Reaction Paper Structure
through SPSE (Situation-Problem-Solution-Evaluation) Writing Paradigm

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ABSTRACT

Teaching writing is a big challenge for an ESL (English as a Second Language) educator. Problems such language conventions, conforming to the norms of academic writing, objectivity of writing, and comprehensiveness are the common lapses that students usually commit as they engage themselves into writing. This study was a humble attempt to address the writing difficulties of students in EAPP (English for Academic and Professional Purposes) subject by means of applying the SPSE (Situation-Problem-Solution-Evaluation) Paradigm of Swales and Feak (2012). After the structured writing, an overall improvement of 16.2% was evident into the writing outputs of the students. Prominently, a good progress on objectivity, comprehensiveness, and completeness with an improvement of 18%, 17%, and 19% respectively. Thus, it implied that structured writing is applicable in other core subjects in Senior High School for these subjects are content-based in nature.

INTRODUCTION

In an EAPP (English for Academic and Professional Purposes) class, a Senior High School student must be engaged into writing – academic writing in particular. For a student to pass the course, it is a must for him to produce write ups that are in the academic and formal context. With that sense, it is the teacher's task to impart well-structured mechanics and comprehensive insights about academic writing.

Well-written and sound reaction paper, position paper, concept paper, and technical reports are the expected outputs to be accomplished in this course. With this, a careful consideration not just with language conventions but might as well with the way the students structure these papers is observed. The content becomes comprehensive when a teacher imparts a particular structure of writing. As it is evident in the study of Favart and Coirier (2006) wherein they did an experimental technique in diagnosing how students form text by having a scrambled arrangement of paragraphs and leaving the students to make sense of this make-shift jigsaw puzzle of paragraphs. At the end of their study, the students were able to make achieve better fluency than those in the control group for they were able to structure the sentence in a logical and orderly manner.

A research article entitled "The effect of Van Dijk discourse strategies on Iranian EFL learners' writing proficiency" wherein one of the strategies of Van Dijk which is using the socio-cognitive model had a positive effect on the writing proficiency of the experimental group compared to the control group. The study dealt with writing strategies of the students, particularly the macro-strategies employed in constructing a text. In addition to this, the researchers gathered a number of related studies that dealt with the macro-structural analysis of editorial texts (Alvior, 2014) and analysis of macro-structures and microstructures of Philippine narrative texts in English (Carreon, 1986). These studies showed that having an overview of the macro-structure of a written discourse will give us an idea behind the processes on how students construct text.

The researcher used of content analysis based on the macrostructural moves of the Reaction paper. Macrostructure or macrostructural moves was defined by Teun A. van Dijk (1983) as "the overall structure of the text." It gives the reader a glimpse of the mental representation on how a text is sequenced logically. Macro structures are present in texts such as expository, narrative, problem-solution text, and the likes.

Engebretsen (2000) further explained that macrostructure represent mental schemas. In addition, Van Dijk (1988) explained that when retelling text based on an event, the language user would follow three macro-rules, namely: deletion, generalization, and construction.

Having explained these things, the researcher would like to explore the implications of using the structural moves of a problem-solution text introduced by Swales and Feak (2012).

Based on the class standing of a Grade 11 section (anonymous for ethical reasons) in the previous school year of 2017-2018, 39% or 20 out of 51 students in the class got final ratings that were ranging from 77 – 75 in their EAPP (English For Academic and Professional Purposes) subject. It had only manifested that majority of the students found it difficult to express themselves in the context of Academic Writing for the teacher-mentor had imparted only the basics of Academic Writing and not the comprehensive discussions regarding the specific procedure/process/structure to follow in a particular form of Academic writing – a reaction paper for instance.

Also, prior to the conduction of the study, the researcher performed a focus-group discussion together with his colleague from the English Department of the researcher's affiliated school. In the FGD, he facilitated a discussion on writing difficulties across grade levels. After the discussion, the researcher was able to identify themes on writing difficulties such as the language conventions errors, formatting problems, lack of ideas,

uncoherent writing scheme, and subjective approach to writing.

With all these stance, this study was an attempt to apply the problem-solution text's macrostructural moves of Swales and Feak (2012), contextualizing it on the Strand/Track, as an intervention program to aid and improve the structure of reaction paper outputs in EAPP (English for Academic and Professional Purposes) class of Grade 12 – Humanities and Social Sciences students of Southville 5-A Integrated National High School for the 1st semester of S.Y. 2019-2020.

Research Questions
1. How was the reaction paper writing performance of the students before the application of the SPSE Writing Paradigm?
2. How was the reaction paper writing performance of the students after the application of the SPSE Writing Paradigm?
3. What were the pedagogical implications of the SPSE Writing Paradigm in EAPP (English for Academic and Professional Purposes) subject and in the other fields of inquiry?

METHODOLOGY
Grade 12 – Humanities and Social Sciences class from Southville 5-A Integrated National High School for the 1st semester of S.Y. 2019-2020 were the participants of the study. Humanities and Social Sciences strand students belong to Academic track. With this, it is expected for them to become inclined into academic writing at all rate for it will be used as they proceed in college and attain a certain degree or professional remark.

Purposive sampling was used in the study. For the researcher wanted to assure that in the end, the reaction paper outputs will get improved through the SPSE Writing Paradigm. There were 40 students will be asked to be a part of the study.

The researcher did an FGD talking about the writing difficulties of students across grade levels. The themes arrived

were used to craft the researcher-made rubric that will be used to evaluate the pre-test and post-test outputs of the students. The researcher performed a pre-test writing task to identify the varied problems encountered by students in reaction paper writing. To validate the outputs, it will be peer-reviewed anonymously by English Teachers of the said school using a teacher-made checklist-rubric. After the model application, a post-test writing task will be administered to see the significant improvement in reaction paper writing of the students. Then once again, it will be peer-reviewed anonymously by English Teachers of the said school using a teacher-made checklist-rubric.

A pre-test writing task was administered wherein the researcher will limit the writing mechanics by giving the prompt and the basic parts of an essay - introduction, body, and conclusion. The students had no restriction in terms of number of words or sentences as they write their papers. After the model application, a post-test writing task was administered. The reaction paper outputs were gathered and analyzed using the structural moves by Swales and Feak (2012). The paragraphs are categorized as Situation, Problem, Solution, and Evaluation based on following:

Parts of a Problem – Solution Text

MOVE 1 **Situation**
background information on a particular set of circumstances
MOVE 2 **Problem**
reasons for challenging the accuracy of figures; criticisms of or weaknesses surrounding the current situation; possible counterevidence
MOVE 3 **Solution**
discussion of a way or ways to alleviate the problem
MOVE 4 **Evaluation**
assessment of the merits of the proposed solution(s)

Content analysis was applied. Both the pre-test and post-test writing task were peer reviewed by English teachers to avoid

biases. Then, a comparative analysis in terms of the results was considered as bases for pedagogical implications.

RESULTS

On the pre-test writing task, scores were relatively low with 58.4% as the general average. It exhibited the drastic improvement across the criteria after the application of SPSE writing paradigm in the reaction paper outputs of the students with a post test general average of 74.6%. The formatting got improved by 13%, Language conventions by 14%, Objectivity by 18%, Comprehensiveness by 17%, and Completeness by 19%. In general, the evident improvement was 16.2%.

Also a view on the number of students who passed and failed in the pre-test and post test reaction paper writing tasks was taken into consideration. In the formatting criterion, 48% of population passed in the post test compared to only 23% who passed in the pre-test. In the language conventions criterion, 48% of population passed in the post test compared to only 20% who passed in the pre-test. In the objectivity criterion, 58% of population passed in the post test compared to only 25% who passed in the pre-test. In the comprehensiveness criterion, 43% of population passed in the post test compared to only 15% who passed in the pre-test. In the completeness criterion, 30% of population passed in the post test compared to only 8% who passed in the pre-test. To sum it up, 45% of population passed in the post test compared to only 18% who passed in the pre-test.

DISCUSSION

Writing itself is tedious to teach. It is a common difficulty among writing teachers who seem to be problematic not just with grammatical construction of students' writing but might as well with the content quality of write-ups.

This research was an effort to address these difficulties such as formatting (The alignment of paragraphs, general aesthetic appeal of writing, and conformity to the standards of academic writing), language conventions (Grammatical presentation of ideas, correct use of punctuations, mechanics on capitalization, and even spelling), objectivity (Logical and critical connectedness of the ideas presented to the given prompt), comprehensiveness (level of clarity of the ideas presented to the given prompt), and completeness (the precise ideas presented to the given prompt).

As for the research findings, it was revealed in the pre-test writing task that students were problematic across the criteria applied by the researcher. After the application of the SPSE writing paradigm, improvements were evident though it was not as high as the usual research experimentations performed by other researchers. It was observed on the results of the study that the objectivity and comprehensiveness of the written work have the most significant improvement. This only means that SPSE could not cater all the relevant problems into writing and teaching writing. At any rate, the paradigm can address the logical ability and critical thinking of the students and how it can be connected to their respective writings. Also through the paradigm, understanding the content of the writing was improved.

Results are functional in an array of purposes because majority of Senior high school core courses are requiring students to produce comprehensive written outputs as a concluding performance task in a specific subject content. In EAPP (English for Academic and Professional Purposes), well-written and sound reaction paper, position paper, concept paper, and technical reports are the expected outputs to be accomplished in this course. With this, a careful consideration not just with language conventions but might as well with the way the students structure these papers is observed.

Aside from EAPP subject, Reading and Writing Skills (RWS) subject is also taken by the students. This is taken every second semester of the school year. The course curriculum encapsulates Purposeful

Writing in the Disciplines and for Professions. This one entails the writing of Book Review or Article Critique, Literature Review, Research Report, Project Proposal, and Position Paper. With that, an implementation of the SPSE writing paradigm would be made possible for objectivity and comprehensiveness are both substantial to such.

Another is on Media and Information Literacy subject, a student is asked to make an argumentative essay about Plagiarism and Intellectual Property Rights. With that, if a teacher imparts a particular writing structure, students will not have difficulty presenting arguments. To sum it up, the results of this study will be applicable for a careful planning of performance tasks (related to writing) to be executed in other core courses.

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