



ASSESSING ACADEMIC WRITING SKILLS OF UNDERGRADUATE ENGINEERS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF TBLT: T-TEST A RIGHT TOOL

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Abstract

The innumerable teaching methods of English Language Teaching has given space for ambiguity in the productive teaching of ELT. Language teaching includes teaching different challenging skills among them writing skill is one. Particularly teaching writing to the students for academic context has been at demand since ages. Every academic course finding it as the only rubric to assess the performance of learner in every prescribed subject, in the course of study. Hence effective academic writing skills are going to be a right outfit to showcase their subjective knowledge, particularly at end results of every examination. TBLT found to be an enthusiastic method and approach to improve the academic writing skills of engineering undergraduate learners. The method of evaluation and assessment also plays a vital role after every experiment and gives encouragement as well as scope for corrections if needed. Hence the research found that T- test is right evaluation for the taught academic writing skills through TBLT. The T-test could answer the proposed research question and could place the assumptions with reality through its presented results. The present paper focusses on the pattern of experimental research and T-test as a right tool for evaluating academic writing skills. Further it throws light on the success of TBLT approach in teaching academic writing skills to the engineering under graduate learner.

Key words: *English Language Teaching, Academic writing skills, Task Based Language Teaching Approach, Assessment and Evaluation and T-test*

1.1 Introduction

The explosion of knowledge in the fields of science and technology has brought forth number of changes in the undergraduate study. It is influential not only for learner but also figured out many challenges in teaching. It necessitated changes in both technical and non technical aspects of study. It raised curtain for an important activity in both personal and social life that is communicating effectively. It has become buzz word in everyday life. Since language happens to be the effective means of communication, language learning and teaching received the urgency to be a focussed area in the research. This indirectly brought importance to communicati ve languages in general and English in particular, which is treated as global language.

1.2. English as Global Language

It is one of the compulsory subjects in the curriculums of all most all the streams of study, in the college education. “English is not only important in getting better job, it is everywhere in social interaction”(Scrase 2004).During their course of study there are many language needs that they must meet till they reach professional perfection. Among them learning academic writing is at demand. Writing in English Language is one of the primary academic needs at present. Students who are very strong in other forms of language usage like pronunciation, accent in spoken English are surprisingly not showing basic efficiency in writing language. Hence it is observed and concluded that academic writing ability should be focussed during undergraduate study that may strengthen their language ability and professional communication.

1.3. Writing is reflective in character

As Ron .V.White says, “both writing and learning are the acts of discovery and writing is a potentially powerful educational tool”(Ron.V.White,1988) Though every learner in their course of study are being assessed by their writing efficiency in the language classroom often it had been a neglected skill, and the teachers of engineering undergraduates are giving less time to learn writing rather than speaking. Hence the concept of academic writing needs study and research. There are various types of writing like Descriptive writing,Narrative writing etc among them Academic writing is the important genre.

2.0 Academic writing: An important Skill

Academic writing is a complex skill to even native speakers. Academic writing is a formal type of writing that is clear and concise and deals with trustworthy information. The main aim of academic writing is to inform than to entertain.

“In academic writing, it is necessary to produce logically structured ideas with well-thoughtout, verified points and to consider different opinions” (Gillet, Hammond & Martala, 2009, p. 88). Significantly many areas of expertise in education is resilient through academic writing. This is also stated by Hyland (2003) who said that "writing is difficult and complex because it includes a number of components, such as the structure of the language, the function of the text, the theme, the process of writing, the content and the genre, and the writing context" (Hyland, 2003, p. 2)This skill is taken as a productive skill just like speaking in the language.

2.1 Need for learning

The present engineering undergraduates are quite curious about getting employment in top MNCs at the end of their graduation. Various companies are visiting the technical universities with an aim of selecting young and talented technocrats that benefit their organization. Hence they have included different verbal areas to test varied skills that are professional skills. The undergraduate engineers who are observed to be good at speaking skills are showing low efficiency in drafting and other writing forms. Since it is also needed for professional success higher attention is demanded and the young engineers also looking at the language teacher to help them in improving in formal writing ability which is academic writing skill. During the recruitment drive they need to undergo many rounds of testing where their writing skills are tested as one of the pre-requisites for the ensuing profession. Among the four language skills writing is one of the less prioritized skill, but often tested for their knowledge and learning capability. This skill can reflect their presentation of opinions, organisational talents, formatting skills and also lexical issues. Related to present employment opportunities the undergraduate engineers are expected to be good at email preparation, report writing, official letter writing and c.v preparation. In the above key genres writing academic and formal content with good format and lexical accuracy keeps the learner at pace. It means that learning academic writing is the need of the hour for technical undergraduate.

2.1 Different Teaching Methods : Efficacy of TBLT

Teaching and Learning are the twin terms that impact classroom since ages. There are various methods of teaching writing skills. Very often slow learners and rural learners find it difficult to follow the teaching instructions in the language class room. So the learner expects exceptional teaching method in the language class. After much research on teaching methods the researcher found that task based language teaching could be more effective way of learning than other conventional methods of teaching. Task based language teaching would make the learner focus on the ultimate aim of the proposed task than inhibitions and fears of using foreign language. If the task is found to be interesting the learner is able to handle the situation as the language he has searched his total knowledge about the situation.

2.2 Task Based Language Teaching

Language learning has been one of the most important activities on the academic platform. Since the learner is at the necessity of possessing efficiency in the global language, the teacher is expected to use more enthusiastic effective methods to teach this language in order to drive away the existing inhibitions like fear, hesitation and complexities etc. According to Richard and Rodger Task based Language Teaching encourages the learner to focus on task completion where the learner has to make use of target language, that will unconsciously develop language ability. TBLT promotes both teacher and learner autonomy, with the result that teachers take responsibility for the consistency of their teaching activities and students in their learning achievements (Cutrone & Beh, 2018; East, 2017; Tian & French, 2019; Waluyo, 2019). Task Based language teaching is an approach that is part of communicative language teaching. When the learner is allotted with interesting tasks, the learning capability will increase and focus will be on the completion of the task, where he unveils his hesitations and fears and proves his ability to finish. That could be the right time to be introduced to another required language and practicing it will make an effective user at the end of the task. There are certain researchers who have done a lot of

research on TBLT. Jeon & Hahn (2006) studied task-based language teaching in Korean secondary school. They found that the task-based learning improved their English. Torkey (2006) conducted a study on "The Effectiveness of a Task- Based Instruction program in developing the English Language Speaking Skills of Secondary Stage Students". The researcher found that communicative tasks motivate learners to engage in communication and initiated them to take risks.

2.3.Process of TBLT

Task based language teaching is one of the novel approaches in English language teaching. Their experience goes along with the findings of Kafipour, et al. (2018) who stated that tasks improve EFL learners' ability in writing competence which includes sentence mechanics, language use, vocabulary, content, and organization along with fulfilling a specific communicative purpose.

Jane Willis introduced a specific process for Task Based Language Teaching. There are three stages, which include Pre task stage, task stage and Language Focus. The use of such task-based writing material for academic purposes is another issue, while the use of it has been an opportunity in recent decades to teach writing practices (Ahmad, 2020; Milarisa, 2019; Yan, 2019).

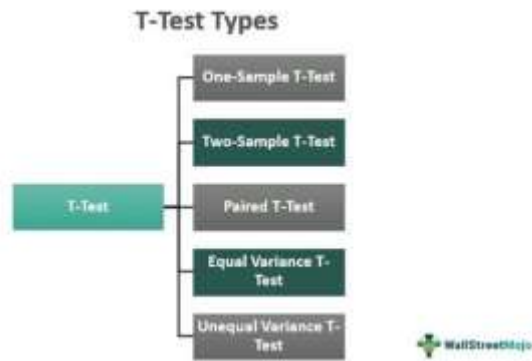
Since this method is the advanced form of Vygotsky's language learning theory, the more knowledgeable other is the teacher who stands as a facilitator to guide the learner throughout the process. Task selection is the teacher's job, as Bhandari (2020) states, to select appropriate tasks and sequence them in such a way that best fit his or her students' learning abilities and meet the expectation of the curriculum.

3.0 Importance of evaluation after the test

Every trial has to be tested and for the desired results. Hence evaluation should take place after the performance of each conducted trial. This evaluation brings forth many important facts about the performance. Like whether the research concept is worth researchable, the taken research tools are suitable and efficient, whether the said hypothesis is relevant and acceptable, whether the desired assumptions will come true etc. The present researcher also took the help of t-test to test the effectiveness of the T-test. T-test is a statistical test procedure, that presents significant difference between two different groups taken for study. Here the inferential statistical analysis takes place with the choice of t-test. It is used for generalizing the results of the taken sample against the selected population. When two groups were taken and the second group only taken as the group that reflects the placebo effect, using t-test for evaluation and analysis, will surely present significant difference after the experiment is over. It is recommended when there is only two groups and will stand against each other.

3.1 Different types of t-test

There are different types of t-tests that will be conducted as per the assumptions mentioned in the t-test. It is also a hypothetical testing tool and it directs the procedure that is being followed for achieving the desired results. There are



1. One sample t-test

In this test the means or average of one group prepared randomly will be compared with the set average the equation for this is as follows

$$t = \frac{m - \mu}{s/\sqrt{n}}$$

Where,

T = t-statistic

m = mean of the group

μ = theoretical mean value of the population

s = standard deviation of the group

n = sample size

3.2 The selected test for the research:

Looking at the properties of t-test and requisition of the applied approach to improve writing skills of the undergraduate students it is proven that the sample t test is the right evaluation method to evaluate the performance of the learners after the application Task Based Language Teaching. The division of control group and experimental group had been framed from the selected engineering branches. The control group is given normal teaching inputs and for the experimental group TBLT approach is used. The target areas in academic writing skills are content organisation content formatting and lexical accuracy. The tasks were set to develop one and the other target areas of academic writing skills. Since right evaluation only can give right conclusion whether the implemented method is the right method to improve academic writing ability. The research study has confirmed that t-sample test will bring forth right assessment about the select methodology. When the mean values of both control group and experimental group is calculated during pre test and post test there found a considerable difference showing that the said approach is the innovative approach and can guide a rural learner also to go with all the mechanics of writing skills. Unlike other testing tools this sample t- test will provide only the normal variation that occurs natural because of the implementation of novel approach which TBLT.

4.0 Conclusion

Many researchers had worked on the improvement of language skills in general and writing skills in particular. It is found that there is necessity of new teaching methods that could enthuse all kinds of learners. TBLT is one such method that involves the learner until he reaches the perfect user of the target genre. This could be evident if a perfect evaluation happens and the results are satisfactory. For the aforesaid approach T-test had been the right evaluation tool to support the assumptions made by the researchers.

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