMs and TOs pointed out that for development of vocabulary teachers' use different practices e.g. they tell students to use their own observation, provide key words and meanings, develop the habit of extensive reading, learn from their personal experiences and from social media.

Observation

One teacher of Matriculation pointed out that they develop students' vocabulary by observing the things from their daily life. They also provide them words with their meanings.

For example:

'I always make my students learn that if you are travelling in a bus then you should observe sign boards and other things. There are some specific words that you read like "Frost Juice". I ask students what is the meaning of Frost. In this way I make my students improve their vocabulary'. (TM1)

Only one teacher of Matriculation reported that their students use 'observation' for developing vocabulary. Rest of the teachers of Matriculation do not use this technique for developing vocabulary. However no teachers of O level use this practices for developing vocabulary.

Words and Meanings

TMs (8 out of 12) provide their students list of words with meanings so that they can memorize difficult words and use in their writing to make the writing more clear.

TM3 pointed out, 'I usually provide them notes with their meanings so that they can memorize it. When they memorize it they can use in their writings'.

While TOs, 6 out of 12, mentioned that they provide the words with their meanings, write idiomatic expression so that students can use in their writing. While TO12 reported that his/her students do not memorize the words because it is advanced level.

'I provide them sample writings containing vocabulary and good expression e.g. well written essay, letter or story to enrich their vocabulary. They maintain their vocabulary journal also and share new words with class fellows who help to polish their vocabulary'. (TO3)

Most of teachers (eight teachers) of Matriculation and some of the teachers (six teachers) of O level give words with their meanings and ask students to learn their meanings for developing vocabulary. Although teachers of O level also use words and meanings but they also give them sample writing and expression to make the writing effective. Students take out difficult words from that writing and prepare their own list of words to improve vocabulary.

Extensive reading

Two teachers of Matriculation have the views that they develop the habit of extensive reading in students so that they can come up with new vocabulary.

TM8 informed, 'I love for my students to go through the newspapers, stories, novels and essays etc. By using extensive reading practices they can easily enhance their vocabulary'.

TOs (7 out of 12) reported that teacher involve students in extensive reading for the development of vocabulary.

'I encourage my students to read more to learn new words of vocabulary to make their writing outstanding'. (TO 3)

Few teachers of Matriculation (two teachers) and most of the teachers of O level (seven teachers) use 'extensive reading' for developing vocabulary. According to the teachers of O level this technique is wonderful for enhancing students' vocabulary because when they go through the process of taking out difficult words from piece of writing they themselves learn and retain the meaning.

Improving spelling

TMs and TOs reported that for improving spelling teachers give examples of words that are similar in pronunciation but different in spelling, gives feedback on their written work, get students memorize the spelling through drill.

Exemplification

Two out of 12 teachers of Matriculation articulated that he/she provides examples from daily life for students' improvement in spelling to reduce their errors.

For example:

TM3 exemplified, 'I give them words from our daily routine life like the difference between Principal and principle. I explain them "Principal" stands for the head of institution, in this way I correct them.'

Few teachers of Matriculation (two teachers) mentioned that they give examples from their real life to teach the spellings. They apply these words in classrooms to give the concept of the difficult word and the words that have the same pronunciation but different in spellings. However no teachers of O level use this practices for improving spelling.

Drilling

TMs (7 out of 12) described that spellings are taught through memorization.

'I give my students some prominent words that I always want for them to use those words in the particular topic which I had assigned to them. This thing helps them in two ways, first they are good in writing and secondly they are very much familiar with the meaning of those words. I give them 70 to 80 words for memorization in a week'. (TM8)

TOs (3 out of 12) recognizes that memorizing spellings are very important to reduce their errors in writing.

'If students are making errors in spellings I give them writing punishments that they are supposed to write 10 times. That helps in memorizing the spellings'. (TO3)

Seven teachers of Matriculation use drill for learning spelling. Only three teacher of O level consider drill to memorize spellings a useful practice. It is obvious that teachers of both systems use drill to learn spelling but there is frequent use at Matriculation.

Quizzes

TMs (2 out of 12) discussed that they arrange quizzes in classrooms so that students can learn spellings through competition.

TM8 articulated, '..... For ensuring their learning I use quiz method. I use this method by telling them the wrong spellings of words in order to find out the right one. You know there is famous proverb 'tell a lie and find the truth' so sometimes I love to use this quotation in my mind'.

Few teachers of Matriculation (Only two teachers) take quizzes for the memorization of spellings. Through this activity students are more prepared because they know that they are going to be assessed by the teacher. However, no teacher of O level use this practice.

Worksheets

TMs (6 out of 12) pointed out that they provide worksheets to students in which one alphabet is missing from the word.

'I provide them worksheets. I omit one alphabet from the words. Students write the missed alphabet and sometimes wrong spellings are given. Students correct the mistakes'.

TO2 said that he provides worksheets to students. Sometime wrong spellings are given in worksheets and students write correct spellings.

'I provide them some of the work sheets with wrong spellings or some word is missing then they are able to correct those spelling mistakes on their written work'. (TO2)

Some of the teachers of Matriculation (six teachers) reported that he/she uses worksheet to memorize spellings. Worksheet is based upon missed alphabet. Students complete the words by providing the missed alphabet. Sometimes wrong spellings are given and students have to correct them. In this way they learn spellings. On the other hand one teacher of O level uses the worksheet for teaching spellings of the word and ask the students to correct it along with the missed alphabet in a word.

Punctuation

TMs and TOs reported that they teach their students about the use of punctuation marks. They said that their students get ideas about the type of sentences through which and they come to know where to put punctuation marks. They also elaborated that their students learn the use of punctuation marks by involving them in practice writing. They also provide feedback to students for their improvement in writing and tell them the rules of punctuation also.

Feedback

TMs (7 out of 12) thought that feedback is very important to get them learn the use of punctuation marks.

TM1 said, 'Through written work students are able to learn the use of punctuation marks.... when I check the written work of students, I diagnose the problems then it is discussed generally in the class room so that students know where they are facing difficulty. Students practice it by using the paragraphs from the textbook'.

TOs (9 out of 12) reported that they give paragraphs to students for punctuation and provides feedback on their work.

'When I check work on their copies and papers we inform the students about the mistakes and then they have to reproduce. It serves in two ways. First, they come to know about their mistakes. Second, they got a chance to correct it through practice writing'. (TO3)

Most of the participants (7 teachers of Matriculation and nine teachers of O level) give importance to feedback for teaching punctuation. According to them feedback is important practices through which students learn where to put punctuation marks.

Rules of Punctuation

TMs (5 out of 12) believed that to make learning more effective it is very important to explain the rules of punctuation to students so that they can use punctuation marks appropriately to convey the meaning.

'I teach them the rules of punctuation so that students are able to know where they have to use punctuation marks (TM4)

Some of the participants of Matriculation (Five teachers) teach their students the rules of punctuation to make their writing more effective. After that they give them sentences for practice the rules. However, no teachers of O level reported teaching their students the rules of punctuation.

Improving Grammar

TMs and TOs communicated that grammar has a key role for developing writing skill and can be taught through variety of practices i.e. to involve students in practice writing, giving feedback on their work, translating the sentences and by teaching rules of grammar.

For example:

Writing Practice

TMs (5 out of 12) expressed their views that they give their students an opportunity to write more and more so that students may be able to correct their grammatical errors.

TM1 expressed, 'by getting the students write on some different topics I keenly observe what they have written in the copy. After identifying their mistakes I correct them and explain'.

While 2 out of 12 mentioned that he/she correct grammatical mistakes on students work and sometimes such paragraphs are given that have wrong sentence structure.

'I give them paragraphs with mistakes to correct them. I give them paragraphs for proof reading that is continuous process of teaching grammar. Through this method of teaching grammar they may be able to have error free writing'.

Some of the participants (five teachers of Matriculation) articulated that they give feedback on grammatical mistakes. While few teachers (two teachers of O level) provide their students paragraphs with grammatical errors. Students identify those mistakes. In this way they come to know how they should avoid mistakes.

Feedback

TMs (7 out of 12) informed that they give feedback on students' grammatical mistakes.

TM2 pointed out, 'grammar mistakes are due to switching from one language to other language. So I give them feedback where they are making errors'.

TOs (7 out of 12) reported that they do not teach grammar as a separate subject although they correct their grammatical mistakes on their work to improve their writing skill.

For example:

TO1 expressed, *'grammar is not taught as a separate subject. If I feel that they are making grammatical mistakes, involve them in practicing writing'*.

Most of the teachers (7 teachers from Matriculation and 7 from O level) informed that they give feedback on students' written work regarding the grammatical mistakes.

Translation

TMs 7 out of 12 believed that translation is important for developing grammatical skills.

'I use translation method for clarifying their concepts from Urdu to English and English to Urdu'. (TM 5, 7).

Most of the teachers of Matriculation (Seven teachers) give them sentences or paragraphs in Urdu. Students are asked to translate it in English with grammatical accuracy. In this way they improve their students' grammatical knowledge. However, no teachers of O level reported the use of translation method.

Rules of Grammar

TMs 7 out of 12 explained the importance of explaining rules of grammar for student.

TM4 described, 'i give them explanation about the rules of grammar. If we are reading something i tell them to see how the nouns and verbs are used in a statement in this way they revise rules of grammar'.

Three out of 12 teachers of O level informed that they teach their students about the rules of grammar.

'Students of O level already know the rules of grammar. However, in some situations in need to make them revise grammatical rules for the students. When once the grammar is strong and concepts are clear they feel free to write on any topic they are asked'. (TO5).

Seven teachers of Matriculation and three teaches of O level teach their students grammatical Discussion

Teachers' responses from both SSC and O level for the use of teaching practices lead to some discussions and considerations. The basic and foremost aim of teaching writing skills are to enable students to be proficient in writing with the best practices used by teachers in classrooms. Learners are exposed to a variety of teaching practices and activities in classrooms for the attainment of learning outcomes.

Research shows that writing skills can be developed by generating ideas, organizing ideas, creativity, command on grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure (Widiningrum, 2013). At SSC, students' exposure to language is given from the textbook. Context is also taken from the textbook. Although there are activities which demands students' involvement in learning process but teachers do not focus them due to shortage of time. Their priority is to complete the whole syllabus. Students are passive because they are required to obey teachers. Teachers think that their role is to transmit knowledge. They do not take into account students' engagement and motivation to learn language. This result extend the finding of Khan (2012). Teachers do not focus on writing practices to enable them to use their creativity in a given context. There is traditional mode of learning in schools that is through easy approaches involving less input by teachers i.e. grammar translation method, recitation method and use of textbook. Teachers do not take initiative touse student centred teaching practices. Similarly, they do not give autonomy to students to take initiative to come with writing topic of their own interest.

A worth noticing fact is that examination system plays a major role in selecting the teachers' classroom practices. There is outdated examination system and teachers prepare their students according to examination point of view. Ahmad (2011) and Rehmani (2003) support the notion that teachers give more focus on expected questions according to examination point of view. For this purpose they use past papers. Due to this some of the content of textbook is not covered in classroom with true spirit. Therefore, they give little or no attention to the process of writing and collaborative activities to be done in classrooms.

With respect to above discussion teachers may not be blamed in this regard because the work they do in English classrooms are in accordance with the examination point of view. They know that their performance in classroom will be judged with the achievement of students in the examination. During interview when teachers of both streams (Matriculation and O level) were asked whether they know the aims and objectives of English writing skills written in curriculum documents, it was surprising when majority of respondents said that the schedule does not allow them due to shortage of time and they do not have the copy of National curriculum. Worth noticing fact is that although National Curriculum is available on internet but they do not have gone through it because they do not consider it necessary to be read.

There may be other numerous reasons of poor quality of English language such as improper admission criteria for taking admission, lack of competent English teachers, lack of conducive and constructive educational climate, shortage of physical facilities.

Conclusion

This study sought to determine teaching practices used for developing writing skills at secondary school level. The study looked for the teaching strategies in three domains of writing: generation of ideas, organization of ideas and language facility and conventions. It is our common observation that writing skills of students of O level are better than SSC. There may be various reasons for it and teaching practices are one of them. It is evident from the data that teachers of O level use teaching strategies that are student centered. O level students showed better performance in all areas focused in the study as compared with students of SSC. Student centered approaches with O level students improve them in developing writing skill,

Recommendation

Continuous professional development of English teachers may be conducted which is very important step for developing competent and skilful teachers. Likewise, teachers should encourage in classroom the process of writing as recommended in National Curriculum to develop writing skills.

On the basis of the findings obtained from this study, it was felt to carry out future research in these areas:

1. This study was conducted at secondary level. Future research is desirable at different grade levels i.e. primary, middle, higher secondary and tertiary level.
2. More research is still necessary by increasing the sample size for generalizability and it is need to be conducted at different subjects as well other than English.
3. Experimental study may be conducted to check the authenticity of the various teaching practices for teaching writing.

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