

DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS THROUGH ONLINE COMMUNICATIVE TASKS BASED APPROACH IN A PAKISTANI SCHOOL

DR. MUHAMMAD SAMI ULLAH¹, PROF. SHER MUHAMMAD AWAN², ZAFAR SIDDIQUE^{3*}, MOHSIN ALI HASRAT⁴ AND ⁵ HUMAIRA HINA

¹ ASSISTANT PROFESSOR FACULTY OF EDUCATION, ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

² PROFESSOR, DIRECTOR ADMISSION RECOVERY, EDUCATION PROJECT, SGC ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

³ PH.D. SCHOLAR DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT, UNIVERSITY OF OKARA, PAKISTAN, *f23-phd-edu-5004@uo.edu.pk

⁴ PH.D. SCHOLAR DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT, UNIVERSITY OF OKARA, PAKISTAN

⁵ LECTURER ENGLISH, RIPHA INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE RAWALPINDI

ABSTRACT

In Pakistan, majority of students rely on cramming. Creative writing is ignored in Pakistani classrooms. Better one reproduces, gets better grades. English Language Learners are not made creative writers. The communicative method helps learners to communicate effectively. By using this method students are able to write creatively. The major objective of study had been to find how a communicative language teaching methodology was helpful in improving creative writing skills in English at the primary school level. Design employed was quasi-experimental. The total number of participants in a natural setting experiment was 60. The test to measure creative writing skills at primary school level had been administered as an instrument for the data collection. Data were analyzed with SPSS and by using paired samples t- statistics for the control and experimental groups. It had been found that there was an exceptional development in creative writing of grade 3 students as gain in every aspect of scoring rubrics i.e., Originality, Grammar, Vocabulary, Mechanics, Fluency and Form was very much high. Therefore, CLT is recommended to teach creative writing skills, specifically generating original and genuine ideas with fluency in primary schools of Pakistan. It is further suggested that Communicative Approach may be used to teach other literary genre like poetry writing, drama writing, and novel writing.

Keywords: Communicative Approach, Creative Writing, Originality, Fluency, Form, Mechanics, Grammar, and Literary Genre.

INTRODUCTION

Creative Writing is a type of writing that requires talent and imagination to create something fresh. It entails the use of one's thoughts to generate new ideas. Composition work necessitates the individual's participation of cognitive skills. The goal of this kind of writing is to generate as many thoughts as possible. Those thoughts should be creative and inventive in character. These tasks need the use of intellect. As per opinion of Harmer (2004), the creative writing process consists of four essential sub-processes. The four steps are: ideas thinking, ideas arranging, ideas writing, and ideas reviewing. So, each stage of the creative writing process needs thought.

The Pakistani English Language Learners are unable to write creatively. Most pupils, according to Rahman (2007), rely on memory rather than their capacity to think. They are not taught how to write a creative composition. The primary cause of this predicament is the educational approach employed. The majority of instructors continue to teach English using the grammar translation technique, which has been widely abandoned. As a result of insufficient English education, Creative Writing talents are not developed effectively, the incidence of English failure is top at all the levels.

Harmer (2004) stated that quality in writing creatively has increased within some schools as a result of improved resources, yet Pakistani students are often afraid of producing their own work. They've been studying virtually all of their topics since they were children in order to pass the exam. Guidebooks, exam papers, and ready-made notes are used by the students for selective study. These are low-quality, non-authentic materials. She also stated that the majority of the classrooms are overcrowded. Creative Writing abilities are not effectively taught and developed in these courses. According to Siddiqui (2007), another aspect of the traditional Pakistani classroom is teacher-centered activities.

The instructor is the most active participant in the classroom, as has been noted several times; he is required to accomplish all of the class work and provide the directions. The pupils are deafeningly quiet and passive listeners. Students' typical activities include listening to lectures, taking notes, and copying things on the chalkboard, as well as being silent throughout the class. In the same way, Ali and Javed (2004) said within same view that the academic role of teacher is teach in an old fashioned manner, that there is no activity to improve Creative Writing skills. According to Harmer (2004), instructors teach English language in the same method as they were taught in school. Instead of developing student skills, the instructor who does not include pupils in the learning process destroys them. The primary role of the teacher is to discover, channel, and foster the talents of the students, however in Pakistani society, such opportunities to develop one's abilities are rare. If it occurs, it is due to pure luck or chance.

According to Siddiqui (2007), most schools do not effectively develop the intellectual mind's creative capacity because of the emphasis on recalling notes and knowledge. Knowledge cramming is also fostered and encouraged by the educational system. Students are able to achieve high grades, but they do not establish the habit of writing even paragraphs in this circumstance. If specific elements connected to thinking capacity for writing paragraphs are included in the examinations, the examination can play a big influence. The focus of the teachers would eventually be on the preparation of such an examination, with the pupils benefiting. Harmer (2004) indicated that it should be the responsibility of a teacher to educate people for Creative Writing. He discussed how guardians, teachers, and elders emotionally and mentally constrain youngsters. The kids are expected to be fully obedient and submissive. As a result of these problems, students lack confidence in their active talents, such as speaking and writing. The school's inadequate teaching quality and pedagogical abilities are exclusively to blame for this. Students have no choice except to cram.

In Pakistan, the curriculum has been deemed to be unbalanced, according to Harmer (2004). There are few opportunities for development of creative writing. As if the ability is not used, these inborn powers gradually fade within them and stop naturally. Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that Pakistani schools use a grammatical approach to teaching. Grammar translation as it is now practiced emphasizes rote memorization of grammatical patterns and structures. This method, according to Bajwa (2004), does not produce communicative competence, which is so students of Pakistan struggle to expressing accurately in writing. Cooze (2006), who also criticized the GTM, expressed dissatisfaction with the grammatical approach to foreign language instruction. This strategy, it is believed, did not result in the learners' capacity to communicate. By using the communicative method, the capacity to write creatively may be enhanced. It is based on real-life situations that need communicating, whereby the trainer constructs a scenario that students are likely to encounter in real life.

According to Harmer (2004), the majority of students find it difficult to generate original work, despite the fact that writing is an important habit to cultivate. Teachers, administrators, and the school, according to Coombe (2009), have a responsibility to enhance students' writing ability. There is a genuine risk, as per Graham (2003), that pupils will not acquire the required writing abilities for school. One popular criticism is that schools do not adequately teach this challenging skill. Griffith (2006) recommended that students use the communicative strategy to improve their writing skills. Similarly, Raji (2009) noticed that using a communicative method to build Creative Writing abilities might be beneficial since it incorporates both fluency and structural parts of the language. In this regard, Siddiqui (2007) noted that the school should help students enhance their thinking talents, which includes Creative Writing. According to Raji (2009), the talent of writing a paragraph has received less attention. In classrooms, greater emphasis is placed on putting grammatically accurate phrases on paper, although Fatima and Zubeda (2009) believe that best writing learned in a situation that is both participatory and communicative. For the development of communicative skills, Iqbal (2011) recommends the CLT.

It may be inferred that Pakistan's current educational system does not stimulate students to write creatively, and that a communicative method is superior for improving students' Creative Writing skills. As a matter of fact, the research suggested that more research into the development of writing creatively in English among primary schoolchildren using a teaching approach like CLT is efficient and important in establishing Creative Writing skills, is required.

Statement of Research Problem

The commonly used method for teaching in Pakistan is lecture method. Teachers focus on marks in exams. Students cram to pass the exams. There had been dire need to blend CLT in an effective way with traditional method of teaching. The major aim/goal of this research study had been to find out effect of a communicative task based approach (CA/CLT) to improve Creative Writing abilities in primary school.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to:

- Only kids in third grade were included in the research. The study only looked at the issue of English Creative Writing.

Objectives of the Research

The research had these objectives:

- To find effect of CLT on Creative Writing (Originality).
- To find effect of CLT on vocabulary in Writing Creatively.
- To find effect of CLT on mechanics in Creative Writing.
- To find effect of CLT on grammar in Creative Writing.

- To find effect of CLT on fluency in creative writing.
- To find effect of CLT on form in writing creatively.

Research Hypotheses

The Null and alternate Hypotheses formulated are as ahead:

Ho1: There is no significant effect of CLT on Creative Writing (skills) as mentioned in objectives of the study.

H1: There is a significant effect of CLT on Creative Writing (skills) as mentioned in objectives of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The majority of English instructors in Pakistan are not completely qualified to carry out their teaching responsibilities. The teachers are not up to date on the latest innovations in English education. In this context, Siddiqui (2007) asserted that there is a scarcity of qualified and adequately prepared English language instructors. Similarly, Rahman (2007) stated that the methods utilised by English teachers in Pakistan is inadequate. Teachers do not receive adequate training. In English language classes, the Grammar Translation Method is employed. Educators in the area of English are unaware of the most up-to-date ways for teaching English. Certain ways and methods have been used to teach any foreign language. Improvements in language teaching methods, according to Cordan (2000), have resulted in changes in the sort of foreign language competency that a student requires, which Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are some examples of skills. Similarly, English Language Teaching methodologies and approaches have evolved.

English is the most widely studied foreign language in Pakistan, and it is taught as a compulsory subject from Grade 1 through university. The grammar translation strategy was employed in the majority of International schools, as per Rahman (2007), although other English-medium educators placed less attention on grammatical errors so had no interpretation at all. Language use, on the other hand, is not focused in secondary school teaching strategies. There is no comprehension of linguistics and its relationship to English, and the focus is exclusively on memorization of grammatical rules and tradition. It sees language acquisition in Pakistan as a matter of remembering norms in order to understand a language's grammar, and it thinks that learning a second language is aided by mastering one's native tongue (Bajwa, 2004). In a nutshell, the grammar translation technique using another local language aids in the acquisition of infinite word lists but frustrates the memory of grammatical rules. It isn't concerned with real-life problems. It discovered that the ability to write paragraphs is not developed. It is a system with no advocates at the moment, but it laid the groundwork for the creation of a new approach for teaching English, the direct method. When employing this strategy, the target language should be the medium of the classroom instructions. Daily vocabulary and phrases should be taught, with grammar receiving only a passing mention. The student should invent his or her own grammatical rules. Learners and teachers should practice oral communication skills by using a question-and-answer technique. The importance of proper pronunciation should be highlighted. Demonstrations, drawings, and objects should be used to teach concrete and abstract vocabulary. This method should be used to teach creative writing as well.

This natural technique appears to be fairly effective in private English medium schools, however Rahman (2002) believes that implementing Direct Method in public elementary schools is problematic. Critics believe it has various disadvantages, such as: This natural technique, termed direct method, necessitates teachers who are native English speakers or who have native proficiency in the English language. It is difficult to find such instructors in Pakistan's public schools. The direct technique is reliant on the teacher's abilities, and not all teachers are knowledgeable about the concepts of this natural method. Following the principles of the direct approach may be counterproductive since, as Harmer discovered, mother tongue may be more efficient for understanding than the English language employed by the instructor.

The ability to think is a cognition-related talent that is the key feature that distinguishes animals from humans. All of the innovative things are the result of well-thought-out ideas. Ability to think clearly is also necessary for writing and composing tasks. It is an activity that assists humans in generating and organizing thoughts, which is what happens during the Creative Writing process. The foundations for literary composition are provided by thinking. Hearing, speaking, reading, and writing were the four linguistic abilities in English previously. However, as Muckharjee (2007) pointed out, there is now a fifth language skill: thinking, which puts the language skills in a new order. Listening, thinking, speaking, reading, and writing (LTSRW) were the activities. All of the activity will be for vain if thinking is not integrated and lacking from language development. When individuals read, listen, talk, or write, language is founded on thinking in such a manner that it inspires them to think.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The details regarding method and procedure are as under:

Design

The design was Quasi- Experimental. The Pretest Posttest Non Identical Control Subjects Design was employed in this investigation. The experimentation will take place in a government school. Two sets of students from Government Primary School Kasmal, and Government Primary School No.2 Multan Khurd were conveniently picked. Students from GPS Kasmal naming Group-A was chosen as the experimental group, whereas students from GPS No.2 Multan Khurd named as Group-B were chosen as the control group.

Sample

The total number of kids in experiment was 60. There were 30 students present in experimental group and 30 students present in control group. The "convenient sampling" was used.

Instrument

The exam to measure creative writing skills at the primary school level was employed as the data collecting tool. There were five tasks modified from the literature. The grading rubrics along with tool were validated by expert comments. They were from faculty at Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad. Because this survey included five levels of Creative Writing skills, each level was given a 20% weighting. The highest possible score for overall creative writing abilities was 100.

Data Analysis

The findings of the pre- and post-tests for the experimental group and control group were examined. The data were examined using paired samples t-test as in tables below.

Table 1: Pre-Test to Post-Test Improvement/Gain in Control Group

		Pre-Test mean	SD (Pre-test)	Number of persons	Post-Test mean	SD (post-test)	Gain	Effect size	t-value	Sig
Control (N=30)	Grammar	2.4	0.81	30	1.9	0.80	-0.50	0.511	2.62	0.18
	Vocab	1.8	0.77	30	1.8	0.84	0.03	-0.22	-0.19	0.03
	Mechanics	2.1	0.74	30	1.8	0.95	-0.26	0.23	1.55	0.01
	Fluency	2.2	0.81	30	1.8	0.81	-0.36	0.70	2.00	0.08
	Form	2.2	0.81	30	1.9	0.95	-0.33	0.26	1.67	0.09
	Total	10.9	0.78	30	9.4	0.87	-1.43	0.10	1.80	0.08

- Data illustrates the pre- and post-control group comparison, with a mean grammar score of 2.40 in the pre-test and 0.813 in the post-test. The mean score improvement was -0.5. The t-value was 2.628, with an effect size of 0.511 at a significance level of 0.186.
- The vocabulary mean score was 1.866 in the pre-test and 0.77 in the post-test. The increase in mean scores was 0.033 points. The t-value was determined to be 0.197. At the 0.030 significance level, the impact size was -0.22.
- The mechanics had a mean score of 2.16 in the pre-test and 1.900 in the post-test. The mean score difference was 0.231. The t-value was found to be 1.560. At the 0.012 significance level, the effect size was determined to be 0.231.
- Fluency had a mean score of 0.817 in the pre-test and 1.866 in the post-test. The increase in mean scores was -0.366 points. The t-value was found to be 2.00. At a significance level of 0.088, the effect size was 0.709.
- The form had a mean score of 2.23 in the pre-test and 0.81 in the post-test. The increase in mean scores was 0.033 points. The t-value was found to be 0.674. At a significance level of 0.091, the effect size was 0.265.
- The total mean score was 10.9 in the pre-test and 9.4667 in the post-test. The mean score improvement was -1.4333. The t-value was found to be 1.80. At a significance level of 0.028, the effect size was 0.138.

Table 2: Pre to post Gain in Experimental Group

Group		Pre-Test mean	SD (Pre-test)	Post-Test mean	SD (post-test)	Gain	Effect size	t-value	Significance level
Experimental (N=30)	Grammar	5.1765	1.66716	13.2941	2.28486	8.1176	3.062	10.215	0.078
	Vocabulary	4.6601	1.53872	10.4118	2.67065	5.7660	2.1235	7.227	0.270
	Mechanics	4.6006	0.94324	12.1176	2.20461	7.660	3.371	12.619	0.325
	Fluency	5.1765	1.77607	13.0000	2.59808	7.8235	2.958	9.882	0.378
	Form	4.2353	1.20049	13.2353	2.65823	9	3.4685	11.521	0.127
	Total	23.68	1.42	62.04	2.608	38.36	2.505	10.883	0.212

- Table 2 displays the pre- and post-experimental group comparison, with a mean grammar score of 5.1765 in the pre-test and 13.2941 in the post-test. The increase in mean scores was 8.1176 points. The t-value was 10.215, with an effect size of 3.062 at a significance level of 0.078.
- The vocabulary mean score was 4.6601 in the pre-test and 10.4118 in the post-test. The increase in mean scores was 5.7660 points. The t-value was found to be 7.227. At a significance level of 0.270, the effect size was 2.1235.
- The mechanics had a mean score of 4.6006 in the pre-test and 12.1176 in the post-test. The mean score difference was 7.660. The t-value came out to be 12.619. At the 0.325 significance level, the effect size was determined to be 3.371.

- Fluency had a mean score of 5.1765 in the pre-test and 13.000 in the post-test. The increase in mean scores was 7.8235 points. The t-value was found to be 9.882. At a significance level of 0.378, the effect size was 2.958.
- The form had a mean score of 4.2353 in the pre-test and 13.2353 in the post-test. The increase in mean scores was 9.00 points. The t-value came out to be 11.521. At a significance level of 0.127, the effect size was 3.4685.
- The Total had a mean score of 23.68 in the pre-test and 62.04 in the post-test. The increase in mean scores was 38.36 points. The t-value was determined to be 10.883. At a significance level of 0.212, the effect size was 2.505.

Findings

The following findings were drawn from the data analysis:

- A remarkable improvement was found after experiment in creative writing among grade 3 students
- Students' Creative Writing abilities can be greatly enhanced by using a communicative language teaching approach/method while using tasks at a Pakistani primary school in terms of sub-skills like fluency, form, originality, vocabulary and grammar.

CONCLUSIONS

- The Communicative Approach aids in the improvement of grammar in creative writing skills.
- The Communicative Approach aids in the development of vocabulary in creative writing.
- The Communicative Approach aids in the improvement of creative writing mechanics.
- The Communicative Approach aids in the improvement of creative writing fluency.
- The Communicative Approach aids in the improvement of creative writing form. It has a positive and considerable impact on the student's Creative Writing originality.

Recommendations

The following suggestions were made in the light of the findings and conclusions of this study.

- Communicative method in teaching Creative Writing is recommended for Primary level English classrooms.
- The Communicative Task-based Approach is suggested to teach creative writing skills at primary level.

REFERENCES

1. Ali, S. M. & Javaid S. B. (2004). An approach to the teaching of English, Lahore: New Kitab Mahal
2. Bajwa, S. (2004). Teaching of English, Bahawalpur: Mian Brothers
3. Coombe, C. (2009). Washback and the impact of high-stakes tests on teaching and learning, in Mansoor, S, Sikandar, A, Hussain, N, & Ahsan N. M. (eds.) Emerging Issues in TEFL Challenges for Asia, Oxford: Oxford University Press
4. Cooze, A. (2006). 100 ideas for teaching of English, New York: Continuum
5. Fatima, Z. D. & Zubeda, K. A. (2009). Cooperative learning: Is it an aid to learning?, in Mansoor, S, Sikandar, A, Hussain, N, & Ahsan N. M. (eds.) Emerging Issues in TEFL Challenges for Asia, Oxford: Oxford University Press
6. Graham, L. & Johnson, A. (2003). Writing journals, Cambridge: United Kingdom Reading Association.
7. Griffith, N. (2006). 100 ideas for teaching language, New York: Continuum
8. Harmer, J. (2004). How to teach writing, Pearson Longman: New Delhi
9. Hayes, S. & Craig, H. (1991). This is the bear and the scary night, London: Walker,
10. Iqbal, H. M. (2011). Education in Pakistan: Developmental milestones, Lahore: Paramount Publishing Enterprise.
11. Rahman, T. (2002). Language, ideology, and power: Language learning among the Muslims of Pakistan and North India, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
12. Rahman, T. (2007). Denizens of alien worlds a study of education, inequality, and polarization in Pakistan, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
13. Raji, M. Z. (2009). Globalization and EFL/ESL pedagogy: Implications, in Mansoor, S, Sikandar, A, Hussain, N, & Ahsan N. M. (eds.) Emerging Issues in TEFL Challenges for Asia, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
14. Rasool, N. (2009). Quality issues in language teaching in higher education, in Mansoor, S, Sikandar, A, Hussain, N, & Ahsan N. M. (eds.) Emerging Issues in TEFL Challenges for Asia, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
15. Siddiqui, S. (2007). Rethinking education in Pakistan: Perceptions, practices, and possibilities, Karachi: Paramount Publishing Enterprise
16. Zafar, S. K. (2009). Computer mediated communication for language learning, in Mansoor, S, Sikandar, A, Hussain, N, & Ahsan N. M. (eds.) Emerging Issues in TEFL Challenges for Asia, Oxford: Oxford University Press.