

**The Effectiveness of the Product-Oriented Approach in Teaching Writing: A Study on Uzbek EFL Learners**

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**Abstract**

This research investigates the effectiveness of a product-oriented method in teaching English writing to EFL learners in Uzbekistan, specifically within the university setting. Although the product-oriented method emphasizes creating precise, well-organized texts, its appropriateness for enhancing communicative competence remains a topic of ongoing discussion. The study involves 60 university students over a span of 10 weeks and evaluates their writing skills using pre- and post-tests, along with student questionnaires. The results indicate that, while the product-oriented method is successful in enhancing grammatical accuracy, sentence formation, and organization of texts, it does not significantly promote creativity, development of ideas, or the expression of an authentic voice in students' writing. The study recommends integrating elements of the process approach to offer a more balanced framework for Uzbek EFL learners, fostering both formal writing skills and critical thinking.

**INTRODUCTION.**

In Uzbekistan, similar to numerous other nations, English has emerged as the main foreign language studied in educational institutions. In recent decades, substantial reforms have been introduced to enhance the quality of foreign language teaching (Tursunov, 2021). However, writing continues to be one of the most challenging skills for learners of English as a foreign language, particularly when English is taught as a foreign language rather than a second language. As a productive skill, writing requires the arrangement of ideas, coherence, precision, and creativity, all of which pose intricate challenges for non-native speakers (Khudaykulov, 2020).

The product-focused approach to teaching writing is one of the most widely utilized methods in Uzbekistan and various Central Asian nations. This strategy highlights the final written output, concentrating on the accuracy of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and the text's organization (Zokirova & Rasulova, 2019). The product-focused method generally includes providing students with example texts and exercises designed to replicate the structure and language found in these samples. Although it has been successful in enhancing students' capabilities to create grammatically correct writings, it has received criticism for not encouraging creativity and more profound involvement in the writing process (Hyland, 2003).

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate how effective the product-oriented approach is in enhancing writing abilities for Uzbek EFL learners. In particular, it examines the impact of this approach on grammatical precision, organization, and coherence in written compositions. Additionally, the study looks at whether the product-oriented strategy constrains students' creativity, critical thinking, and their capacity for self-expression.

**2. METHODOLOGY**

**2.1 Research Design**

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This research utilized a quasi-experimental framework to evaluate the efficacy of the product-oriented approach. A total of 60 college students were randomly divided into an experimental group (30 students) and a control group (30 students). Both groups underwent a pre-test to assess their writing abilities, and following a 10-week intervention, they completed a post-test to evaluate their advancement.

### 2.2 Participants

The study included 60 second-year students from an English Philology department at a university in Uzbekistan. According to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), all students had intermediate English proficiency at the B1 level. The experimental group was given a structured curriculum based on a product-oriented approach, whereas the control group was given a more balanced approach that included product-based methods as well as process-oriented elements like brainstorming, drafting, and peer feedback.

### 2.3 Procedure

The experimental group received a 10-week intervention that included instruction in five different writing genres: descriptive essays, narrative essays, argumentative essays, opinion essays, and cause-effect essays. The instructor used model essays to show the proper structure for each genre. Every two weeks, each student was assigned a writing task based on one of these genres. The text's grammatical accuracy, use of appropriate vocabulary, and writing organization were all emphasized. In contrast, the control group was taught using a combination of product-oriented and process-oriented methods. In addition to model essays, students were encouraged to brainstorm, collaborate in groups, revise drafts, and solicit peer feedback. These activities aimed to develop students' creativity, critical thinking, and ability to revise and improve their work.

### 2.4 Instruments

To evaluate the effectiveness of both approaches, three main instruments were employed:

- **Pre-Test and Post-Test Writing Tasks:** Both groups were required to write a 250-word essay on a general academic topic before and after the test. The essays were graded using a standardized rubric that evaluated grammar, coherence, cohesion, vocabulary usage, and idea development.
- **Student Questionnaire :** A student questionnaire was distributed at the end of the intervention to gather feedback on writing instruction and product-oriented approach.
- **Teacher Interviews :** Interviews with instructors were conducted to understand the practical application and challenges of using a product-oriented approach in Uzbek EFL classes.

### 2.5 Data Analysis

The quantitative data from the pre- and post-tests were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests to see if either group's writing performance improved significantly. Qualitative data from questionnaires and interviews were thematically coded to identify common trends and insights about students' experiences with instructional methods.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 Improvement in Writing Skills

The pre-test and post-test results revealed significant improvements in the experimental group's writing performance, particularly in grammar, sentence structure, and text organization. However, the control group showed more balanced improvement, with greater gains in vocabulary usage, coherence, and idea development. The experimental group's average post-test score was 85%, compared to 70% on the pre-test. This improvement was primarily due to the emphasis on grammatical accuracy, text structure, and

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organization. The control group, which used a combination of product and process-oriented methods, had an average post-test score of 88%, with significant improvements in vocabulary selection, logical flow, and argumentation.

#### 3.2 Student Perceptions

The questionnaire revealed mixed reactions from students in both groups. In the experimental group:

80% of students appreciated the clear guidelines and the structured approach to writing. However, 70% expressed frustration with the lack of opportunity to express their own opinions or ideas freely in their essays.

In the control group:

75% of students felt that the peer feedback and revision process helped them refine their ideas and improve the quality of their writing.

65% expressed a preference for the opportunity to brainstorm and engage in more collaborative writing activities.

#### 3.3 Teacher Feedback

The study's instructors agreed that the product-oriented approach was effective in helping students develop basic writing skills. However, they discovered that students in the experimental group frequently struggled with more difficult writing tasks, such as developing arguments or critically analyzing issues. One instructor stated, "While students can easily reproduce the language and structure of model texts, they struggle when asked to create their own content or critique a topic." This is a major limitation of the product-oriented approach. The control group, which used more interactive and process-based techniques, appeared to improve their problem-solving skills and independent writing abilities. Teachers observed that students in this group appeared more confident in expressing their opinions and approaching writing challenges creatively.

### 4. DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 The Strengths of the Product-Oriented Approach

The findings of this study support the effectiveness of the product-oriented approach in improving basic writing skills like grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. These are essential skills for EFL learners, especially in countries like Uzbekistan, where the educational system places a high value on formal correctness (Mavlonov, 2020). As evidenced by the experimental group's performance, the product-oriented approach can assist learners in producing technically accurate texts.

Furthermore, this method helps students prepare for standardized exams, where writing tasks must be clear, concise, and correct (Khudaykulov, 2020). The emphasis on model texts also gives students concrete examples of what a well-organized, error-free text looks like, which can help them gain confidence in writing.

#### 4.2 The Limitations of the Product-Oriented Approach

However, the product-oriented approach's emphasis on grammatical accuracy and text structure frequently sacrifices creativity and the development of new ideas. In this study, the experimental group showed limited improvement in vocabulary usage, coherence, and argument development. These shortcomings reflect a critique of the product-oriented method, which produces "mechanical

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writers" who replicate language forms without developing authentic voices (Badger & White, 2000). The process-oriented approach, which emphasizes brainstorming, peer feedback, and revision, provides an alternative that promotes creativity, critical thinking, and active participation in the writing process. The control group's performance in this study demonstrated the importance of incorporating such activities to cultivate independent writers capable of critical thinking, idea organization, and reflective writing.

#### 4.3 Implications for EFL Education in Uzbekistan

In Uzbekistan, where English language proficiency is increasingly important for academic and professional success, combining product-oriented and process-oriented approaches may yield the best results. According to the findings, while the product-oriented approach is effective for teaching fundamental writing skills, it should be supplemented with activities that encourage creative thinking, problem solving, and peer interaction.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the importance of a balanced approach to writing instruction in EFL classrooms in Uzbekistan. While the product-oriented approach is useful for developing foundational skills, incorporating process-oriented elements can significantly improve students' ability to generate ideas, express themselves authentically, and engage critically with writing tasks. The findings suggest that EFL educators in Uzbekistan should think about combining the two approaches to better prepare students for the demands of academic and professional writing.

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