Teaching and Learning English Functional Writing: Investigating Egyptian EFL Student Teachers' Currently-Needed Functional Writing Skills

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Abstract:

Abstract. At an age marked by the emergence of new literacies, vast technological developments, and social networking practices, language is currently approached from a pragmatic perspective that recognises its functional use to meet realistic communicative goals. Taking this into account, the present study sought to identify the functional writing skills needed by EFL student teachers and suggest some methods/techniques for teaching functional writing in English language courses at Egyptian public schools. To reach this two-folded objective, the researcher employed a mixed-method research design that included both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods/techniques. More specifically, after composing a comprehensive functional writing skills list based on thematic analysis of a number of documents (n=50), an online survey was administered to a group of EFL teacher educators (n=40) requesting them to rate each skill in the list in terms of its importance on a 5-point Likert scale. Then, a semi-structured interview was conducted with some EFL teacher educators (n=15) to identify the working methods/techniques which could be valid and appropriate nowadays for teaching English functional writing at Egyptian public schools. The study reached a preliminary list of functional writing skills (54 items under 9 main categories) as well as a final list and taxonomy of those items re-ordered descendingly based on statistical means (max= 5.00) calculated through SPSS based on participants' ratings. Additionally, the study proposes a set of methods/techniques to be used for teaching functional writing at Egyptian public schools derived from interviewees' accounts (e.g. active learning strategies, collaborative learning, and online learning).

Keywords:

Keywords: EFL student teachers; functional writing; functional writing skills; pragmatic competence; teaching functional English; teaching functional writing

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