

Rhetorical Composition Worktext and Students' Writing Skills in English

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ABSTRACT : This study determined the quality of Rhetorical Composition Worktext and the students' creative writing performance. This was conducted at Sultan Kudarat State University, Tacurong City, Philippines. The English and Literature teachers, as well as, the Sophomore Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) students served as the participants of the study. This study was an experimental in type and utilized the pretest, posttest and random systematic sampling which represented the two level treatments: the rhetorical composition worktext (experimental group) and the traditional instruction (control group). The descriptive-evaluative design was also utilized to determine the quality of rhetorical composition worktext in terms of content, relevance, acceptability, and instructional quality. The Rhetorical Composition Worktext was qualitatively described as Very Satisfactory. The level of performance in composition writing of the control group based on their pretest and posttest scores were described as Low Performance and Moderate Performance respectively. The experimental group's level of performance in composition writing based in their pretest and posttest scores were described as Low Performance and High Performance respectively. The control group's level of performance in composition writing revealed that there is a significant difference between the levels of performance in composition writing in favor of posttest. The experimental group's level of performance in composition writing revealed that there is a significant difference between the levels of performance in composition writing. The control and experimental groups' level of performance in composition writing revealed that there is a significant difference between the levels of performance in their composition writing. The results showed that Rhetorical Composition Worktext is applicable and can be used as a tool in developing the composition writing activities of the students. The Work text in Rhetoric should be used in teaching Creative Writing for the development of students' writing skills; there should be a serious deliberation on Logos for students to be trained in using good reasoning; and writing courses should be established to discourage students' frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraphing.

Keywords: Rhetoric, composition, rhetorical composition, ethos, pathos, logos, writing, skills, writing skills.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many countries around the world claim that their college graduate students cannot write well and it affects the economic status of the country. The decline of writing skills in young people is a serious concern. The college essay bypass as mentioned above, it's an indicator that the country might be headed. There is hope for teaching students to be proficient, if not highly competent writers given the number of concerned educators. The ability of the college students to write clearly and competently, both in first year composition and beyond, is often questioned but with appropriate instruction, sufficient motivation, intentional curricular design, and

recognized good practices for writing in the disciplines, these students could and did write at or near very high levels of accomplishment, Johnson and Krase (2012).

The Philippines experiences the same problem with regards to the decline of writing skills of Filipino graduates which reflects lack of analytical and critical thinking. Yet many education experts have pointed out that schools fail to adequately teach students either of those things in secondary school and beyond. Students are more often taught what to think, not how to think, and as a result often don't understand how to expand on ideas, apply rules in a broader sense, or even begin to understand what constitutes great writing. Actually, students can become great writers, when they have to learn at least two basic things: the rules of good writing and how to think critically and creatively (<http://www.braintrack.com/blog/2012/11/why-college-students-today-cant-write/>).

The knowledge about rhetoric can be helpful on how to develop critical thinking among the students. Rhetoric is a term that is widely used in many forms which often talk as an art of persuasion. But for the purposes of writing it fits into three distinct categories as: pathos (emotion based persuasion), ethos (credibility behind the persuasion) and logos (logic based persuasion). In these three distinct categories the creativity of the students to create a composition becomes broader.

The major goal of this study is to create an instructional material as teaching aid for writing in English. It has a solid foundation on developing the critical thinking among the students so that they learn the different techniques in writing using the three distinct categories. As soon as the students learn to formulate composition the rules of good writing follows. The most important is that the students are able to write a coherent composition with strong foundation. It is giving a new twist in teaching writing.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

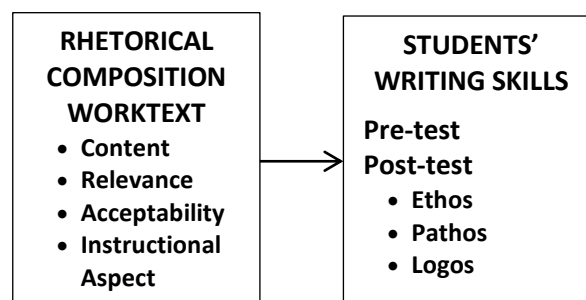


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aims to develop the writing skills in English of the students using rhetoric. The findings of this study will serve as the basis for a proposed instructional tool in the development of the writing skills of the students in English using rhetoric.

Specifically the study will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of quality of rhetorical composition module in terms of:
 - 1.1 content;
 - 1.2 relevance;
 - 1.3 acceptability; and
 - 1.4 instructional quality?
2. What is the control and experimental groups' level of performance in their pretest and posttest in composition writing?
3. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the control group in composition writing?

4. Is there a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group in composition writing?
5. Is there a significant difference between control and experimental groups in their levels of performance in composition writing?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Research Design

The descriptive design was utilized to determine the quality extent of rhetorical composition worktext in terms of its content, relevance, acceptability, and instructional qualities. This study also employed the Experimental Research Design (ERD) utilizing the pretest and posttest (two group designs).

Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in the Sultan Kudarat State University ACCESS Campus, EJC Montilla, Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat during SY 2016-2017.

The Subjects

The subjects of the study were the 60 BSED Second Year students of Sultan Kudarat State University-ACCESS Campus, EJC Montilla, Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat, Philippines who were enrolled in Engl. 221 (Creative Writing) course during Second Semester, SY 2016-2017. These students were randomly chosen based on their grades in English ranging from 2.00 – 2.50 during first semester.

Research Instrument

The instruments for this research were the rhetorical composition worktext, the test, and the validation instrument. The test instrument was the worksheet in Ethos, Logos and Pathos that lasted up to 50-60 minutes per session for an average student. A validation instrument was accomplished by a panel of evaluators composed of English teachers. They evaluated the worktext in terms of its content, relevance, acceptability, and instructional quality. The indicators were tailored from the criteria set in evaluating instructional materials adapted from the study of Herrera (2011).

Scale	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent	Interpretation
5	4.30-5.00	Excellent	meets 81% of quality
4	3.40-4.20	Very Satisfactory	meets 61-80% of quality
3	2.60-3.39	Satisfactory	meets 41-60% of quality
2	1.80-2.59	Fair	meets 21-40% of quality
1	1.00-1.79	Poor	below 21% of quality

The teacher-made pretest and posttest were anchored on the writing prompts made by the researcher and were validated by experts in the field...

To identify the students' level of writing performance, compositions were rated by the three teachers and described according to the ESL composition profile as shown below.

Areas in Composition Writing	Raw Score	Verbal Description
Ethos	25	Excellent
	18-24	Very Good
	11-17	Fair
	5-10	Very poor
Pathos	25	Excellent
	18-24	Very Good
	11-17	Fair
	5-10	Very poor
Logos	25	Excellent
	18-24	Very Good
	11-17	Fair
	5-10	Very poor

*Adapted and modified from ESL rubrics in composition writing. 2016

To describe the performance in each of the specific area in composition writing, Ebel's Criteria was used. The criteria mentioned by Matullano (1991) and as cited by Poblador (2005), which described the levels of development of certain skills are shown below:

Score	Descriptive Equivalent	Interpretation
81 & above	Very high performance	shows superior writing skills
61-80	High performance	shows clearly competent writing
41-60	Moderate performance	shows adequate writing skills
21-40	Low performance	developing writing competence
1-20	Very low performance	weak writing skills

Validation Procedure

Validation of the instruments was done through a panel of teachers on testing for their comments, suggestions, or other courses of action to ascertain its content validity. A letter was personally given to the teachers asking for their expertise in evaluating the content of the module followed by a questionnaire wherein they were asked to write their ratings, suggestions and comment.

Data Gathering Procedure

A permit to conduct the study was solicited from the President of the University and the Dean of College of Teacher Education Sultan Kudarat State University ACCESS Campus.

Upon the completion of the Work text, it was subjected to evaluation by the English teachers using the instrument prepared by the researcher. It was then be introduced and implemented to a group of students.

Written outputs were given to the three English teachers for checking. The data will be consolidated by the researcher and a softcopy of the table with the ratings from the teachers were given to the statistician for computation.

Statistical Treatment

This part of the study was composed of the systematic presentation and analysis of the data gathered from the study. These included the statistical tools to be used in the interpretation of the data.

Mean was employed in the evaluation of the content, relevance, acceptability, and instructional qualities of Work text as well as describing the performance of the students in the pretest and posttest.

The t-test was used in the computation of the significant difference between the pretest and posttest results and the significant effect of rhetorical composition instruction on the students' writing performance.

2. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Summary of Grand Mean Ratings on the Work text

Table 1 presents the summary of grand mean ratings on the content, relevance, acceptability and instructional aspect of the Work text.

Table 1. Over-all Mean rating of the Work text in terms of Content, Relevance, Acceptability and Instructional Aspect

Indicators	Means	Verbal Description
Content	4.09	Very Satisfactory
Relevance	4.29	Very Satisfactory
Acceptability	4.24	Very Satisfactory
Instructional Aspect	4.28	Very Satisfactory
Overall Mean	4.225	Very satisfactory

Table 1 reveals the summary of grand mean ratings on the content, relevance, acceptability and instructional quality of the Work text. The evaluation showed that out of the 10 indicators, the highest mean rating of **4.29** with the verbal description of very satisfactory was garnered by the relevance of the topics and exercises in the module. Next to relevance was its instructional quality, **4.28**, still very satisfactory which shows that using Work text is effective on students. This indicator was followed by acceptability, **4.24**, described as very satisfactory, and tells that teachers do accept the idea of using Work text as a strategy in creative writing.

Finally, the lowest mean rating of **4.09** with the verbal description of very satisfactory was obtained by the content, but, still described as very satisfactory.

The over-all mean rating for the acceptability is **4.225**, which qualitatively describes the Work text as very satisfactory and meets **61-80%** of the quality standard.

It implies reveal that using Work text as a strategy is relevant to the instructional quality of creative writing, thus accepted by the English teachers.

Level of Performance in Composition Writing of the Control and Experimental Groups in their Pretest and Posttest

For problem number two, Table 2 presents the control and experimental groups level of performance in composition writing in their pretest and posttest.

Table 2. Mean Rating and Verbal Description of the Control and Experimental Groups' Pretest and Posttest Scores

Indicators	Pretest	Posttest
Control	34.87	47.63
Experimental	36.13	52.07
Verbal Description	Low Performance	Moderate Performance

Table 2 shows that the pretest mean scores of the control and experimental groups' level of performance in composition writing obtained **34.87** and **36.13** were described as low performance. It implies that the students show developing writing competence, while the posttest mean scores **47.63** and **52.07**, regarded as moderate performance, indicates that students show adequate writing skills.

It implies that there is a difference in the mean scores as well as in the performance of the students, from low performance to moderate performance. This difference is the outcome of the teaching – learning process. On the other hand, experimental group shows relatively moderate performance with the use of worktext in rhetoric.

To answer problem number three, the significant difference between the pretest and posttest on the level of performance in composition writing of the control group in terms of ethos, pathos ad logos is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. t-test Analysis of the Control Group's Level of Performance in Composition Writing in terms of Ethos, Pathos and Logos between the Pretest and Posttest Means Scores

Areas in Writing	Pretest	Post test	Difference	t_c	$t_{crit}(.05)$	Interpretation
Ethos	13.23	17.93	4.80	8.94	2.045	Significant
Pathos	11.47	15.7	4.53	11.24	2.045	Significant
Logos	10.57	14.00	3.43	8.97	2.045	Significant
TOTAL	34.87	47.63	12.77	12.86	2.045	Significant

Table 3 shows the t-test analysis on the control group's level of performance in terms of ethos, pathos and logos between the pretest and posttest means scores in composition writing. Since the computed t of each area is greater than the critical value_(0.05) of **2.045**, the decision is to reject H_0 . Therefore, there is a significant difference between the level of performance in composition writing of the control group in terms of Ethos, Pathos and Logos. It implies that their prior knowledge has increased about **12.77** differences of pretest and posttest scores; thus, students have learned something in the teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, there is a need to conduct a pretest and posttest to the control group because even if there is no intervention, it is important to test whether the students learned appropriate information or knowledge using the traditional way of teaching. To answer problem number four, the significant difference between the pretest and posttest on the level of performance in composition writing of the experimental group in terms of Ethos, Pathos and Logos between the Pretest and Posttest Means Scores is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. t-test Analysis of the Experimental Group's Level of Performance in Composition Writing in terms of Ethos, Pathos and Logos between the Pretest and Posttest Means Scores

Areas in Writing	Pretest	Post test	Difference	t_c	$t_{crit}(.05)$	Interpretation
Ethos	13.23	19.37	6.12	13.42	2.045	Significant
Pathos	11.47	17.33	5.87	12.31	2.045	Significant
Logos	11.43	15.37	3.93	10.50	2.045	Significant
TOTAL	36.13	52.07	15.93	15.07	2.045	Significant

Table 4 shows the t-test analysis on the experimental group's level of performance in composition writing in terms of Ethos, Pathos and Logos between the pretest and posttest mean scores. Since the computed t is greater than the critical value_(0.05) of **2.045**, the decision is reject H_0 . Therefore, there is a significant difference between the level of performance in composition writing of experimental group as shown in their pretest and posttest scores.

It implies that the experimental group attained knowledge than previous writing as shown in the over-all difference of **15.93**. For problem number 5, table below presents the significant difference between the control and experimental groups' mean gain scores in terms of Ethos, Pathos and Logos in composition writing.

Table 5. t-test Analysis of the Control and Experimental Groups' Mean Gain Scores in Composition Writing in terms of Ethos, Pathos and Logos between the Pre-test and Post-test

Areas in Writing	Control	Experimental	Difference	t_c	$t_{crit}(.05)$	Interpretation
Ethos	4.80	7.20	2.40	3.640	2.002	Significant
Pathos	4.53	7.67	3.13	6.310	2.002	Significant
Logos	3.43	7.13	3.70	7.246	2.002	Significant
TOTAL	10.91	20.62	9.71	8.66	2.002	Significant

Table 5 indicates the t-test analysis of the mean gain scores in composition writing of the control and experimental groups. Since the computed t is greater than the critical value_(0.05) of **2.002**, the decision is reject H_0 . Therefore, there is a significant difference between the level of performance in composition writing of the control and experimental groups.

Considering that students are in the same range of intellect based on their grades, the difference of learning using the traditional (chalk-talk) method and the use of work text is evident. The results show that students inclined to use the work text manifests relatively higher improvement in composition writing than that of students learning through the traditional way of teaching.

3. SUMMARY

This study focused on the quality of Rhetorical Composition Worktext and the students' creative writing performance. This study was conducted at Sultan Kudarat State University, College of Teacher Education-ACCESS, EJC Montilla, Tacurong City. The English and Literature teachers, as well as, the Sophomore Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) students served as the participants of the study. Results were gathered through a questionnaire and the given pretest and posttest.

This study was an experimental in type and utilized the pretest, posttest and random systematic sampling. This study represented the two level treatments: the rhetorical composition worktext (experimental group) and the traditional instruction (control group).

The descriptive-evaluative design was also utilized to determine the quality of rhetorical composition worktext in terms of content, relevance, acceptability, and instructional quality.

The following are the significant findings of the study:

Based on the evaluation conducted by the teachers, the Rhetorical Composition Worktext yielded to an over-all grand mean of 4.225, which qualitatively described the worktext as Very Satisfactory. Each characteristic garnered the following grand mean ratings: content had 4.09; relevance had 4.29; acceptability had 4.24; and instructional aspect had 4.28. These characteristics are all rated as Very Satisfactory.

The level of performance in composition writing of the control group based on their pretest and posttest scores obtained the respective mean scores of 34.87 and 47.63 respectively. It clearly shows that their pretest described as Low Performance and that would mean that, students show developing writing competence while their posttest described as Moderate Performance and also means that students show adequate writing skills.

The experimental group's level of performance in composition writing based in their pretest and posttest scores had obtained the respective mean scores of 36.13 in the pretest, described as Low Performance and means that students show developing writing competence, and, 52.07, described as High Performance and mean that students show adequate writing skills.

The t-test for determining whether there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores on the control group's level of performance in composition writing revealed that the computed t was equal to

12.86 and greater than the critical value (0.05) of 2.045. The decision is to reject the H₀. This indicates that there is a significant difference between the levels of performance in composition writing in favor of posttest as shown by its mean score of 47.63.

The t-test for determining whether there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores on the experimental group's level of performance in composition writing revealed that the computed t which is equal to 15.07 is greater than the critical value (0.05) of 2.045. The decision is to reject H₀. This indicates that there is a significant difference between the levels of performance in composition writing in favor of the posttest as shown by its mean score of 52.07.

The t-test for determining whether there was a significant difference between the control and experimental groups' level of performance in composition writing revealed that the computed t was equal to 8.66 and greater than the critical value(0.05) of 2.002. The decision is to reject the H₀. This indicates that there is a significant difference between the levels of performance in composition writing as shown by the mean scores of controlled and experimental groups of 10.91 and 20.62, respectively.

The results showed that Rhetorical Composition Worktext is applicable and can be used as a tool in developing the composition writing activities of the students.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the researcher concluded that the developed work text in persuasive writing (rhetoric) is applicable and a very good strategy in teaching creative writing among college students. It is manifested in the outcome of the study that there is a significant difference in the composition writing performance of the control and experimental groups in terms of Ethos, Pathos and Logos as shown in the difference which is considered as the learning development of students using the work text. It also implies that the experimental group's writing skills were developed compared to the writing performance of the control group.

5. RECOMMENDATION

Considering these findings, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Work text in Rhetoric may be used in teaching Creative Writing for the development of students' writing skills;
2. there may be a serious deliberation on Logos for students to be trained in using good reasoning;
3. writing courses may be established to discourage students' frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and paragraphing;
4. further study is also suggested to develop a course pack of Work text with basic English grammar and Picture-writing integration in teaching.

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How to cite this article: CRISTOBAL MILLENES AMBAYON, *Rhetorical Composition Worktext and Students' Writing Skills in English, Asian. Jour. Social. Scie. Mgmt. Tech.* 2(5): 72-81, 2020.