

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF TEACHING WRITING SKILLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Abstract. *This article examines the fundamental theoretical principles underlying the teaching of writing skills in secondary school, highlighting how cognitive, linguistic, and pedagogical factors interact in the development of students' written competence. The author reviews major theories such as the process approach, product approach, and genre-based instruction, emphasizing their relevance to learners' needs and classroom realities. The article explains that writing is not merely a mechanical activity but a complex cognitive process involving planning, drafting, revising, and editing. It also stresses the importance of linguistic competence, including vocabulary range, grammatical accuracy, coherence, cohesion, and text organization, which play crucial roles in producing meaningful written texts. Furthermore, the article analyzes how socio-cultural and communicative theories support learner-centered instruction, promoting writing activities that reflect real-life purposes and authentic contexts. The author highlights the role of teacher feedback, peer collaboration, and scaffolding strategies in guiding learners through different stages of writing development.*

Keywords: *teaching writing skills; secondary school; writing pedagogy; process approach; product approach; genre-based instruction; cognitive strategies; linguistic competence.*

INTRODUCTION.

Teaching writing skills in secondary school plays a crucial role in the development of students' overall language competence, academic success, and communicative abilities. Writing is not only a fundamental component of language learning but also an essential tool for expressing ideas, demonstrating knowledge, and engaging in meaningful communication across subject areas. In the contemporary educational context, where students are expected to participate actively in academic, social, and digital environments, strong writing skills are indispensable. An effective writing pedagogy, therefore, must be grounded in sound theoretical principles that address the cognitive, linguistic, and social dimensions of writing. Understanding these foundations allows educators to design instructional practices that support students' gradual progression from basic sentence construction to sophisticated written expression.

The importance of writing instruction in secondary school is closely linked to the developmental stage of learners. Adolescents are expanding their critical thinking abilities, forming personal and academic identities, and learning to articulate increasingly complex ideas. Writing serves as a medium through which they organize thoughts, analyze information, and reflect on experiences. As such, writing education must go beyond teaching mechanical skills; it must nurture students' cognitive engagement, creativity, and ability to construct coherent and well-structured texts. This broader perspective aligns with modern views of writing as a process rather than a product, highlighting the need for continuous practice, revision, feedback, and reflection.

The theoretical foundations of teaching writing are built upon several key approaches, each of which contributes valuable insights into how learners acquire and improve writing skills. The process approach, for instance, views writing as a dynamic activity involving planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. It emphasizes the importance of encouraging students to focus on the development of ideas rather than perfection in the first attempt.

Literature review. The teaching of writing skills in secondary school has been widely examined in linguistic, pedagogical, and psychological research. Scholars generally agree that writing is a multidimensional skill that

integrates cognitive processes, linguistic knowledge, and communicative competence. Early studies, such as those by K. Hyland, conceptualized writing as a complex cognitive process involving planning, translating, and reviewing. Their cognitive model has significantly influenced modern process-oriented writing instruction, emphasizing metacognition, recursive drafting, and the need for explicit strategy training [4,72].

Subsequent research on the process approach highlights the importance of feedback, peer collaboration, and drafting cycles. Studies by D. Nunan show that students improve their writing quality when encouraged to revise content and structure rather than only correct surface errors. These findings helped shift classroom practices from product-focused correction to process-based instruction [5,112].

Research on the product approach has remained relevant, particularly in contexts where learners prepare for standardized examinations. Scholars such as Harmer J. (2004) argue that providing clear models helps learners understand text organization, cohesion, and genre conventions. This approach is especially beneficial for novice writers who need explicit structure [3,69].

Methodology. The methodology of this study is based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches to examine the theoretical foundations and practical effectiveness of teaching writing skills in secondary school. A mixed-method design was chosen to ensure a comprehensive understanding of how theoretical principles translate into classroom practice and how students develop their writing abilities over time.

The research began with a theoretical analysis, which involved examining academic literature, pedagogical frameworks, and linguistic theories related to writing instruction. This phase provided the conceptual basis for identifying key teaching approaches, including the process approach, product approach, genre-based instruction, and socio-cultural perspectives. The theoretical analysis also helped determine which instructional elements such as feedback, scaffolding, and strategy training are considered essential for developing writing skills [1,58]. For the empirical component, the study used classroom observation and teacher interviews to gain insights into current practices. Observations were conducted in secondary school English classes to document how teachers introduce writing tasks, provide guidance, and facilitate revision. Attention was given to the use of instructional materials, the integration of technology, and the role of peer collaboration. Teacher interviews further provided qualitative data on challenges, instructional choices, and perceptions of effective writing pedagogy.

A student writing assessment was also carried out to gather quantitative data. Students completed writing tasks before and after a period of instruction informed by the theoretical principles identified in the literature review. Their performance was evaluated according to criteria such as organization, coherence, grammar, vocabulary, and task completion. These results allowed the researcher to measure progress and identify areas of improvement [2,25].

Results. The results of the study reveal significant improvements in students' writing skills after the implementation of instructional methods grounded in established theoretical principles. The analysis of pre- and post-instruction writing samples shows that students demonstrated noticeable progress in text organization, coherence, and clarity of expression. Before instruction, many students struggled to develop clear topic sentences, maintain logical flow, and use appropriate linking devices. After the targeted lessons, however, their writing exhibited more structured paragraphs, smoother transitions, and greater awareness of audience and purpose.

Discussion. The findings of the study highlight several important insights into the teaching of writing skills in secondary schools, emphasizing both pedagogical and linguistic dimensions. First, the results demonstrate that students' writing proficiency improves significantly when instruction moves beyond traditional mechanical exercises and incorporates communicative, learner-centered approaches. This supports existing theories suggesting that writing is not merely a product to be evaluated but a process that requires scaffolding, feedback, and opportunities for practice. In this respect, approaches such as process writing, collaborative writing, peer review, and genre-based instruction were found to positively influence students' confidence and accuracy. These findings align with earlier studies noting that learners acquire writing skills more effectively when they are engaged in meaningful tasks and when instruction is adapted to their cognitive and linguistic needs.

Conclusion. The study of theoretical foundations for teaching writing skills in secondary schools highlights the essential role of well-structured, pedagogically informed instruction in developing students' communicative competence. Writing, as one of the most complex language skills, requires the integration of cognitive, linguistic, and affective factors. The findings show that when writing is taught not simply as a mechanical exercise but as a purposeful and creative process, learners develop stronger abilities to express ideas clearly, organize information logically, and use language accurately. This aligns with contemporary educational theories that view writing as a dynamic process involving planning, drafting, revising, and editing. The research confirms that the teacher's methodological choices significantly impact learners' writing outcomes.

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