

**Investigating The Washback Effects On Improving The Writing Performance Of
Iranian EFL University Students**

Sholeh Kolahi

English Language Department
Azad University
3rd Floor, No.1372, Alborz 5 (Barzegarpour)
Alborz St, Marzdaran Boulevard
Postcode 1463853581
Iran

Tel: +9821 4424 2488
Fax: +9821 4425 1241

Sholeh_Kolahi@yahoo.com

INVESTIGATING THE WASHBACK EFFECTS ON IMPROVING THE WRITING PERFORMANCE OF IRANIAN EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

Because of the complex nature of writing as a social, cultural and cognitive phenomenon, and the variety of challenges faced by both learners and teachers, learning and teaching writing in EFL context, this study aimed to investigate the washback effects on improving Iranian EFL students' writing performance. Two research questions were addressed. The first was whether the test-oriented writing classes provide teachers with a taxonomy of more common errors in university EFL learners' scripts or not. The second aimed at investigating the significance of the difference in the writing performance of university EFL learners receiving washback treatment and those taught by the traditional method. The subjects of the research were ninety Iranian university EFL students, making up two intact classes of third-year majors. There were forty-five students per class, which consisted almost entirely female. The control group continued the traditional way of practicing writing in the classroom. The experimental group received washback-based instruction. The instructional program was then steered toward improving the areas of difficulty and focusing on the aspects that require more practice. The study showed that the rate of grammatical and lexico-semantic errors was more than errors in keeping cohesion, coherence and rhetorical organization. The diagnostic instructional program based on washback effect was satisfactory in improving the students' writing performance.

Key words: washback, writing performance

INTRODUCTION

A kindred notion prominent in applied linguistics, especially in Britain, is called “washback”, which is the extent to which the test influences language teachers and learners to do things “they would not necessarily otherwise do”. Alderson and wall (1993,p.117). According to Buck (1988,p.17), there is a natural tendency for both teachers and students to tailor their classroom activities to the demands of the test, especially when the test is very important to the future of the students, and pass rates are used as a measure of teacher success. This influence of the test on the classroom (known as washback by language testers) seems to be of course, very important; this washback effect can be either beneficial or harmful. Hughes (1989,p.1) states simply that “the effect of testing on teaching and learning is known as backwash” (this term being synonymous with washback). He devotes a brief chapter to “achieving beneficial backwash, in which he outlines seven ways of promoting positive backwash (Hughes,1989,pp.44-47). For Shohamy, Donista-Schmidt, and Ferman (1996), Washback is “the connections between testing and learning” (P.298); to Gates (1995), it is “the influence of testing on teaching and learning” (P.101) and for Messick (1996) following Alderson and Wall (1993), washback is “the extent to

which the introduction and use of a test influences language teachers and learners to do things they would not otherwise do that promote or inhibit language learning” (P. 241). He adds an important dimension to the definition of washback when he states that “evidence of teaching and learning effects should be interpreted as washback ... only if that evidence can be linked to the introduction and use of the test”. McNamara (2000) raises the possibility of the type of assessment being an important factor. He sees performance assessments that require integrated content and skills as having more positive washback than discrete item testing which often stifles communicative teaching approaches.

Of course, some language researchers avoid the term “Washback”. There are possibly two reasons. First, the very existence of the concept of washback has been questioned (Alderson and Wall,1993). However, since 1993, a considerable literature has emerged on the topic of washback, which seems to indicate that washback does exist (see, for example, Cheng & Watanabe, forthcoming). Washback can be analyzed into aspects of a curriculum that negative washback can affect and ways that positive washback can be fostered (See Brown 1999, for discussion of both positive and negative washback, or Brown, 2000 for more details on fostering positive washback). Second, many authors simply use other terms for the same basic concept as washback and thereby avoids the term. For example, in the general education literature, this concept is sometimes referred to as backwash, while elsewhere it is referred to variously as test impact, test feedback, curriculum alignment, and measurement driven instruction.

Washback, whether it is positive or negative, can be a potential boon or threat to language teaching curriculum (broadly defined) because, through washback, a test can steer a curriculum in one direction or another (in terms of teaching, course content, course characteristics, and / or class time) either with or against the better judgment of the administrators, teachers, students, parents, etc.

Factors to be Considered in Designing a Test of Writing to Provide a Basis for Washback Effect

For washback effect to be effective in improving the students’ writing ability, the test of writing should be designed according to the identification of the ability we are intending to test. This in turn requires identifying the factors other than the ability we are intending to test that may be engaged by the test task, so that we can attempt to control them to ensure that the inferences about language ability we make on the basis of test results are valid. However, the degree to which a writing test is specifically measuring language as opposed to measuring other cognitive skills is not always clear-cut.

Bachman and Palmer (1996), discuss two main purposes for language tests, of which we can consider writing tests to be a subset. The primary purpose is to make inferences about language ability, and the secondary purpose is to make decisions based on those inferences. These inferences are then used as data for making a variety of decisions at an individual, classroom, or program level. It is possible to make three types of inferences on the basis of a language test: proficiency, diagnosis, and achievement. For the purpose of this article the second and third types are of more importance. Inferences about diagnosis-that is, the strengths and weaknesses of

individual students-are used primarily by teachers to tailor their instruction to meet their students' needs. Inferences about achievement - or the degree to which individuals or groups of students have met specific instructional goals – are used to make decisions about grading and promotion on the individual level, and about modification of instruction on the classroom level.

As mentioned above, the primary purpose of a language test is to make inferences about language ability. So, defining the construct – writing ability – is one of the most fundamental concerns in developing a test of writing. While models of complex cognitive activities such as writing can never be completely accurate (or proven), they are useful for considering the various factors that influence the process. An early and influential model of the writing process was that of Hayes and Flower (1980) which considered writing as a recursive and not a linear process: thus instruction in the writing process may be more effective than providing models of particular rhetorical form and asking students to follow these models in their own writing. Hayes's model (1996) is an update version of the Hayes-Flower model and that of Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) focused on some issues which helped the two models to complete each other. The Hayes model attempts to outline the various influences on the writing process, particularly those internal to the writer, while the Bereiter and Scardamalia model addresses the different processes followed by expert versus novice writers. While both of these models are based on first language writing, they have important implications for second-language writing as well. Grabe and Kaplan's Model (1996) removes shortcomings of the previous models and provides a detailed list of the components of language knowledge relevant to writing. This view of language knowledge building on the work of Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980), and Bachman (1990), divides language knowledge into three types: linguistic knowledge, discourse knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge. Linguistic knowledge includes knowledge of the basic structural elements of the language, sociolinguistic knowledge includes knowledge of the ways in which language is used appropriately in a variety of social settings, and discourse knowledge refers to knowledge of the ways in which cohesive text is constructed. Current scholarship in the field seems to have arrived at a consensus position that communicative language ability consists of interactions, between aspects of language knowledge, on the one hand, and strategic competence, on the other hand, as set forth by Bachman (1990) and Modified by Bachman and Palmer (1996). (See, for example, McNamara, 1996, and Douglas, 2000, for thoughtful discussions of the Bachman and Palmer Model of communicative language ability).

As opposed to the Grabe and Kaplan taxonomy of language knowledge specifically relevant to writing, the more general taxonomy of components of language ability put forth by Bachman and Palmer (1996) and Douglas (2000) Consists of grammatical knowledge, or knowledge of the fundamental building blocks of language, textual knowledge, or knowledge of how these building blocks are put together to form coherent texts, functional knowledge, or knowledge about how language is used to achieve a variety of communicative functions, and sociolinguistic knowledge, or knowledge about how to use language appropriately in different social settings.

Taking all the models into consideration and to make the study more precise and practical, writing ability is divided into communicative effectiveness including relevance and adequacy of content, compositional organization, cohesion, adequacy

of vocabulary for purpose and accuracy including grammar, punctuation and spelling. Moreover, to adjust the assessment process with the objectives of the study portfolio assessment was preferred

Portfolio Assessment

A portfolio can be defined as a purposeful collection of students' works that exhibits to the student (and / or others) the student's efforts, progress, or achievement in a given area' (Northwest Evaluation Association, 1991: 4, cited in Wolcott, 1998). Portfolio assessment is seen by many as an alternative approach to writing assessment that can allow broader inferences about writing ability than are possible with single-shot approaches to evaluating writing, both in the individual classroom and on a larger scale. Weigle,(2002). Hamp-Lyons and Condon,(2000) give nine characteristics that are present at more or lesser degree in portfolios. Of the nine characteristics, the most important components of a portfolio are collection, reflection, and selection, according to Hamp-Lyons and Condon. So, the assessment will greatly fit the present study's requirement to investigate the possibilities of finding relevant answers for the research questions.

THE STUDY

For washback effect to be pedagogically effective in our academic writing classrooms, two general results are necessary. First, it must be shown that it is possible to collect, identify, describe and classify the errors of students through their performance in a writing test and of course statistically determine the rather level of the students' ability in different components of writing ability in comparison with other components. Of course, over the past several years researchers have emerged a consensus that because of the constraints of limited second language knowledge, writing in a second language may be hampered because of the need to focus on language rather than context. Silva (1993), in a review of differences between first and second-language writing, found that writing in a second language tends to be more constrained, more difficult, and less effective (P. 668) than writing in a first language: second language writers plan less, revise for content less, and write less fluently and accurately than first-language writers. In addition, the cognitive processes outlined in Hayes' (1996) Model in particular text interpretation and text generation may be more difficult for second-language writers because of limited language proficiency. The process of text generation, or encoding internal representations (ideas) into written text, may be disrupted by the need for lengthy searches for appropriate lexical and syntactic choices (Weigle,2002). Consequently, the written product may not match the writer's original intention. In other words, following an analytic approach both in the teaching and testing processes clarifies the different components of writing ability expected to be practiced, enhanced and assessed in the typical writing class. Second, the effectiveness of adjusting the instructional program with the features of L₂ which cause problems for the learners (washback effect) in developing the EFL university students' writing ability must be explored.

So, the following research questions were addressed:

1. Do the test-oriented writing classes provide us with a taxonomy of more common errors in university EFL learners' scripts?

2. Is there a significant difference in the writing performance of university EFL learners receiving washback-based treatment and those taught by the routine method?

METHOD

Subjects and Design

The subjects of this research were 90 Iranian university EFL students making up two intact classes of third year majors. There were 45 students per class, almost entirely female and students' assignment into classes was random. The experimental group received washback-based instruction, while the control group continued the routine way of practicing writing in the classroom. The study was conducted for 16 sessions, 1.5 hours each. Before the research began, the students in the two classes were supposed to write a composition based on what they had already been taught and practiced in their advanced writing course during the previous semester on a topic (The Best Age to Live). The students' scripts were rated based on the TEEP attribute analytic scale (Weir, 1990) (available in the appendix) in order to investigate whether there were significant differences in the writing performance of the students in the two groups.

Treatment

The control group of the study was treated according to the routine method. The students had a textbook (Practical writers with Readings, Baily & Powell 1989). They were taught to write five-paragraph essays following models of particular rhetorical forms in their writings. The approach to teach writing was process-oriented and the students were supposed to follow the relevant stages or processes to produce the final drafts. The topics were first discussed in the class and the students went through brainstorming, structuring, focusing, generating, preparing first drafts, peer editing, etc. Some of the scripts were written in the class and some out of the class. All the scripts were corrected by the teacher (researcher) and the necessary comments were given. However, the general framework of the instructional program was reviewing the models and exercises in the book emphasizing on the general design of the essay and paragraph development strategies.

The experimental group received washback-based instruction. The students had the same textbook and the teacher (researcher) taught the general framework of five paragraph essays referring to the models provided in the book. Sometimes the students were supposed to do the exercises and go through the activities. However, the teacher's main concern was to focus on the students' errors with the aim of describing and classifying them. The results were outlined when all the scripts for any given topic were scored and the students were provided with the feedback. Infact, the main purpose was to draw the students' attention on the areas of difficulty. As it will be shown in data analysis, the learners showed more ability in adapting the models and less accuracy and adequacy of using appropriate vocabularies in different contexts. So to the extent the limited time of each session in a less than ideal class of 45 students permitted, the teacher (researcher) had formal instructions focusing the most common and important problems of the students and the students were often supposed to refer to some grammar and vocabulary books, review the determined

parts and give reports of their activities both in written and oral forms. To motivate the students to share the activities eagerly, the final score was divided into 12 scores for the final exam and 8 scores for the classroom activities. For within class activities to be more effective, different tasks with the purpose of enhancing the students' writing ability were performed. The distinctive feature of the instructional strategies for the experimental group was diagnosis of the specific problems based on the results of the writing tests and directing the teaching program toward meeting the needs and removing the problems.

Data Analysis

The first research question of this investigation involved with the possibility of preparing a taxonomy of the errors in the scripts of EFL university learners in the essay-writing classes. During the 16 sessions of the class, the students produced 10 written samples in the class and the context was quite similar to that of the final exam. The results of error analysis are indicated in two sections in the following tables:

Section A. Grammatical Errors
Table 1: Errors in the use of Tenses

1. Present continuous instead of simple present tense
We are facing with happy people everyday. People are trying to keep their friendship in several ways.
2. Present perfect instead of simple past
I have been born in Tehran. I have graduated from high school two years ago.
3. Simple past instead of past perfect
As I saw in my dream, I wanted to run away. He was very angry about what he said .
4. Past perfect instead of simple past
Last week our relatives from Isfahan had come to visit us.
5. Past continuous instead of simple past
I was knowing that I was successful in konkoor.

Table2: Errors in the use of preposition

1. Omission of Preposition
Statistics doesn't agree \ her claims. We came back \ my town after three years.
2. Redundant use of preposition
We shouldn't discuss about trivial matters. In the garden, I enjoyed from from the peace and tranquility.
3. Wrong use of preposition
*only some examples a. from instead of Of They are afraid from failure. \ I enjoyed from the song of birds. With So, they are satisfied from their life.

To \	b. for instead of He taught playing piano for me. Then I go for sight seeing
---------	--

Table 3: Errors in the Use of Articles

1. Omission of the definite article “the”
* only some examples
a. Before certain geographical names which require the definite article. Last summer we went to \ beach but we couldn’t swim there.
b. Before nouns referring to times of day and night in a generic sense I had a class in \ morning
2. Redundant use of the indefinite article

Of course, the researcher occasionally faced with other grammatical errors such as: Wrong use of active and passive verbs, misplacement of adverbs, errors in the use of conditional sentences or relative clauses and the use of typical Persian constructions in English, But it was really out of the scope of the course to deal with all of them unless the class changed to a grammar class!

Sections B. Lexico-Semantic Errors
a. Try to be relaxed at least 4 or 5 o’clock every day.
b. Tehran is my mother town.
c. The owner of the private ground did not let us have a picnic there.d. Graham Bell was a large man.

To analyse the findings of the researcher statistically and to clarify the components of writing ability measured by the TEEP scale, it is necessary to review it. The homogeneity of students is proved as it will be shown in the next part. Instead of a single scale composed of a number of subscales, Weir's scheme (available in the appendix) consists of seven scales, each divided into four levels with score points ranging from 0 to 3. The first four scales are related to communicative effectiveness, while the others relate to accuracy. The TEEP scale was extensively piloted and revised to make sure that it could be applied reliably by trained raters (Weigle 2002).

To compare and contrast the mean ranks among several variables (here different components), The Friedman test was used. To interpret the results as they are shown in tables 4, 5, the chi-square test is used.

Table 4 Ranks

	Mean Rank
v	3.54
g	3.54
p	3.89
c	4.22
r	4.51
o	4.24
s	4.06

Table 5 Test Statistics

N	110
Chi-Square	35.291
df	6
Asymp.Sig	.000

When the level of significance for chi-square test is smaller than .05, it can be concluded that at least one of the variables differs from others regarding the mean rank. The value .000 for Asymp.Sig shows that the significance level has been less than .01 and only the three decimal numbers are computed and the rest is not given. Table 4 indicates that students' performance has been better respectively in Relevance and adequacy of content (r), Compositional organization (o), Cohesion (c), Spelling (s), Punctuation (p) and adequacy of vocabulary for purpose and grammar had the same rank and of course the lowest. So, it can be concluded that EFL university students attending essay-writing course are more Knowledgeable concerning the content of their course rather than vocabulary adequacy and grammar (accuracy).

The second question motivating this study was whether there were significant differences between the EFL university students' writing performance receiving washback-based instruction and those who received traditional instruction (experimental and control groups). The procedures used to gain the relevant results are as follow:

A group of 110 third year EFL university students of essay-writing course were chosen randomly for the study. A topic (the Best Age to live) was given to the testees and they were supposed to write an essay in 1 hour. The purpose was to choose two homogeneous groups from the participants to serve as the experimental and control groups. The components of the writing ability and the scale used for scoring were the same as the scale used at the final exam after the treatments. (See appendix). A t-test was run to compare the mean scores of the two groups and the analysis of variances.

The statistical description of the two groups is available in Tables 5 & 6.

Table 5 Group statistics

group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
VAR00002 control group	55	13.6182	1.99528	.26904
experimental group	55	15.7455	2.28699	.30838

Table 6 Independent Sample Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variance		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
VAR00000	Equal variance assumed	.750	.388	-5.198	108	.000	-2.12727	.40924	-2.93847	-1.31608
	Equal variance not assumed			-5.198	106.050	.000	-2.12727	.40924	-2.93863	-1.31591

Table 6 shows the significance level is larger than .05 (.388 > .05). So, the groups are homogeneous.

To ensure more homogeneity, 10 scores with the highest and lowest standard deviations in each group were omitted. So, 90 subjects in the experimental and control groups received washback-based and traditional instructions respectively. At the end of the course, i.e. the 16th session, the subjects of both groups were given a topic to write an essay in 1 hour. The scripts of 90 subjects were scored analytically by three raters. The results of the inter-rater reliability showed that there was rather significant agreement among the raters. Tables 7 & 8 indicate the results:

Table 7 Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
rator1	14.9667	2.31968	90
rator2	14.9556	2.17707	90
rator3	14.7778	2.02666	90

Table 8 Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	rator1	rator2	rator3
rator1	1.000	.654	.696
rator2	.654	1.000	.571
rator3	.696	.571	1.000

. The covariance matrix is calculated and used in the analysis

The researcher could now compare the mean of the scores of the final exams of the two groups (rated by herself). The level of significance .035 was smaller than .05. So, the t-observed value was greater than the critical t-value and the mean difference between the two groups was significant. The mean of experimental group (15.6667) was larger than that of the control group (13.2889). Table 9 & 10 show the results:

Table 9 Group statistics

group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
VAR00004 90 aYNi 1.00	45	13.2889	1.54658	.23055
2.00	45	15.6667	2.30612	.34378

Table 10 Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
VAR00004 90 aY	Equal variances assumed	4.593	.035	-5.744	88	.000	-2.37778	.41393	-3.20037	-1.55518
	Equal variance not assumed			-5.744	76.920	.000	-2.37778	.41393	-3.20203	-1.55353

The larger mean of the experimental group indicates that the washback effect-based instruction has been more effective in improving the writing performance of the Iranian EFL university students than the traditional method of teaching writing.

CONCLUSION

Writing can be conceptualized as a linguistic, cognitive, social and cultural Phenomenon. While writing in a first language is a challenging, complex task, it is more so in a second language. It requires the S/F language learner to be both fluent (being communicatively effective) and accurate (using grammatically correct sentences). It seems that at the university level and in EFL context manipulating more effective writing classes requires the diagnosis of the specific areas of difficulty (through washback results) and steering the direction of the instructional programs toward removing the problems with the aim of improving the learners' writing performance. To achieve the appropriate diagnosis, it is necessary to give writing tests to the students and collect, describe and classify their errors and get some kind of taxonomy of errors to form the basis of instructional program. A final writing test at the end of the teaching period would be indicative of the learners' improvement.

REFERENCES

- Alderson, J.C. & Wall, D. (1993). Does washback exist? *Applied Linguistics*, 14, 115-29.
- Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental Consideration in Language Testing*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press
- Baily, Edward P. & Powel Philip A. (1989) *The Practical Writer with Reading*. Holt, New York: The Dryden Press.
- Bereite, C. and Scardamalia, M. (1987). *The psychology of written composition*. Hilldale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Brown, J.D (1999). *The roles and responsibilities of assessment in foreign language education*. *JLTA Journal*, 2, 1-21.
- Brown, J. D. (2000). *University entrance examinations: Strategies for creating positive washback on English language teaching in Japan*. Shiken: JALT Testing & Evaluation SIG Newsletter, 3(2), 4-8. Also retrieved March 1, 2001 from the World Wide Web: http://www.jalt.org/test/bro_5.htm
- Buck, G. (1988): Testing listening comprehension in Japanese university entrance examinations. *JALT Journal* 10. 15-42.
- Canale, M. and Swain, M. (1980). *Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing*. *Applied Linguistics* 1, 1-47.
- Cheng, L. & Watanabe, Y. (forthcoming). *Context and method in washback research: The influence of language testing on teaching and learning*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gates, S. (1995). Exploiting washback from standardized tests. In J. D. Brown & S. O. Yamashita (Eds.), *Language testing in Japan* (pp. 101-106). Tokyo: Japanese Association for Language Teaching.
- Hamp-Lyons and Condon, W. (2000 theory and). *Assessing the portfolio: Principles for practice theory and research*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Hayes, J. R (1996). A new framework for understanding cognition and affect in writing. In C. M. Levy and S. Ransdell (Eds.), *The science of writing*. NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.
- Hayes, J. R. and Flower, L. S(1980). Identifying the organization of writing processes. In L. W. Gregg and E. R. Steinberg (Eds.), *Cognitive processes in Writing* (pp. 31-50). Hilldale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hughes, A. (1989). *Testing for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hymes, D. (1972). On Communicative competence. In J. Pride and A. Holes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics* (pp. 269-93). NY: Penguin. .
- Messick, S. (1996). Validity and washback in language testing. *Language Testing*, 13, 241-256.
- Mc Namara, T. (2000). *Language Testing*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Shohamy, E., Donista-Schmidt, S., & Ferman, I. (1996). Test impact revisited: Washback effect overtime. *Language Testing*, 13, 298-317.
- Silva, T. (1993). Toward an understanding of the distinct nature of L Writing: The ESL research and its implications. *TESOL Quarterly* 27. 657-77.
- Weigle, S. C (2002). *Assessing writing* .Cambridge: CambridgeUniversity Press.
- Wolcott, W. with legg, S. M. (1988). *An overview of writing assessment: Theory, research and practice*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Appendix

A. *Relevance and adequacy of content*

0. The answer bears almost no relation to the task set. Totally inadequate answer.
1. Answer of limited relevance to the task set. Possibly major gaps in the treatment of topic and/or pointless repetition.
2. For the most part answers the tasks set, though there may be some gaps or redundant information.
3. Relevant and adequate answer to the task set.

B. Compositional organization

0. No apparent organization of content.
1. Very little organization of content. Underlying Structure not sufficiently controlled.
2. Some organizational skills in evidence, but not adequately controlled.
3. Overall shape and internal pattern clear. Organizational skills adequately controlled.

C. Cohesion

0. Cohesion almost totally absent. Writing so fragmentary that comprehension of the intended communication is virtually impossible.
1. Unsatisfactory cohesion may cause difficulty in comprehension of most of the intended communication.
2. For the most satisfactory cohesion although occasional deficiencies may mean that certain parts of the communication are not always effective.
3. Satisfactory use of cohesion resulting in effective communication.

D. Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose

0. Vocabulary inadequate even for the most basic parts of the intended communication.
1. Frequent inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Perhaps frequent lexical inappropriacies and/or repetition.
2. Some inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Perhaps some lexical inappropriacies and/or circumlocution.
3. Almost no inadequacies in vocabulary for the task. Only rare inappropriacies and/ or circumlocution.

E. Grammar

0. Almost all grammatical patterns inaccurate.
1. Frequent grammatical inaccuracies.
2. Some grammatical inaccuracies.
3. Almost no grammatical inaccuracies.

F. Mechanical accuracy I (punctuation)

0. Ignorance of conventions of punctuation.
1. Low standard of accuracy in punctuation.
2. Some inaccuracies in punctuation.
3. Almost no inaccuracies in punctuation.

G. Mechanical accuracy II (spelling)

0. Almost all spelling inaccurate.
1. Low standard of accuracy in spelling.
2. Some inaccuracies in spelling.
3. Almost no inaccuracies in spelling.

Teep attribute writing scales (weir, 1990)