Functional Writing Skills

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Abstract: Writing is the purpose of teaching the language. The importance of functional writing for every human being in society stems from the fact that each individual has physical and social interests and needs that require writing. The functional writing relates to transactions and administrative requirements, and facilitates the work of the interests, companies, government departments and others. It is the official writing with specific rules, standardized assets and customary traditions among employees. The current study is concerned with the presentation of the areas of writing skills that should be taught to students to achieve their needs and to become active in society.
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Introduction

Writing is the purpose of language instruction for students. All they learn from other branches of the language are the means to this purpose, so that they can disclose what is going on their souls from normal things in a sound language in a faltering and not ashamed. Therefore, they can organize a set of ideas on a topic they have studied, or a matter that people are interested in, so they can portray them adequately. Then write it in a good way that combines order and effect, be it brief or lengthy (Atta, 2005).

Therefore, it is necessary for everyone in society, because it enables him or her to fulfill these needs. Without it, the individual becomes incapable of fulfilling the demands of life that require writing(Abdul-Hamid, 1998, p. 73).

The functional writing relates to transactions and administrative requirements, and facilitating the work of the Institutions, companies, government bureaus and others. It is the official writing with specific rules, standardized assets and customary traditions among employees (Yassin, 2010, p. 178).

Therefore, students should be trained in this type of writing to help them fulfill the demands of life in which they live through the different areas that make up aspects of life(Abdul-Hamid, 1998, p. 73).

Functional writing is the art of the wtiter's use of written language symbols (letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs) to satisfy his communicative needs(Al-Naqa & Hafez, 2004, p. 93).

Definition of functional writing

There are many views of functional writing's Definition;

"Functional writing can be seen to as anwriting of different life situations in a manner that is predominantly Report or scientific writing nature. It is characterized by the writing of life situations and dominated by report method"(Younis, 2004, p. 20).

"the functional writing is official writing with specific rules, codified assets and traditions recognized by employees and their superiors, or between employees, or between those seeking to serve their interests in different departments(Fdal-allah, 2008).

"functional writing can be stated as the writing that expresses the linguistic practices and the daily written commitments through the linguistic attitudes and the written activities that are prevalent in society in all its categories and levels, which vary in quantity and quality depending on the diversity of societies and environments and their differences" (Mousa, 1995, p. 14).

"It is the writing that accomplishes the continuity of people to organize their lives and fulfill their needs, such as: writing letters and telegrams and filling out forms and reports, regardless of the dimension of time and place" (H. S. Shehata, 2002, p. 244).

"It is a group of written activities used by community members at different categories and levels, which are related to the needs of the organization and human affairs" (Al-Laqani & Al-Jamal, 2003, p. 145).

From the above it is clear that there are multiple definitions of functional writing, all of which focused on their basic character, namely, functionality and accuracy. The definitions emphasized the use of writing in the interests. The researcher believes that the functional writing is the official writing that is accurate and clear, related to the needs of the student inside and outside the school, and achieve communication between him and the people through;

official letters, telegrams, reports, summaries and others.

Teaching functional writing aims

Review of literature (Fdal-allah, 2008) (Issa, 2012) (Manna, 2008) (Abd-Ella, 2010) shows that teaching functional writing aims to:

1. Facilitate contact with others and achieve communication among members of the linguistic community in order to meet the needs of living through writing letters, reports and others.

2. Students use the written word to express the needs of their professional work by writing letters, reports and memos.

3. Students acquire the specific skills of the functional writing types.

4. Students' Proficiency of the general skills of functional writing related to words, sentences and vocabulary.

5. Proficiency of students to present their information and clarify their ideas in appropriate words.

6. Employing information, facts and data makes writing work useful or effective.

7. The ability of students to write briefly without confusion and at an appropriate speed.

8. Students Commitment on cleanliness and order in their writings.

9. Using the language skills gained by learning other language branches.

10. To identify the idea and explore the various aspects in depth commensurate with the level of linguistic development.

11. Make use of his previous readings and experiences to enrich the content of the subject expressed.

12. Use different punctuation, which makes it easier for the reader to interact with the subject.

13. Students' proficiency the organization of the written work according to the accepted principles.

14. Students have the ability to critique and discover linguistic, artistic and intellectual errors in the written work.

15. Employing students for construction operations when carrying out any written work.

16. Students use language: correct using of words and sentences.

17. Pupils commitment to linguistic and technical specifications for the functional writing works.

18. The students' appreciation of the importance of functional writing in the areas of administrative work.

19. Students keen to develop their skills in functional writing.

Functional Writing Standards

(Abdel-Bari, 2010, p. 54) explained that the functional writing is characterized by a set of criteria are:

- The predominance of the story method.
- Objectivity in the presentation.
- Precision and clarity.
- Their association with specific areas of life.
- Direct in display.
- Commitment to specific places when writing some areas.
- Scientific Secretariat in presenting the ideas of the writer of the topic.
- Accuracy of Brief.

Elements of text

Functional text is based on four main pillars that form the characteristic nature of it. These pillars are: the purpose of writing the Functional text, the target audience, the style of the writer of the functional text, the scope of this text. The breakdown is as follows (Younis, 2005, pp. 81-94).

(1)   The purpose of Functional text

The purpose of writing the functional text is the cornerstone of this text, which is the motivation and motivator for writing this text. Although the purpose of writing the Functional text in general is to meet communication needs with others, but these communication needs vary from person to person. They differ from one position to another for one person. Therefore, the writer of the text should determine the purpose of writing the text accurately and use the appropriate vocabulary to express this purpose.

(2)   The target audience by Functional text

The target audience type is one of the main pillars of the functional text. The writer should specify the type of target audience in this text before writing, and directs the text to this audience. The writer should use the appropriate vocabulary for the target audience in the functional text.

(3)   Field of functional text

There are multiple functional types of the text such as telegrams, forms, advertisements, notes, reports, letters etc. (Abdel-Bari, 2010, pp. 52-148).

(4)   The Style of the text writer

(Younis, 2005, pp. 92-93) argues that Style of writing the text is the way a writer uses to express his purpose of writing the text. He states that the writer's style is determined in the functional text according to; purpose, type of target audience, and type of functional text. The purpose of writing the text, the type of target audience in this text, and the type of text.

(Younis, 2005, pp. 92-93) sees that the most important skills of the Functional Writing related to the writer's style, are:

- That the writer uses a brief in expressing his purpose of writing the text.
- To use the appropriate vocabulary for the purpose, and the type of target audience in the text.
- To avoid spelling mistakes.
- To avoid exaggeration and mannerisms.
- To use punctuation marks in the correct positions.
- To avoid grammatical errors.
- To use appropriate interwoven tools between words and sentences.

Literature

Due to the importance of functional writing, many studies were conducted to develop the writing skills of students in different educational stages. From these studies: Mousa, 1995) (Issa, 2012)(Ahmed, 2011) (El-Masry, 2006)(Al-Makhzoumi, 2004)(Al-Ghamdi My & Al-Zahrani, 2014)(H. S. Shehata, 2015) (Dakhikh, 2010)(Gad, 2005)(Al-Thanyan, 2015)(Al-Nassar, 2007)(N. R. M. Shehata, 2013) (Awad, 2000 (Awad, 2002) (Ali, 2010)(Arafa, 1996)(H. R. A.-R. Obaid, 1996)(Lafi, 2005)(Ghanem, 2015)(Qasim, 2010)(Manna, 2008)(Muharram, 2006)(Abu-Lin & Abdel-Kader, 2016)Yahya, 2010)(Michael & Chamot, 2001).(Holden, 1994) where they aimed to develop the skills of Functional writing through the strategy of self-learning.

The researcher has benefited from previous studies, the following:

- Defining the concept of functional writing.
- Identifying the functional writing areas, and its importance in different educational stages.
- Identifying the functional writing skills.

Stages of Functional writing

The written work begins before it begins, and ends after it is finished. This statement means that the process of functional writing has more one stage. Literatureas: (Fdal-allah, 2008)(El-Teton, 2009)(Al-Haddad, 2005)(Abu-Sakinah, 2004)(Hussein, 2006) (Abbas, 2005)(Awad, 2002)(J. M. Obaid, 2004) (Fahmy, 2002) that the process of functional writing has the following three stages:

1- The first stage: starts before the beginning "before the start of the actual writing".

2- The second stage: it is the writing stage.

3- The third stage: it is post-writing.

Types and skills of functional writing.

Functional writing has many areas, including different modes of communication in actual writing in life situations. Literature(Abdul-Hamid, 1998) Mousa, 1995) (Atta, 2005)(Atta, 1990)(Aser, 2000)(H. S. Shehata, 2015)(Al-Mazroui, 2012)(Ahmed, 2011) Yassin, 2010) (Katab, 2015)(Fdal-allah, 2008) show that functional writing includes several areas, and the most important ones as following;

1. Letters writing skills.
2. Writing Telegrams skills.
3. Summary Writing Skills.
4. Essay writing skills.
5. Report writing skills.
6. Skills of writing banners (advertisements).
7. Skills of preparing the opening and closing words.
8. Skills of filling the forms.
9. Meeting Minutes Writing Skills.
10. Skills of writing reference lists.
11. Skills of recording notes.

Functional Writing Skills

Functional Writing Skills has specific skills for each of its areas. The following is an explanation of each:

(1)   Letters writing skills:

Messages or letters are social activity written by individuals to eliminate some of their social demands. The letters are divided into social (personal or brotherhood) and official (interest, administrative or diwaniya) messages. These types of messages are used by the person inside and outside his country. It has various purposes and types (Al-Shanti, 2001, p. 175).

Teaching Writing the Letters, must emphasis on skills (Younis, Al-Naqa, & Taima, 1986, p. 114) such as;

- Writing Basmalah in the middle of the discourse.
- Writing the name of the addressee or its name on the right side of the letter.
- Writing a beginning greeting.
- Viewing the subject of the message that fits its purpose.
- Writing the conclusion of the letter, and then the end greetings in parallel with the opening greetings.
- Writing the sender name, his signature, and the date of his writing on the left side at the end of the Letters (Al-Shanti, 2001, p. 177).

(2)   Writing Telegrams skills

Telegram is a form of official message in that they are communication aim to achieve a practical purpose. a telegram is a mail form written in urgent or emergency circumstances. telegrams are used to provide information to others or to inform them of matters of concern, as well as express joy or sadness in specific situations (Abdel-Wahed, 1996)(Al-Khatib, 2000)(Sobeih, 2001, p. 78)(H. S. Shehata, 2002, p. 131).

Some literature as: (Al-Khatib, 2000, p. 87) (Sobeih, 2001, p. 78)(Abdel-Wahed, 1996, p. 45)(H. S. Shehata, 2002, p. 131)(H. S. Shehata, 2002, p. 131) explained that the Writing Telegrams skills are:

- The telegram clerk shall specify the data of the consignee of the Telegrams.
- Specifying the sender data of the telegram shall specify its data.
- Accuracy and concise use of language.
- Organize the information and place it in its designated places.
- The ability to write the name and address of the addressee and the sender's name and address in the appropriate place.

(3)   Summary Writing Skills

A functional field of writing required by many linguistic positions. Students need to write a summary of a paragraph or subject within the classroom. at the same time it is a skill of basic writing skills that can't be dispensed with any person(Fdal-allah, 2008, p. 244).

It expresses very clearly the basic ideas of the text in a few words, without prejudice to its content and original essence. The quality criterion is to get rid of useless, and to keep the important, whether basic or subsidiary idea. The summary is based on brevity with clarity of ide(Yassin, 2010, p. 178).

Some of the skills that need to be taken into account when teaching writing the summary are the following (Abdul-Hamid, 1996):

- Emphasize the main ideas of the subject.
- Surround the main ideas of the subject.
- Distinguish between main and subsidiary ideas, and important and unimportant sentences and words.
- Organizing, arranging and sequencing ideas in a logical way.
- Clarity of ideas.

(4)   Essay writing skills

The article is about a set of paragraphs dealing with one subject that is difficult to discuss in one paragraph. Through the article you can view or discuss an idea or some ideas (H. S. Shehata, 2002, p. 262).

It should be taken into account when teaching writing essays the following skills(Manna, 2008, p. 64; Mustafa, 2003):

- Develop an appropriate address.
- Writing a systematic and methodological introduction to the topic of the article.
- Surround the contents of the article.
- Treating all aspects of the article topic.
- Gives an opinion and Persuades the reader.
- Writing an abstract conclusion to the subject of the article.

(5)   Report writing skills

The report is one of the areas of Functional writing that is of great importance in life. A person needs to write a report about a trip, position or experience he or she has passed in different situations, that need to be written(Essawi, 2000, p. 81).

The report is a written presentation of the facts and data of a particular subject or problem. It may extend to scientific analysis, draw conclusions and follow up with recommendations and proposals on the subject or problem(Fdal-allah, 2008, p. 178).

Teaching Writing the report, must emphasis on skills (Younis et al., 1986, p. 114) such as;

- Define the report (individual or organization).
- Identify the subject of the report.
- Write the body of the report in concise statements.
- Formulation of recommendations.
- Signature of the writer of the report.

(6)   Skills of writing banners (advertisements):

Advertisements (banners) is one of the types of functional text. A person needs to write the advertisements in different life situations.

Teaching Writing advertising, must emphasis on skills (Khater & Chalabi, 1994, p. 145) such as;

- Organization and clarity.
- Accuracy in data usage and concise.
- Good formatting of the ad sheet.
- Choose the right words that are obvious.
- Formulate words in proper sentences.
- Agree the terms used with the goal of the Advertisements.
- Writing the body of the advertisement.
- Knowledge of the assets of a place to comment and good while.
- Focus on banners on educational values.

(7)   Skills of preparing the opening and closing words

Teaching Writing opening and closing words, must emphasis on skills(Abdel-Zaher, 2007)(H. S. Shehata, 2002, p. 81) such as;

- Use appropriate sentences for the denominator.
- Selection of words that perform the meaning accurately and clearly.
- Brief, include the opening speech or final paragraphs or three paragraphs.
- Diversification between the structural and cognitive methods.
- Select appropriate ideas.
- Accuracy of citations and safety of recruitment.
- Choose the appropriate opening word.
- Preparation of opening speeches for different occasions.

(8)   Skills of filling the forms

Forms are a field of functional writing used by man in all stages of his life, and require the ability to

write data in the space allocated to them(Younis et al., 1986, p. 141).

The forms are the most common types of functional text used in various life situations during and after study. These include filling out the general exam forms, loan forms from libraries, and application forms (H. S. Shehata, 2002, pp. 258-289).

Filling out the forms requires special skills(Hilal, 2010, p. 66)(H. S. Shehata, 2002, p. 279)such as:

- Use personal information accurately and clearly (name, address, and housing).
- Writing in the places designated for writing without an increase or decrease.
- Implementation of instructions written in the margin of the form or the beginning.

(9)　　Meeting Minutes Writing Skills

Minutes of meetings A written work to be initiated during the meeting, which is finalized after it, and presented before the next meeting for review and approval. Also an official document can be consulted for an order, a decision, or a retrieval of events (Fdal-allah, 2008, p. 34).

Teaching Writing Meeting Minutes events, must emphasis on skills(Abd-Ella, 2010, p. 188), such as;

- Write the title of the record.
- Determine the time and place of the meeting.
- Specify attendee names.
- Presentation of the agenda.
- Registration of meeting decisions.
- Specifies the end time of the meeting.
- Signature of attendance.

(10)　　Skills of writing reference lists

Writing bibliography is a field of writing that is necessary to prepare a set of references to study a problem and to identify the names of books, stories and fields that fit a particular classroom(Khater & Chalabi, 1994, p. 146).

This type of writing is needed by students of higher education levels, especially secondary school students, because they prepare for university education, which requires the use of references in their research(Hilal, 2010, p. 68).

Teaching writing references must emphasis on skills as the following(H. S. Shehata, 2002, p. 263):

- Name of full author.
- Name the book, publisher, place of publication, and date.
- Name the article and the name of the magazine that it contains, number, and year.
- Organize the references by author's name or title of the book.
- Give titles to books, articles, and magazines.
- The order in the order of publications.

(11)　　Skills of recording notes

It is intended to record notes: train students to record and record their observations on each experience of importance in their daily lives, and be observed in the form of points that reveal the view of students in that experience (Abdel-Zaher, 2007, p. 84).

Teaching recording notes must emphasis on skills, such as(Megawer, 2000, p. 583);

- Ability to write logical.
- Draw the attention of others to what should be noted in their activities.
- Draw their attention to the importance of the accuracy of their words and clarity.

Discussion

Writing is the purpose of teaching the language. The importance of functional writing for every human being in society stems from the fact that each individual has physical and social interests and needs that require writing. The functional writing relates to transactions and administrative requirements, and facilitates the work of the interests, companies, government departments and others. It is the official writing with specific rules, standardized assets and customary traditions among employees. The current study is concerned with the presentation of the areas of writing skills that should be taught to students to achieve their needs and to become active in society.

The present study addressed the following:

- - The concept of functional writing, and the objectives of teaching.
- - Functional writing standards.
- - Elements of the functional text.
- - Text writer style.
- - Functional writing areas.

The study presented skills for each of these areas of functional writing.

- Letters writing skills.
- Writing Telegrams skills.
- Summary Writing skills.
- Essay writing skills.
- Report writing skills.
- Skills of writing banners (advertisements):
- Skills of preparing the opening and closing words.
- Skills of filling the forms.
- Meeting Minutes Writing Skills.
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