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Beyond Language Structures: A Process Approach to Writing in Second Language at the Undergraduate Level

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Abstract

This study explores the interrelation between the process approach to writing and the writing competence of the learner. The study adopted the hypothesis that process approach to writing improves the writing competence of the learner, and therefore, should be adopted as a better approach in place of the currently practiced Product Approach to writing. Translated into more concrete terms in English as a Second Language Teaching/Learning context (ESL), the writing competence, as envisaged here, is not only the learner's ability to successfully complete a particular writing task with emphasis on explicitness and accuracy, but also his/her cognitive engagement with that task with an awareness of the meta-cognitive processes involved in the task; i.e., a students' ability to reflect on the strategies they use to write. This particular approach was tested with the undergraduates of the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences (FHSS) at the University of Ruhuna in a representative sample. A baseline test, a comprehensive, Process Approach oriented writing program, and a final test comprised the major methodological procedure of the study. The findings showed that the writing skill of students has considerably improved after the Process Approach teaching program, and therefore, it needs to be given due recognition in the overall English language teaching program conducted by the English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) of the University of Ruhuna

Keywords: *Process approach, product approach*