CHAPTER 2
THE MAJOR APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF WRITING

2.1 Introduction

As the present study is about the teaching of writing, it would be apt here to describe the major theoretical frameworks available to the teaching of writing. ESL teachers now have many approaches to the teaching of writing to choose from. At least three major approaches can be identified and these are:

1. The Product Approach

2. The Process Approach and

3. The Genre Approach.

Earlier, the product and process approaches had influenced most of the teaching in the ESL classroom. Today, genre approaches have emerged and have influenced the teaching of writing in a big way.

This section will try to provide some insights into these approaches and review them, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. It will conclude with some suggestions from each of them to achieve a better and more synthetic approach to the teaching of writing.
2.2. The Product Approach

This is the most widely and commonly used approach worldwide for teach writing. Hence a brief description of the product approach is given in the next three sections.

2.2.1. The Distinctive Features

Many researchers have discussed the product approach and showed its characteristics. Pincas (1982), for example, contends that product approaches see writing as being primarily about linguistic knowledge, paying attention to the appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax and cohesive devices.

Here is an example taken from Jordan (1989) which shows the product approach method in teaching writing.

**GRAMMAR**

Some areas of language consistently cause difficulty. Some of the main ones have been selected for practice.

In the sentences below there are a number of errors: they have been underlined. On the lines beneath each sentence write the whole sentence correctly.

1. Table 3 is showing that most of this accidents occurs to young children
2. Each worker pay a small money which is taken from their salary.

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

1. Specialist doctors in hospitals can divide into surgeons which operate the body and another specialists which act as consultants.

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

2. The number of schools grewed gradually till 1965 and then ___ number rised suddenly.

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

3. When a country apply for foreign aids ____ is because it has no enough resources of its own.

_________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

(Jordan, 1989, p. 14)

The example above helps the students practice and strengthen writing at the sentence level paying attention to certain areas in grammar. But such practice may give the students the impression that writing is a mastery of grammar rules and that writing can be taught separately from context, audience, and purpose.
Hedge (1988) defines this approach as an approach to writing which examines “the features of written texts” (p. 8). She explains that this approach may include the skills of “getting the grammar right, having a range of vocabulary, punctuating meaningfully, using the conventions of layout correctly, e.g. in letters, spelling accurately, using a range of sentence structures, linking ideas and information across sentences to develop a topic, developing and organizing the content clearly and convincingly” (p.8).

Hedge (1988) states that there is a possibility that this approach may include a list of the forms such as letters and essays, and the functions such as narrative and description of written texts as well as the practice of different features and organization of these different written texts but with focusing on one or a set of general skills “within the context of a whole text” (p. 8). Hyland (2003) indicates that writing, in this approach, may be looked upon as a logical and well-organized placement of words, clauses, and sentences according to rules of a language. He says that this view of writing regards writing as a product of writers’ control over grammar and vocabulary. The way of developing one’s skill of writing, Hyland (2003) explains, is through manipulating and imitating a given text through exercises such as filling the blanks, completing of sentences, transforming of tenses or personal pronouns and other activities.

Jordan (1997) also indicates that in the product approach the learner is provided with a model and different exercises are given to show its
“important features” (p. 165). The students are then asked to write “a similar or parallel text” (p.165). Tickoo (2003) makes it clear that the product approach gives attention to the product of a student’s writing without helping the learner to know “the processes” which “successful writers use” (p. 63). In this approach, he explains, the learner learns the rules of grammar and how to use them.

To put it in a nutshell, product-based approaches view writing as chiefly being knowledge of the structure of language, and the writing development as chiefly being the result of the imitation of the stimulus (i.e. texts) provided by the teacher. (Badger & White, 200; Hyland, 2003)

### 2.2.2. Levels of Teaching Writing

In this approach, Pincas (1982) clarifies; learning how to write has four phases: familiarization; controlled writing; guided writing, and free writing. In the familiarization phase, learners are familiarized with certain features of a particular text. In the controlled and guided writing phases, the learners practise the skills with reducing control preparing them for the free writing phase in which the learners practice real writing activities such as writing a letter and an essay. Similarly, Hyland (2003) holds that this approach has a four-stage process: familiarization in which learners are given “certain grammar and vocabulary through a text” (p. 3), controlled writing in which learners often control or use in a skillful way “fixed patterns from substitution tables” (p. 4), guided writing in which learners imitate given texts, and the
free writing where learners use “the patterns” (p. 4) they have practised in writing an essay, letter, etc.

2.2.3. Limitations of the Product Approach

From what has been said, the product approach seems to create some problems for the students. The first problem is that it gives an indication that the improvement of writing is based on mastering the rules of grammar and vocabulary and teaching through grammar method may be the best criterion for teaching good writing. Hyland (2003) points out four weaknesses in the product approach. First, he maintains that the structural orientation stresses that writing is an act of joining “lexical and syntactic forms” (p. 4) and that good writing is proved through knowledge of these forms and of the rules used to construct texts.

The second problem, Hyland mentions, is that “formal patterns” (p. 4) which are presented to the students are based on the subjective judgment of course-writers and are not based on an analysis of authentic texts. This may result in confusion for the students especially when they decide to write about a topic of different situations. Hyland (2003) explains that written texts are always the reaction of a particular interactive context and that there is no “universal” (p. 5) standard by which good writing is judged since good writing depends on a given context.

The third problem has something to do with meaning. What is important in the product approach is accuracy and usage but not the
communicative content. The communicative content is thought of later. The fourth problem is that the student cannot think about a topic and say what he wishes to say and how to say it. He is not recognized as an individual. Tickoo (2003) says that “In most cases such classroom writing denies the learner an opportunity for self-expression” (p. 63).

2.3. The Process Approach

A new approach named the process approach had emerged which was considered better than the product approach. The distinctive features and the limitations of this approach are given below.

2.3.1 The Distinctive Features

It is evident from what has been discussed that the product approach focuses on producing different kinds of written products, i.e., it focuses only on the end-product of specific different types of genres and does not take into account the act of writing itself. The product approach, however, emphasizes the imitation of different types of model genres, letters, etc. Zamal (1982) contends that the methods that stress on “form and correctness” disregarding the manner ideas are being “explored through writing” will fail to teach the students that the act of writing is mainly “a process of discovery” (p. 195)

Richards et al. (1992) define the process approach briefly as the one which stresses “the composing processes of planning, drafting, and revising”
that help writers while writing. The approach aims to develop the students’ writing skills through the practice of these composing processes.

Here is an example of a task which requires the students to make drafts before they come up with the final text.

1. Culture shock happens when a person has to operate within a new set of cultural rules and value. Write a text, for American travelers to your country, alerting them to the existence of “culture shocks” and giving them some advice on how to cope with it. Before you begin planning your essay, discuss the following texts with two or three other students (text omitted).


It is obvious from the task above that the students will go through several drafts and revisions. However, the task would be more effective or of great use to students when teachers intervene during the ongoing process of composing and offer their students with effective comments or feedback. This is because such intervention may motivate the students to revise, edit and therefore reorganize their ideas in more effective ways.

Thus, the product approach is apparently different from the process approach, since the process approach emphasizes the cognitive processes writers use when writing such as planning, composing, and revising. Liebman – Kleine (1986) says the process is not a belief or a set of beliefs which others
are expected to accept without argument but “a concept” which allows people to understand writing “in a new way and thereby ask questions” which “were not asked” since people understood writing as a finished product (p. 785).

Notwithstanding, Hyland (2003) states that process theories have strongly influenced the development of L2 writing instruction. He clarifies that their proponents have taken and used “the techniques and theories of cognitive psychology and L1 composition” (p. 17) in response to the formal views of writing to improve the ways of understanding and teaching writing.

2.3.2. Theory Underlying the Process Approach

Flower and Hayes (1981) were the first to study and develop the application of the composing processes. They tried to identify the organization of the cognitive processes in writing through their theory-the cognitive process theory of writing. The cognitive process theory, Flower and Hayes (1981) explain, is based on four points.

2.3.2.1. The First Point of the Theory

The first point of the theory claims that the process of writing to a greatest extent, is realized as a series of distinctive thinking processes arranged by writers during the composing process. This point is the stage process model which describes the composing process as a series of stages that are described by the gradual development of the written product.
The writing process, is said to consist of three important elements:

a. **The Task Environment**

b. **The Writer’s long term memory**

c. **The writing process**

**a. The Task Environment**

The environment is that which subsumes all things starting with the “rhetorical problem or assignment” and ending with “the growing text itself” (p. 369).

At the beginning of composing, the rhetorical problem, Flower and Hayes (1981) made it clear, is very complicated; it includes the “rhetorical situation and audience” which motivate a writer to write as well as “the writer’s own goals in writing” (p. 369). All these demands can be dealt with by a writer. As composing goes on, the growing text demands both the writer’s time and attention during composing. These two demands will compete with other two facts which guide the composing process: “the writer’s knowledge in the long-term memory” and “the writer’s plans” for coping with “the rhetorical problem” (p. 371).

For example, Flowers and Hayes (1981) clarify, it is not difficult to see the disagreement between the writer’s knowledge about a topic and what he is willing to say to a particular audience, or between a phrase that complements a sentence and the more difficult idea the writer wants to express. They also clarify that one of the important aspect of writing is to see the way writers
organize and combine the “multiple constraints of their knowledge, plan and text into the process of constructing each new sentence” (p. 371).

b. The Writer’s long-term Memory

The second element is the writer’s long-term memory where the writer’s knowledge of the topic and of the audience as well as knowledge of various writing plans and problem representation are stored. The problem with long-term memory, however, is “the cue” (p. 371) which will help in getting the wanted knowledge out of it. The second problem for a writer is the way of “reorganizing that information to match the demands of the rhetorical problem” (p. 371).

c. The Writing Process

The writing process involves three main processes, namely, planning, translating, and reviewing controlled by a monitor. It would be pertinent here to discuss these processes in some detail.

i. Planning

The first process of the third element of the writing process is planning in which writers make an “internal” and “abstract representation of the knowledge” which “will be used in writing” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 372). Planning has a number of sub-processes: the process of generating ideas and the process of organizing. The process of generating ideas involves bringing the relevant information back from the long-term memory. This information
is sometimes organized in the memory which in turn helps the writer generate standard written English. The process of organizing plays a crucial role in grouping ideas and forming new concepts. That is, it helps the writer discover categories, look for both subordinate ideas which improve a current topic and the superordinate ideas which include the current topic. The process of organizing, is influenced by all rhetorical decisions and the plans used to reach the audience since it is directed by the main goals formed in the process of goal setting which may be “procedural” such as “Now let’s see-a- I want to start out with ‘energy’” (p. 372) or “substantive” such as “I have to relate this [engineering project] to the economics [of energy] to show why I’m improving it and why the stream turbine needs to be more efficient” (pp. 372-373).

In addition, goal – setting, Flower and Hayes (1981) make clear, is a main part of the planning process. The writer’s goals are both procedural and substantive. What is important about writing goals is that they are set out by the writer. These goals help a writer generate ideas and those ideas therefore produce a new, more complicated goal which integrates content and purpose. However, goals can be improved and changed not only in pre-writing stage but also in the continuing process of composing so long as writers revise the main goals on the basis of the knowledge they have gained during the process of writing. (372–373).
ii. Translating

The second phase of the writing process is the process of translating. Flower and Hayes (1981) define it as “the process of putting ideas into visible language” (p. 373). The writer’s task is to translate a meaning into a series of syntactical and lexical pieces of written English, which is arranged in a complicated network of relationships. Thus, the writer is required to deal with all the demands of written English: the syntactic and the lexical, which may overload the capacity of short-term memory.

Paying attention to the spelling and grammar may influence the process of planning and produce. Poor planning and that if that are to be ignored, this will also produce errors and in both cases the writer will be affected. Alternatively, as a way out, they mention the result of the set of studies conducted by Bereiter and Scardamalia which point out that children deal with the translation process through modifying and at the end of the process they leave “the discourse conventions of conversation” (p. 374).

iii. Reviewing

The third process which is under the control of a monitor is reviewing. Reviewing is a “conscious process” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 374) where writers read what they have written as a help for further translation or a systematic evaluation and revision of the text. It relies on “two sub-processes: evaluating and revising” (p. 374). Planned reviewing often results in new “cycles of planning and translating” (p. 374). Nevertheless, the process of
reviewing can also take place as an unplanned action caused by evaluating either the text or one’s own planning. The sub-processes of “revising, evaluating, and generating” (p. 374) have the ability to interrupt any other process and take place at any time in the process of writing.

As mentioned earlier, the above processes are controlled by a monitor. Monitoring, Flower and Hayes explain, occurs when writers start composing. They monitor the process of writing and their progress. The function of the monitor is to decide when the writer moves from one process to the next. It determines the process of generating ideas before a writer starts writing a prose. This choice depends on both “the writer’s goals” and “individual writing habits or styles” (p. 374). According to Flower and Hayes, an example of the different composing styles: there are writers who try to reach the finished product on the one hand, on the other hand there are ones who decide to plan the entire text before beginning to write a word.

Thus, the model here recognizes three main processes: planning, translating, and reviewing as well as a set of sub-processes. However, people do not go through these processes in a linear direction, Flower and Hayes indicate that planning is not only restricted to the beginning of the composing stage but can be used at all the levels of composing. Thus, the process of writing does not take place in ordered stages but through a series of optional actions (p. 375).
Figure 3: Structure of the writing model (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 370)

The diagram describes the cognitive process model which involves different processes. It shows that the process of writing does not take place in a linear fashion. For example, knowledge about the writing topic or knowledge from memory can be used in the planning stage and information from ‘planning’ can flow back the other way. This, however, provides evidence that writing is a flow of recursive activities in which writers go backwards and forwards between drafting and revising.

The main point this diagram shows is that writers go repeatedly through a number of cognitive processes as they plan, remember, write, and reread. Nevertheless, the diagram above may give the wrong idea or impression that the writing process is an easy task since it exemplifies the process of writing simply and clearly. This is not true as the process of
writing is complex and cannot be organized and displayed easily when it is in process.

2.3.2.2 The Second Point of Theory

The second point of the cognitive theory says that the processes of writing are organized in a hierarchical system. A particular process may be repeated at any time and embedded in another process or within another example of the process itself. For example, when a writer constructs or forms a sentence in the translating stage, he may encounter a problem and have a look again at the version of the entire written process to overcome this problem. The writer may then generate and organize new ideas, translate them into standard writing and review this new option to expand her / his current goal of translating. This kind of embedding where “an entire process is embedded within a larger instance of itself” is termed in linguistics as “recursion” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 375).

Moreover, a process with a hierarchical system which involves many embedded sub-processes is very effective since it allows a writer to do a lot with the few simple main processes: planning, translating, and reviewing. Therefore, reviewing should not be defined as the only stage in the process of composing but as “a thinking process” (p. 376) that can take place whenever a writer decides “to evaluate or revise” (p. 376).
2.3.2.3 The Third Point of the Theory

The third point, is that which directs the writer to decide, choose, and present the overall purposeful structure of composing. This point claims that “writing is a goal-directed process” (p. 377). In the process of composing, writers formulate a hierarchical network of goals which guide the writing process. Goals are the most important part of the cognitive process theory. People view writing as “a purposeful act” but they do not know when they will finish this act (p. 377).

Therefore, Flower and Hayes (1981) raise a question: how does the writing process gain control over “its coherence, direction, or purpose?” (p. 377). One answer, they say, to this question can be explained by the fact that people forget a number of their goals once these goals are agreed about. The second answer to this question is that the goals themselves are of two kinds: “process and content” (p. 377). Process goals are mainly “the instructions” (p. 377) writers give to themselves which tell about the way the process of writing should be done, whereas content goals and plans determine all things that the writer wants to convey to the audience. Moreover, there are some goals which have something to do with organization which can also determine both process and content goals.

What is important about the content goals, is that they become part of an expanded “network of goals and sub-goals as the writer composes” (p. 377). These networks have three features. The first feature is that they are
produced as soon as the writers start composing. They are not created at the stage of pre-writing but in “close interaction with ongoing exploration and the growing text” (p. 378). The second is that the goal-directed thinking, which makes this network, has a number of “forms” (p. 378). Goal-directed thinking often includes defining the writer’s starting point, designing a plan for achieving a goal or assessing one’s success, which are linked with discovery. However, the writer’s goals, regardless of being “abstract or detailed, simple, or sophisticated” (p. 379) give a sensible reason for moving ahead in the composing process.

The third and last feature is that writers along with creating a hierarchical network of goals, as they compose, call back at their higher-level goals which in turn direct their next step and makes it coherent. Even though there is little understanding of this network and how it is used by writers, one can know the important difference between good and poor writers. Poor writers rely on only surface level goals such as completing a sentence or correcting the spelling of a word. Nevertheless, the third point in the cognitive process theory, concentrates on “the role of the writer’s own goals” (p. 381) which help in explaining the purpose of writing. In brief, in the process of writing, writers, “regenerate or recreate their own goals” on the basis of “what they learn” (p. 381). This leads to the last point of the theory.
2.3.2.4 The Fourth Point of the Theory

The fourth and last point of the cognitive process theory says that “writers create their own goals by generating goals and supporting sub-goals” (p. 381) which represent a purpose and sometimes by recreating their own deep-level goals on the basis of what they have learned by writing. Writing is thought of as a process where knowledge develops as writers write but writers must create the guiding goals for their process. They should also develop an expanded network of feasible “sub-goals” as they write which direct to “more abstract top-level goals such as ‘interest of the reader’ or ‘describe my job’” (p. 381). Writers sometimes have the ability to change or replace the directing goals for writing and planning depending on “what they learned through writing” (pp. 381-382).

These two main processes are generating sub-goals and regenerating of goals. They are of three patterns:

1. Explore and consolidate

2. State and develop

3. Write and regenerate (p. 382).

The explore and consolidate pattern takes place at the beginning of composing or anywhere. The writers often work with high-level goal or plan to explore, i.e. “thinking the topic over” (p. 382), writing the ideas quickly, or starting to write to get grips with what they have to say. The writer goes back
to top-level goal and reviews the information that has been generated. Then
the writer consolidates it and produces “a more new complex idea” by
producing new concepts (p. 382). In the process of consolidating, a new goal
is formulated replacing the goal of exploring, directing the subsequent event
in composing. In addition, if the topic is unknown, demanding creative
thinking, the act of exploring, consolidating and regenerating goals will be a
critical skill for the writer.

In the state and develop pattern, the writer starts with “a relatively
general high-level goal” (p. 384) that he continues to produce or adds to the
sub-goals, as the goals are completely determined, the writer starts translating
them into actual text.

The write and regenerate pattern is similar in some way to the explore
and consolidate pattern but instead of planning, the writer is creating prose. A
very small example of this is when the writer, in his planning, tries to
compose the first sentence of his article. He had done the act of planning
before producing this sentence and this sentence is a detailed representation of
what he planned to say. After writing a sentence, the writer may see that the
sentence is not only inadequate but that his goals could be expanded.

The situation or period between writing and planning, allows the writer
to learn from “a failure” (p. 385) and to create a new goal. Thus, they
conclude, this process of formulating and developing sub-goals, and
sometimes regenerating those goals is an effective creative process. Giving
special importance to the creative writer means placing the important part of creativity “in the hands of the working, thinking writer” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 386).

2.3.2.5 Limitations of the Process Approach

Hyland (2003) sees that the process approach has weaknesses from a social perspective. The first weakness is that this approach views writing as “a decontextualised skill” (p. 18) by considering the individual as an isolated writer expressing personal meanings. What is needed from the writer is to rely on general principles of thinking and composing to set out and communicate their ideas. This, however, would give the learner an access to be active in processing the information but ignoring the real processes of language use. Thus, Hyland clarifies, the process approach tells how some writers write but not why certain linguistic and rhetorical choices are made by them.

The second weakness is that in the process model the teacher’s role is reduced as s/he makes the students themselves respond to their writing. The third weakness is that the students in the process classroom are not provided with conscious teaching “in the structure of the target text types” (p. 19). They are expected to rewrite, or write a ‘second draft’ based on the marginal comments given by their teacher.
2.4. The Genre Approaches

2.4.1. The Distinctive Features

In spite of the dominance of the process models, Hyland (2003) states that they have, for some time, come “under siege from more socially-oriented views of writing” that do not accept “their individualism” (p. 17). Process approaches, he clarifies, have showed greater respect for individual writers and for the writing process itself, but there is little evidence to show their influence on the development of better writing in L2 contexts. The chief reason, Hyland explains, is that process approaches do not address how meanings are constructed socially and they do not look beyond the confines of the individual where purposes are guided, relationships are established and where writing is shaped. Genre-based pedagogies, take advantage of this deficiency giving clear and systematic explanations about how language functions in a social context.

Scholars in the field of genre, Hyon (1996) says, have pictured genres as “oral and written text types” described by “formal qualities and communicative purposes in a social context” (p. 695). Nevertheless, a lot of discussions of genre, as explained by Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998), use “the definitions given by Swales (1990) or Martin (1984)” (p. 308). For Martin et al (2003), genre is “a staged, goal-oriented social process” (p. 7). It is “Social” in that people take part in genres with other people; “goal-oriented” since genres are used to have things done; “staged” since it consumes a few
steps to achieve the goals wanted (pp. 7-8). Swales (1990) views genre in terms of the ‘moves’ that stand for the writer’s social purpose, and comprise ‘steps’ that are optional textual parts.

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share a set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. (p. 58).

For both, Swales and Martin, it is the communicative purpose which brings any genre into existence, shaping the “schematic”, or “beginning–middle–end” structure of the discourse and influencing choices of content and style (Swales, 1990, p. 58; Martin, 1985, p. 86). Moreover, the idea of genre, according to Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998), tells about the linguistic work students should do, the kind of discourses that they should understand and bring into existence. It also helps, they explain, to understand the reason for the shape of a discourse through examining its social context and purpose.
The task above would be of great help to the students since it provides a model for a particular genre and states the context of writing. The context includes the purpose of writing such genre (i.e. a complaint) and the audience to whom such complaint is written (i.e. a shop manager). This would not only help students to write effectively but also makes them aware of what constitutes a particular genre.

The task above, mainly pays attention to the rhetorical structure of a ‘complaint’ genre and the language used to achieve this particular genre. This, however, would not help the students go through the process of writing,
namely, the process of exploring which is really an aspect needed for improving students’ writing.

Nevertheless, genre theory, as explained by Hyland (2003), tries to get grips with both ways individuals use language so as to orient to and explain given communicative situations, and use “this knowledge for literacy education” (p. 22). Three schools of Genre theory have emerged and the following section attempts to describe what Genre theory is according to these three schools.

2.5. The Three Schools of Genre Theory

Hyon (1996), observes that there are three broad, overlapping schools of genre theory. The first one is the “New rhetoric approach”, which explains “a body of North American scholarship” depending on different “disciplines concerned with L1 teaching” such as “rhetoric”, first language “composition studies”, and “professional writing” (p. 696).

The genre scholars of these areas mentioned above are different from those in “ESP” since they concentrated mainly on “the situational contexts” (p. 696) of the genres rather than forms and focused on “the social purposes” (p. 696), or actions, which are achieved by these genres within these situations (Devitt, 1993; Schryer, 1993). Thus, a number of scholars in the ‘New Rhetoric approach’ used “ethnographic” methods rather than “linguistic” ones “for analyzing texts” (p. 696). They focused chiefly on “the
rhetorical contexts” in which genres are used rather than “detailed analyses of text elements” (Schryer, 1993, p. 201).

The second approach, as indicated by Hyon (1993), pays attention to the “linguistic features of different genres” (p. 697). This approach, Hyland (2003) says, is “linguistic” (p. 21) since it views genre as “a class of structured communicative events used by the members of discourse communities who share social purposes” (Swales, 1990, pp. 45-47). These purposes, according to Swales (1990:58), are the reasons behind a genre and help in shaping its structure and in choosing its content and style.

The third approach, Hyon (1993: 696) continues to explain, is known as “Systematic functional linguistics” (p. 696). Hyland (2003) makes it clear, based on Christie and Martin 1997, that this approach puts emphasis on “the purposeful, interactive, and sequential” (p. 21) features of varied genres and how language has a systematic relationship with context through examples of “lexico-grammatical and rhetorical features” (p. 22). Thus, there are different approaches which define and analyse the spoken and written genres.

2.6. The Analysis of Genres and the Cultural Aspect

Johns (1997) stressed the importance of the cultural aspect of genres when they are examined. Examining texts as samples of genres, Johns (1997) holds, encourages the examination of “the structure and content of written discourses” as well as the way “these internal textual elements” get affected by other texts and “social and cultural” (p. 38) aspects in a given context. She
also holds that help should be given to students in conceptualizing the texts in everyday life as genre samples and therefore “socially constructed” which in turn would help them in conceptualizing academic discourses as “socially constructed” genres as well (pp. 38-39). Nevertheless, Johns (1997) says that when genres are examined, more than one text should be attempted so as to help students speculate both the similarity with other texts and the other thing which has been changed for a given context. She examined the genre of “wedding invitations” (p. 39) in two different languages: English and Spanish. The texts were exhibited to the audiences to name the genre. The audience were then asked about the reason which got them know that these are wedding invitations and the clues which caused them to put them into the same category.

The audiences used two aspects of genre knowledge which gave them the clues: “content and form” Johns (1997) (p. 39). The content involves lexis such as “wedding or marriage, and the names of the bride and groom, and the time and place of the ceremony” (p. 39). The forms entail the appearance of each element of invitation separately and are conventionalized. These features, she clarifies, help experienced readers and writers in distinguishing texts from the genres. The other element of genre knowledge is that which audiences gave to these texts – it is the “communicative purpose” (p. 39). These wedding invitations are sent to ask others to take part in marriage celebrations. Thus, experienced readers and writers across the world, Johns
holds, have produced the idea of “a wedding invitation schema” (p. 39) and thereby they have acknowledged a genre pattern.

Johns (1997), then, identifies the difference that had existed between the two invitations. The English text, she makes it clear, deletes the names of the parents, an issue that was talked over between the bride and groom and their families. On the contrary, the Spanish text exposes the names of both sets of parents, as well as the names of people taking part in the ceremony who are very important to the weddings in this culture.

However, the wedding genre of invitation in Yemen, is similar to the Spanish one as it states the names of both sets of parents. But it is dissimilar from both wedding genres of invitation – the English and the Spanish since it neither deletes the names of the parents nor includes the names of the people taking part in the ceremony. It is also different from both texts as it mentions only the names of the male parents whose family members are to take part in the ceremony.

In addition, the Yemeni text mentions the name of the bridegroom and deletes the bride’s name which is referred to by ‘the daughter of’ (They mention her father’s name). Thus, in spite of some repeated elements from text to text in this and other genres, John (1997) concludes, every text is subjected to be revised on the basis of “the social forces in its particular context” (p. 41).
2.7. **Genre Awareness and Analysis**

Morgan (2007) enquires whether “linguistic” knowledge or having something to say makes a good writer. Nevertheless, she confesses that the two features have their effect on improving writing but they are not the most important ones. She asserts that “knowledge of genre” (p. 12) – the way we examine the “communicative purpose and use knowledge of previous texts” (p. 12) is the most important factor in writing effective texts.

Morgan puts forward that raising awareness of genre properties should have a room in the domain of teaching writing as well. She, therefore, believes that ‘appropriacy’ and ‘accuracy’ can contribute to yielding effective texts. She acknowledged that grammatical errors may not be serious and thereby not rendering the text incomprehensible. But, grammatical errors, she confesses, sometimes, prevent understanding of a text. Similarly, genre awareness is also important since genres are connected with “the communicative purpose, roles and the culture in which they are found” (2007, p. 12).

Therefore, Morgan (2007) suggests that students in class should be aware of the ways genres are constructed and the teacher could provide “language awareness activities” which should lead to a systematic analysis of texts.

Morgan (2007) clarifies that in the awareness-raising stage students should know that a text can have two or more purposes. She suggests that,
before starting a deep analysis of a genre, students should be able, in the initial stages, to say the probable purpose of different genres. Then, they can study closely the genres paying attention to the lexis and grammar of the target text.

In genre analysis, Morgan (2007) explains, the students will not only analyze the “linguistic and non-linguistic” (p. 14) characteristics of the texts but also their socially-constructed reason. She also clarifies that students may study authentic genres having similar purpose and understand the way they are different from each other relying on the reason of constructing such genres and the knowledge of audience as well as the mode of transferring these genres.

Morgan (2007) asserts the fact that awareness-raising phase is the basis of any genre writing since it views writing as a socially-constructed task where the context of writing decides what to include in the target genre and the way it should be shaped. Morgan further recommends that students in class should be supplied with the target genres and that they should be helped to attend to the rhetorical and grammatical characteristics in order to help them gain an awareness which would help them later to write effectively.

2.8. Genre Approaches and the Product Approaches

Following Kay and Dudley-Evans(1998) description of Genre Approach, which they say comprises three stages, one might conclude that the Genre Approach is similar to the Product Approach which also comprises
three stages. Genre approaches as Badger and White (2000) state are “an extension of product approaches” (p. 155) as they are mainly concerned with linguistic knowledge. But they are unlike product approaches since they stress the fact that writing differs according to the social contexts where they are produced and thereby the existence of different kinds of writing that are tied to different situations such as “research article” and “sales letter” (Flower & Hayes, 1993, p. 307).

2.9. Limitations

Nonetheless, the merits and demerits of the genre approach can clearly be explicated through the results of the workshop done by Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998). They have conducted a workshop where their participants have put genre into practice in different L2 teaching learning contexts. The participants viewed the genre approach as useful at beginner or intermediate levels of proficiency in a second language since it makes them confident and capable of producing a text that fulfils its purpose. Genre-based approaches, Kay and Dudley-Evans also explain, make students feel safe in writing by providing them with useful models. Nevertheless, participants also expressed their fears that the approach is prescriptive rather than descriptive as it prescribes the way certain texts should be written. This leads to the absence of creativity and motivation among learners.
2.10. Comparing Product, Process, and Genre Approaches

Hyland (2003) clarifies that the different perspectives: process, purpose, and context supply teachers with “curriculum options or complementary alternatives” (p. 22) for course designers, which have implications for pedagogy and learning. He also clarifies that “the strengths of one might complement the weaknesses of the other” (p. 23).

Badger and White (2000) explain that the weaknesses of product approaches are that the cognitive skills such as “planning a text” are of minor roles, and that the learners’ “knowledge and skills” are underestimated (p. 157). But their strengths are that they admit the learners’ need for linguistic knowledge about texts and that imitation is a method through which people can learn.

The weaknesses of process approaches, Badger and White expound are that they take it for granted that writing is produced by certain processes, giving less importance to the other kind of texts writers produce and the reason for producing such texts. Besides, they do not provide learners with sufficient linguistic input to help them write effectively. The strengths of these approaches are that they know the importance of the writing skills and the learners’ skills they bring with them - their role in developing “the writing ability” (p. 157).

According to Badger and White, the weakness of genre approaches is that they underestimate the skills used for producing a text and view learners’
role as highly “passive” (p. 157). But their strength is represented in
acknowledging that writing is tied to “a social situation”, showing “a
particular purpose”, and can take place through conscious “imitation and
analysis” (p. 157).

Hence it is clear that there arose a need to include the insights of
product, process, and genre approaches and adapt an approach, which
combines the three approaches. The new approach was named as a process-
genre approach.

2.11. The Process-Genre Approach

In combining the different orientations, Hyland (2003) says, the most
appropriate of the available approaches should be used to help learners
“understand writing and learning to write” (p. 26). Therefore, teachers in the
classroom should familiarize students with texts and “reader expectations” as
well as help them understand the “writing processes, language forms and
genres” (p. 26). In addition, there is a need, he concludes, for showing a deep
understanding and awareness of the students’ practices and perceptions of
writing they bring to the class. These practices and perceptions should be the
basis to rely on so that students see writing as relevant to “particular groups
and contexts” (p. 26).

Genre analysis, Badger and White (2000) explain, concentrates on the
language contained in a given text and what is needed is to include the
processes writers use when producing a text showing them “under the term
‘Process genre’” (p. 158). Moreover, teachers, in the writing classroom, must produce the situation and learners should find and discover the purpose and other elements of the social context. The teacher, they clarify, does not, in large cases, know what learners know or can do before the class. Therefore, learners should try to produce a text in a process genre and the text should be compared with probably the teacher’s one. Then, the teacher, based on this comparison, can find out whether they want more input or skills.

2.12. Conclusion

The chapter has discussed three major approaches to the teaching of writing, namely, the Process Approach, the Product Approach and the Genre Approach, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses, suggesting their combination to achieve a better and more synthetic approach to the teaching of writing. One curious fact to be noted here is that none of the thirty teachers interviewed in the survey has any awareness of any of these approaches.