What Do We Know and What Do We Need to Know about Arab Gulf EFL/ESL Students' Writing?

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Abstract

Despite being the least used mode of human communication, writing is of utmost importance as it is the means through which testing and assessment of learning usually takes place. Therefore, it is important to investigate various aspects of Arab Gulf EFL/ESL students' writing performance. Important also is reviewing the studies conducted on these students' writing. Such research can inform teachers of how to optimally meet the writing needs of this student population. Critical reviews of writing research related to this context will help identify what we already know and what we need to know about Arab Gulf EFL/ESL students' writing. Only two review attempts (Abdel Latif, 2008; Al-Hazmi, 2001) were made in relation to this research area. These two attempts are limited in that they paid no particular attention to the diverse areas of research on Arab Gulf EFL/ESL students' writing, and that is why they did not review many studies related to this context. Therefore, a more comprehensive review work is needed that synthesizes the key findings of previous studies, shows how English writing research has developed in Arab Gulf countries, and highlights the questions answered by this research and the ones left unanswered. The present article tries to address these issues by reviewing research on Arab Gulf EFL/ESL students' writing.

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