The effect of the communicative approach on functional writing in English at the secondary level

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Abstract

The communicative method is founded on the premise that learning a language is effective when learners are forced to convey actual meaning. The major goal of communicative language education approaches is to train students to be confident communicators in a variety of real-life situations by working together. The purpose of this study was to see how a communicative strategy affected Functional writing in Secondary school English. In this work, the pre-test, post-test and non-Identical control group approach was employed, which is a quasi-experimental approach. The total number of participants in the trial was 47. It has been found that there is exceptional improvement in students by an experimental process as gain in every aspect, that is, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and form is very much high. Students studying English at the secondary school, college, or university level may benefit from a communicative approach to higher-level learning.

Keywords: Communicative strategy, English, functional writing;

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1. Introduction

Our major means of communication is language (Suzuki, 2021). It is how we communicate our opinions and suggestions to others (Loewen et al., 2020). English is used as a tool to communicate in more than only English-speaking countries. It is a language that is spoken all over the world. Listening, writing, speaking, reading, and writing are the four fundamental abilities in English. "As you attempt to push beyond the limitations of your native tongue and then into a native word, a new environment, a new set of ideas, feeling, and behaving," Ahmad (2011) writes, "every bone and fiber of your being is touched in some manner." Conventionally, fluency has been associated with speech and has been overlooked when dealing with other abilities. However, while writing takes more time to master and produce, it should be just as effective as the other talents. Because Pakistani students memorize topics for test reasons, Rashid and Mukhtar (2012) points out that they lacked analytical, introspective, and critical abilities. Writing is a mentally active and creative activity in which the writer generates meaning (Pearson, 2022; Qin & Zhang, 2022).

Listening and reading are responsive and receptive competencies, but speaking and writing are productive abilities (Ramanujan & Weekes, 2020; Zabihi et al., 2021; Luczaj et al., 2022). Ahmad and Rao's (2013) study were conducted to evaluate the successfulness of communicative language teaching to GTM and to assess Pakistani teachers' attitudes toward communicative language teaching. They discovered that communicative language teaching was more effective than the grammar translation method (GTM) in the teaching of English in Pakistan, and that teachers were willing to implement it in the classroom because of its positive impact on increasing learners' communicative ability and interest in learning.

Ur Rahman and Hashmi (2019) found that using a variety of teaching strategies had a good influence on students' improvement of English writing skills. According to Kwambai Philip (2016), communicative language teaching was adopted in reaction to discontent with traditional Instruction and is effective in developing writing abilities in an EFL environment. Swarts (2017) defined writing as a process that includes planning and composing a draught, responding, reviewing, changing, evaluating, and disseminating. The last stage of writing is when the writer decides how to present his writing to the readers (Cohen, 2014). The prominence of English as a medium is explained by the fact that only an English presenter is understandable in every country. It is one of the United Nations' official languages. English, as a window on the world, provides us with perspectives on a wide range of global events as well as the condensed essence of contemporary knowledge in all areas of human endeavor. English is a literary language as well as a language used in libraries. English is taught as a required course in Pakistani educational institutions from grade one to graduation.

According to Iqbal (2011), the English language is difficult by nature since it requires words to be combined into written or spoken sentences in line with grammatical rules. The teaching of English at Pakistani academic institutions is now in disarray (Siddiqui, 2007). Educators, parents, and students are concerned about the declining caliber of English language education. The standard is likewise not up to par when it comes to the kids' ability to write English functionals. The state of functional writing abilities is defined as inadequate, and many causes for this are examined.

1.1. Purpose of study

The purpose of this study was to see how a communicative strategy affected kids' ability to improve functional writing abilities in elementary school. Explain why it's your favorite activity is a good functional writing prompt because it encourages students to build subject sentences, write supporting phrases in the right sequence, utilize literary devices to achieve coherency, and finish their functionals for competence. In many science classes, teachers teach through traditional teaching methods. They do not take interest in practicing textbook activities in the classrooms. As they only focus on academic achievements of their students; hence, health consciousness is neglected at the Secondary level in Pakistan. To link the said two, this research was conducted to explore the effect of textbook activities on students' health consciousness at the Secondary level.

1.2. Objectives of the Research

Research was proposed to achieve the following main objective: To find out the effect of the CA on the improvement of Functional writing; to find out the effect of the CA on the vocabulary component in the development of Functional writing; to find out the effect of the CA on the mechanics component in functional writing; to find out the effect of the CA in the grammatical component on the improvement of writing abilities in functionals; to find out the effect of the CA in the fluency component on the improvement of writing abilities in functionals; and to find out the effect of the CA in the form component on the improvement of writing abilities in functionals.

1.3. Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant effect of CA on the improvement of functional writing skills.

Ho2: There is a significant effect of CA on the improvement of functional writing skills.

Ho3: There is no significant effect of CA on the improvement of vocabulary in functional writing skills.

Ho4: There is a significant effect of CA on the improvement of vocabulary in functional writing skills.

Ho5: There is no significant effect of CA on the improvement of mechanics in functional writing skills.

Ho6: There is a significant effect of CA on the improvement of mechanics in functional writing skills.

Ho7: There is no significant effect of CA on the improvement of grammar in functional writing skills.

Ho8: There is a significant effect of CA on the improvement of grammar in functional writing skills.

Ho9: There is no significant effect of CA on the improvement of fluency in functional writing skills.

Ho10: There is a significant effect of CA on the improvement of fluency in functional writing skills.

Ho11: There is no significant effect of CA on the improvement of form in functional writing skills.

Ho12: There is a significant effect of CA on the improvement of form in functional writing skills.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The majority of Pakistani pupils are unable to write functionals due to rote memorization, a cramming-based test system, poor teaching technique, and a defective syllabus. The goal of this study was to help Secondary school pupils improve their functional writing abilities by adopting a communicative strategy. The study's findings will enlighten instructors and educators on how to adopt a communicative strategy to improve students' functional writing skills at the secondary school level.

The research will benefit English language instructors in elementary schools since it will propose an effective teaching style for teaching functional writing abilities. When the study's findings are known, English language teachers will be able to adjust and enhance their teaching methods for teaching functional writing. The findings of the study will be used by English language teacher training institutes to prepare future secondary school English teachers by concentrating on communicative language instruction and providing appropriate training. Teacher training institutions may provide learning programs with English language instructors to strengthen their ways to teach functional writing abilities, maintaining the collaborative approach concept in mind.

This study would be useful to English education specialists and curricula designers who are working on communicative coursework and curriculums for secondary schools. They would be able to add communicative language education as a methodological part of the secondary curriculum based on the study's results. Furthermore, the study's findings will be useful to scholars interested in researching the subject of English language teaching at the elementary level, as well as those interested in topics such as methods and methodology for English teaching and functional writing.

1.5. Literature Review

According to Ur Rahman and Hashmi (2019), the target language is spoken in the classroom in several Pakistani schools. Instead of emphasizing analytical techniques that focus on explaining grammatical rules in the classroom, students should be encouraged to use direct and spontaneous language. This practice, which is utilized in the field of English language instruction, will assist students with inducing grammatical rules on their own. The "direct approach," as it is known, is a natural kind of teaching that employs these methods and ideas.

The communicative method of English teaching like the language of a foreign is a theory or philosophy that emphasizes the importance of communicative ability in English language learning. The aforementioned technique, according to the Dictionary of Longman of Teaching Language and Applied Linguistics, was a reaction against grammar-based approaches. The following are the secondary elements, as revealed by the same dictionary: Writing abilities should be taught in three levels, according to Kress (2003): regulated, guided, and free writing. Controlled writing is used to help students avoid making errors. As a guide, the instructor determines the topic and language at this level. The teacher's role in guided writing is to set the scene and assist students in composing their written works . Writing a Functional while following the teacher's framework is an example of guided writing.

According to Bajwa and Choudhary, (2006), students in free writing rely heavily on their linguistic expertise and content. In this situation, the teacher assists by providing criticism on the written content. The practice of this sort of writing allows pupils to better develop many forms of compositions. The first stage is concerned with language correctness; the second is concerned with language structure; and the third level is concerned with language production. According to Mukherjee (2007), this stage is unusual since secondary school pupils do not have a strong writing ability, but this may be remedied using communicative language instruction as a teaching approach in English language classrooms.

According to Myhill (2001), using a communicative approach in "shared writing" helps learners integrate spoken and written language excites and inspires them to pay attention, which helps to enhance the talents of writing within the relevant topic. "Sharing writing" allows teachers and students to discuss and debate ideas, construct stories, and comment on children's literature, creating a way for Functional writing to grow.

They appear in people's heads. The basic goal of a grammar essay is to paint a picture of an object or scenario that has been witnessed. The description should be inventive and the mind should perceive things that are not visible from the outside. It is not enough that a postman wears a uniform and distributes mail and money orders if you are writing an essay on him. It should also include information on how he feels, his viewpoints on certain topics, and his views on inflation, among other things. The phrase "describe" is employed when vocabulary is used to explain what the camera captured, what the ear perceives, and so on. When the thing is intricate, this talent becomes more difficult to master. In this case, a description should begin with a broad overview of the issue, followed by specific specifics. As per Burns (2006), that skill may be strengthened in the classroom through the use of oral communication language training, and piquing a student's sense of curiosity is one way to encourage him to think. He has to practice asking questions, disagreeing with arguments, and evaluating things logically.

Letter writing has fallen out of favor as a result of contemporary technologies and information technology, yet letters must still be written. Official letters, business letters, and letters to friends, acquaintances, and family are just a few examples. According to Harper (2006), it is a critical skill that may be enhanced through communicative language instruction. In general, all of the principles that apply to any other composition should be applied to letter writing, that is, it should follow the standards of an excellent composition. The importance of content simplicity, naturalness, and clarity in letter writing cannot be overstated. Students' ability to communicate can be improved through

communicative language instruction. For this purpose, the important points might be written down. The letter's key criteria are the writer's address, date, greeting, content, and closure or subscription. Keeping these considerations in mind, the letter-writing abilities of the participants were assessed as part of the data analysis for this study. This was done to assess the pupils' fluency and writing abilities.

The process of thinking leads to the comprehension of everything as well as the generation of numerous writing ideas. Thinking is connected to the mind's ability to create new things or develop new ideas, as well as the organization and rearrangement of the human mind's thoughts. Thinking, according to Cooze (2006), may have a crucial role in the development of writing skills.

2. Materials and Methods

The details regarding the method and procedure are as under:

2.1. *Participants*

The total number of people that took part in the experiment was 47. There were 17 students present in the experimental group, that is, six girls and 11 boys, while 30 students were present in the control group, that is, 14 girls and 16 boys in the research. The experimental group was Group-A, while the control group was Group B. A technique known as "convenient sampling" was used to choose the sample. The following criteria were used to choose the school and the participants:

- Permission from the school's Head Teachers.

- At least 5+ third-grade female and male students are available in the schools.

- Teachers' willingness to give up their lessons freely for the experiment.

- Permission to visit the school and the concerned class regularly to give communicative sessions as an intervention.

- The school's curriculum should follow the Punjab textbook Board's Lahore syllabus.

- The researcher's study location, Allama Iqbal Open University in Islamabad, has convenient access to schools.

The participants for this study were chosen as a sample based on the aforementioned criteria.

2.2. *Data collection Instrument*

The investigation's fundamental technique, or design, was Semi Experimental. The Pre-test Post-test Non-Identical Control Subjects Design was employed in this investigation. The experimentation will take place in a government school. The concerned instructor instructed the control group. The instructors' academic qualifications were M.A. English at the school, and they had been teaching there for more than 3 years. The schools' administration developed these groups for the benefit of the students.

The examination to measure creative writing skills at the secondary school level was employed as the data collecting tool. As demonstrated in Appendix A, there were five tasks modified from the literature. The first job was to evaluate grammar writing abilities. The second objective was to evaluate vocabulary writing abilities. The third assignment was to evaluate mechanics writing abilities. The fourth assignment was to evaluate fluency writing abilities. The fifth assignment was to evaluate form writing abilities. In every task, there were two equivalent forms. The experts' opinions were validated before pilot testing these task items, which were altered and incorporated into the test for Functional writing skills. Faculty members from the Institute of "Education's Department of English Language Teaching and Linguistics" and Allama Iqbal Open University in Islamabad served as experts. The examination was piloted with kids in secondary school. These kids were taught the Punjab Textbook Board's Lahore syllabus. The test's subjects were chosen to examine functional writing abilities, before participating in the pilot test, the pupils had never viewed the themes.

The information was gathered and evaluated using Hughes' approach of "analytic scoring," which he describes in his book "Testing for Language Teachers." Experts validated the scoring rubrics, which may be found in Appendix C. The data were examined using the SPSS 16 programmer. According to grading rubrics, the Secondary components of creative writing skills were vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, fluency, and form. Individuals who participated in the pilot exam had their works graded using marking rubrics dependent on these criteria. The reliability coefficients were discovered by a "Reliability Analysis." Cronbach's Alpha scores stayed constant at 0.865 throughout the whole study. The test included some small adjustments. After all of the required changes had been completed, the administered pretest he both experimental & control. Both the pre-tests and post were identical. A test for measuring Functional writing abilities may be found in Appendix "A" both the pre-tests, and post was identical. It may be claimed that the participants' post-test scores would be biased as a result of their exposure to the pre-test. The experimental and control groups, on the other hand, are likely to have the same effect.

2.3. Data Analysis

The findings of the pre- and post-tests for the experimental group and control group are examined in this chapter. The data were examined using the procedures listed below.

- In terms of Functional writing ability, the experimental and control groups were compared overall.

- In Functional writing, there was a comparison of experimental and control groups at each school.

- Gender-wise comparison in functional writing skills.

2.4. Ethics

Permission to visit the school and the concerned class regularly to give communicative sessions as an intervention was sought from the school's Head Teachers. No child was harmed during the experiment.

3. Results

In the tables, the gain the effect sizes of something like the experimental group and control group is compared. As shown in the table, the control group improved significantly in vocabulary and writing fluency. In mechanics and form writing, the improvement was negligible. Overall, the control group improved greatly in terms of skills of functional writing. Due to the experimental group having larger effect sizes than the control groups, the experimental group improved considerably in mean scores of grammar writing, vocabulary writing, mechanics writing, fluency writing, and form writing.

Table 1. *Pre- to post-experimental Group Gain Scores Comparison*

Group P1		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	2.400	0.813	30	1.900	0.803	-0.5	0.511	2.628	0.186
	Vocabulary	1.866	0.776	30	1.900	0.844	0.033	-0.226	-0.197	0.030
	Mechanics	2.166	0.746	30	1.900	0.959	-0.266	0.231	1.547	0.012
	Fluency	2.233	0.817	30	1.866	0.819	-0.366	0.709	2.009	0.088
	Form	2.233	0.817	30	1.900	0.959	-0.333	0.2635	1.674	0.091
	Total	10.9	0.788	30	9.466	0.870	-1.433	0.138	1.800	0.028

The following findings were drawn from the data analysis:

- It has been found that there is a remarkable improvement in students by the experimental process as gain in every field, that is, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and form is

very much high. The gain is above 7 in all the parameters.

- It has been found that below-average students of the control group face difficulty in grammar, mechanics, fluency, and form in functional writing.

- It has been found that below-average students of the control group face difficulty in grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and form in functional writing.

- It has been found that above-average students of the experimental group improved significantly in all the parameters, that is, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency, and form in functional writing.

- It has been found that above-average students of the control group face difficulty in grammar, mechanics, fluency, and form in functional writing. They show vocabulary improvement.

- Students' general functional writing skills may be considerably enhanced using a communicative method while in secondary school in Pakistan.

4. Discussion

When compared to the traditional grammatical or structural technique employed in most Pakistani English language instruction classrooms, Grammar writing, a level of Functional writing abilities for students in secondary school may be greatly enhanced with the communicative approach. When compared to the traditional grammatical or structural method employed in most Pakistani English language education classrooms, the communicative approach can greatly improve students' vocabulary writing skills, which is a level of functional writing skills at the secondary level.

When compared to the traditional grammatical or structural method employed in most Pakistani English language education classrooms, the communicative approach can greatly improve students' mechanics' writing skills, which is a level of Functional writing skills at the secondary level. When compared to the traditional grammatical or structural method employed in most Pakistani English language education classrooms, the communicative approach can greatly improve students' fluency in writing skills, which is a level of functional writing skills at the Secondary level.

When compared to the traditional grammatical or structural method employed in most Pakistani English language education classrooms, the communicative approach can greatly improve students form writing skills, which is a level of Functional writing skills at the secondary level. Students' general functional writing abilities can be greatly enhanced using a communicative method while attending a Pakistani Secondary school.

5. Conclusion

The following conclusions are made from the findings and data analysis. It is concluded that there is a significant difference in the health consciousness of the students when taught through textbook activities. Textbook activities improved the health consciousness of the students for a balanced diet, usage of water, prevention of disease, and personal hygiene. This shows that textbook activities help to make the students' concepts better and improve their performances as compared to the traditional way of teaching in which little or no focus is given to textbook activities.

Textbook activities are also helpful in enhancing the skills and attitudes of the learners. The group of students who were instructed by TB activities exhibited higher achievements. It implied that the experimental group took substantial benefit from the intervention that is TB activities. The inclusion of health-related activities in textbooks brings positive results in the health consciousness of the students.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations are given based on the findings collected during the study:

- English language instructors in Pakistani schools may employ a communicative method while teaching different types of functional writing, such as theatre for girls and boys, in English language teaching classrooms.

- English instructors in Pakistani elementary schools for girls and boys should adopt the communicative approach to teach functional writing abilities.

- Communicative language education, rather than traditional ways of teaching reflective, creative, and argumentative essay writing, is advised for girls and boys in Pakistani Secondary schools to significantly increase their functional writing abilities.

- The communicative approach is regarded as being superior to the standard ways utilized in Pakistani English language teaching classes for test preparation.

- English instructors in Pakistani elementary schools should employ the communicative approach to develop dialogue writing skills.

- It is also advised for girls and boys that the communicative approach is superior to traditional ways used in Pakistani secondary school English language teaching classrooms for teaching other language skills such as listening, speaking, and reading comprehension.

- A communicative methodology for advanced-level learning may assist students studying English in secondary school, college, or university.

- It is recommended that communicative language instruction be used while teaching any literary genre in the subject of English.

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