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Impact of Creative Writing Techniques as the Pedagogical Intervention on English Language Writing Skills of Undergraduate Students in Pakistani Universities

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Abstract: *This study unfolds the impact of creative writing technique on improving the writing skills of a public sector university' fifty undergraduates studying English language-related course, but their writing skills' proficiency is not up to the mark because of their use of L1 in learning other courses. The researchers held a pre-test to know grammatical, spelling, and overall syntactical errors. Later on, a series of lectures on how to minimize errors in English by using L2 was organized and eventually, a post-test was taken to know the results of the creative writing technique as a pedagogical intervention on learners' writing skills. The findings reflect that the creative writing technique as a pedagogical intervention in L2 improves writing skills of the students at the undergraduate level if the use of L1 is minimized. In the light of the results, the study suggests that this approach is helpful in improving undergraduates' English Language writing proficiency.*

Key Words: Creative Writing Technique, Pedagogical Intervention, L2, Writing Skills

Introduction

All English languages are equally important, but academic writing in terms of producing and preparing quality writing is something which is a worthwhile activity where all academics are engaged, and there is proof of increasingly enhanced attention to help the development of writing skills, taught with the help of L2, of the learners and the output is well equipped veterinary science students

who are academically sound. The teaching and learning of academic writing involve complex ways, but it is highly valued across the board in all disciplines. Indeed, it should be a top-level priority that has to be taken up seriously both by the learner and the teacher. Writing skills is significantly multifaceted with several sub-skills, and that is why it is considered as a productive skill. It is a systematic, goal-oriented, and purposeful activity. Generally, writing can be divided in

to three popular stages pre-writing, writing, and post writing. Good writing skill should be focused, developed, united, the coherent, and correct one. For a better composition, writing is the greatest tool as it is essential in mass literacy, education but above all in corresponding as it enables people to communicate their ideas, thoughts, views, emotions, and opinions.

Since Pakistan is a diverse society and culture, likewise its educational set up is where many languages are used at the same time. We have institutes that start with direct medium, Urdu Medium, or National Medium, and in some cases, we have institutes where learners are taught in their mother tongue. So students coming to Higher educational institutes have a different educational backgrounds. Those who are city folks and dwell in urban areas have got a better English language writing skills, while those who come from remote areas their English language writing skills is not that one which can be called a fine text; rather, they need a lot of hard work to make it fine and refine syntax. At the same time, it has also been observed their writing skill remains at a level of intermediate or upper intermediate level of English language writing skill. They lag behind others; the only reason for this is our traditional methods of teaching the foreign language. Most of the time, it has been observed foreign or target language is taught with the help of the Grammar translation method equally supported by the mother tongue.

Especially when they try to write some piece of composition, they do commit errors as the first language infiltrates along with other methods of teaching a foreign language. This results in faulty and poor writing. The errors are because of a lack of awareness of the rules of the target language or some other factors like the mother tongue are involved. There has been a fervent dichotomized competition regarding whether or not or now not mom tongue (L1)

needs to be used in L2 or foreign language (L2) lecture rooms. The greatest point of discussion is that, instead of L1,L2 should be used singularly (Chamber, 1991; [Halliwell & Jones, 1991](#); [Macdonald, 1993](#)) as it considers that L1 use undermines the getting to know manner ([Chambers, 1991](#); [Halliwell & Jones, 1991](#); [Macdonald, 1993](#)) by becoming a cause of a decrease in publicity to L2 ([Cook, 2001](#)); even as the use of most effective L2 builds the tongue the genuine, by causing advancement in the newbies' very own in-constructed language tool. These stances help [Krashen's \(1981\)](#) hypothesis of comprehensible input and the natural order of acquisition. In Krashen's phrases, rookies should be catered to with comprehensible entry in the desired language at the manner to build up and make bigger competence in this language. Keeping in view the above discussion, this study intends to see that to what extent the use of L1 on the part of the students and, to some extent, teacher affects the writing skills of the undergrads studying veterinary sciences. Hence, the study aims at applying creative writing skills as a pedagogical intervention to improve the writing skills of the students studying in the 3rd semester of DVM at a public sector university in the province of Punjab.

Objectives of the Study

- 1) To know the types of errors that occur in writing by the veterinary sciences' undergrads because of their L1 usage.
- 2) To determine the impact of the application of creative writing technique as a pedagogical intervention to improve the writing skills of the undergrads with the use of L2.

Research Question

1. Does the mother tongue interfere and become one of the causes of errors in English language writing skills so far as

- veterinary sciences' undergrads are concerned?
2. What are some common types of errors in English language writing skill?
 3. What could be the viable pedagogical technique to improve the writing skills of the veterinary sciences' undergrads?

Literature Review

In spite of having a difference of opinion, it is imperative to install it in L2 (or foreign) language lecture rooms for psycholinguistic motives to decrease college students' reminiscence restraint ([Harbord, 1992](#); [Kern, 1994](#)); beginning and maintaining articulated interplay ([Brooks and Donato, 1994](#)); for reinforcing. Students' lingual and mental capabilities ([Scott, 1996](#)); for scaffolding and reducing their affective filters ([Meyer, 2008](#)). [Atkinson \(1987\)](#) and [Macaro \(2001\)](#) don't forget L1 is use as a getting-to-know device. Others ([Philipson, 1992](#); [Stables and Wikeley, 1999](#)) even remember its avoidance as sheer 'linguistic imperialism.

In the same manner, different language training techniques, except the direct and the audio-lingual strategies, employ L1 in an L2 to take a look at room for particular functions. Taking it as an example, it was brought to use as a platform of coaching inside the Grammar Translation Method; for offering coaching and response with tutoring of contrastive phonology in the Silent Way; for a clear dialogues delivery in Suggestopedia, and for clear cut bacon light in Community Language Learning. It was thus adopted in a just manner for the communicative approaches ([Larsen-Freeman, 2000](#)).

Likewise Scott (1996), as an example, says the pre-writing stages inspire complicated cognitive competencies that contain each concept of technology and linguistic statistics. This complexity plunges the L2 writers, especially those with confined L2 ability, into complete effort because of the

truth they'll discover it tough to differentiate in their prior knowledge concerning the concern(s) of writing and 'information at the language expression' ([Stapa and Abdulmejid, 2009](#)). Scott affirms that the difficulty turns into extra excessive if the issue given is a way of lifestyles orientated with L2 and is uncommon to the students, which, consequently, mars their creativity and critical thinking. Research findings also endorse Scott's perspectives pointing that L2 writers transfer to L1 to create and prepare thoughts (Wen, 2002) mainly after they come across difficult responsibilities ([Woodal, 2002](#)). Therefore, Woodall energetically advocates using L1 for the prewriting degree of L2 writing. [Wang \(2003\)](#) additionally affirms that much less blessed L2 writers transfer to L1 all through writing.

We have already seen that [Jones and Tetroe \(1987\)](#), [Friedlander \(1990\)](#), [Paiz \(2011\)](#), [Stapa and Abdulmejid \(2009\)](#), and [Wang and Wen \(2002\)](#) have studied the results of L1 use at L2 prewriting stage. While Friedlander unraveled the remarkable consequences of L1 use within the planning machine of L2 writing, Jones and Tetrone determined that the decrease in L2 fluent writers who use their L1 produced greater info and abstract mind at some stage in the strategy planning stage of L2 writing than individuals who did not. [Paiz \(2011\)](#) and [Wang and Wen \(2002\)](#) moreover accept as real with Jones and Tetrone, that language use at the pre-writing stage relates with college students' stage of language skillability. [Stapa and Abdulmejid \(2009:45\)](#), in an associated mission, discovered that L1 use helped college students generate thoughts and 'produce higher wonderful essays in terms of higher achievement, content, and mater, language, well-organized, vocab and mechanics'.

By the same token, the use of beginners' first language (L1) is a controversial hassle in 2nd language (L2) education for years. Based on the English-Only Instruction (EOI),

language learners are generally endorsed to apply L2 of their schoolroom activities; within the interim, college students' L1 can be discouraged for now not being used as a lot as viable. Thus students are pushed to provide the goal language (L2) as masses as viable as well as [Brooks and Donato \(1994\)](#) notice that instructors every so often avoids using company work truly because they sense that students will use their L1 at some stage in the business enterprise interest.

Therefore, the trouble of the learner's first language (L1) within the language of the foreign place examine room has been an arguable dialogue for a long term. In the field of second language coaching and gaining knowledge, Thai people consider that the most productive manner to research a new language is to be immersed in the goal language (L2). If a pupil desires to examine English well, then he or she needs to pay attention, talk, examine and write in English as a bargain as possible. In Thailand, people moreover agree with that local English-speaker lecturers are the ideal language instructors as they're believed to offer a perfect target language study room ([Wiriyachitra, 2001](#)). However, because of the low English proficiency, a few students almost research nothing or little knowledge conveyed with the aid of English. Needless to say, they get aggravated and finally to become demotivated, inexperienced persons of their English language teaching ([Larsen-Freeman, 2009](#)). As [Laopongharn and Sercombe \(2009\)](#) point out, a person English beginners' failure in finishing the course and the terrible attendance end result from a lack of comprehensible input and frustration.

In the meanwhile, students' language ability is related to their instructional success in lots of elements ([Cohen, 2014](#)). Most of the university students locate themselves in an academic environment wherein the coaching fashion, the language used in practice, and the mastering conditions, are individual from

their formative reviews in phrases of beliefs, studying guide and educational needs (Bureau of International Cooperation Strategy, 2006). What makes the state of affairs worse is the style of language backgrounds encountered, implying a complexity in the form of conversation. Two languages and literacy are desired inside the coaching and gaining knowledge of context, which leads to high frustration, confusion, and pressure amongst non-English native speakers, college students as they are attempting to understand the language in their disciplines and speak with self-notion and competence inside the English tertiary environment ([Alptekin, 2002](#)).

As discussed earlier, [Dickson \(1996\)](#), states that using target language inside the lecture room notably will increase college students' exposure to the goal language. By using the goal language in the schoolroom, college students are anticipated to no longer only study languages but additionally analyze through language ([Andriani & Abdullah, 2017](#)). Using target language in the classroom can provide modeling property for university youngsters, each in phrases of language manufacturing and attitudes in the direction of language ([Rahmadani, 2016](#)). [MacDonald \(1993\)](#) argues that the most use of TL through instructors in elegance may have an effect on student motivation. According to [Tholin \(1992\)](#), the first minutes are 'critical,' and it's miles in those first mins when the instructor has to inspire the scholars to apply the TL. In addition, [Dörnyei \(1994\)](#) argues that instructors are not the most effective seem as instructors but also characteristic models, motivators, mentors, and professionals. This indicates how critical the usage of TL is in beauty (in this case, English). If the teacher applies L1 extra in beauty, college students will no longer proper away need to in addition their expertise of TL. [MacDonald \(1993\)](#) moreover contends that when too often L1 is used, students will not be

stimulated.

Hence it is imperative that the trainer need to be top at selecting and utilizing the language of training properly. The language used not handiest want to be correct and with the useful resource of the level of language improvement of university students but additionally need to be a language that is understandable to university college students (Baker, 1988; Andriani & Abdullah, 2017). This may be referred to as code-switching. One definition of the exercising of moving returned and languages or registers of the identical language is a long way greater in verbal exchange than in writing (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). Whereas consistent with Cook (2001), code-switching is a natural phenomenon in setting the speaker which stocks or more languages. Coste (1997) also argues that code-switching can assist similarly novices' proficiency in TL by utilizing the L1 as a referral element.

Methodological Procedure

This is a single-centered cross-sectional quantitative research that has been conducted on fifty students studying in DVM 1st semester in a public sector university, Lahore, Pakistan. During the pre-test, students were asked to write a paragraph to understand the nature of errors that they could frequently commit. After the pre-test, a creative writing technique/approach was applied for four weeks to enhance the creative writing skills of the students, followed by a post-test. During four weeks of teaching, only L2 was used in the classroom, and all directions and classroom proceedings were conducted in the targeted English language. To materialize instructions in L2 different tasks were assigned in the classroom based on pre-writing, while writing, and post-writing activities. The results have been presented both in tabular and graphic forms in the findings section.

Findings of the Study

Table 1. Pre-test and Post-test Results

Pre-test: 50 students		Post-test: 50 students	
Type of Error	%age	Type of Error	%age
Grammatical Errors	44	Grammatical Errors	26
Spelling Errors	24	Spelling Errors	12
overall syntactical errors	32	overall syntactical errors	18

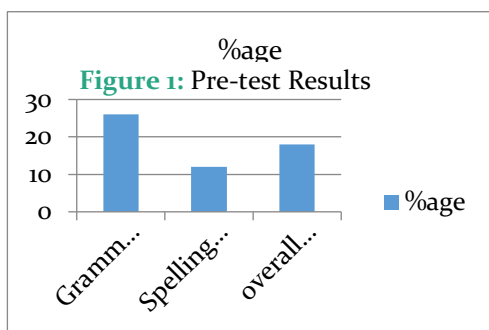


Figure 1: Pre-test Results

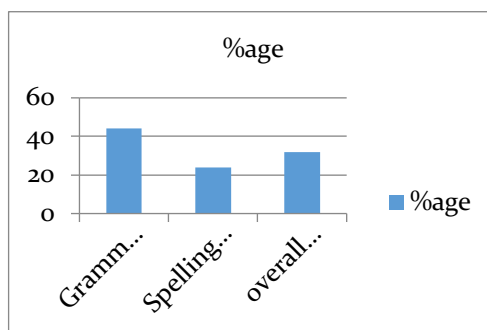


Figure 2: Post-test Results

Discussion

The study aimed to know the types of errors the undergrad with a major in veterinary sciences make while producing any piece of writing in the English language as they only study one course pertaining to the English language whereas all other courses are veterinary science-based, which probably do not allow students to use much of L2, English, in the class of English related course. This creates an issue for the teacher and the students as well. Hence, the study provides an insight about the common types of errors in English language writing skill, mother tongue interference, and how it has become one of the causes of errors in English language writing skills so far as veterinary sciences' undergrads are concerned. Besides, it also addresses the question of what could be the viable pedagogical technique to improve the writing skills of the veterinary sciences' undergrads?

The researcher has discussed the use of L1 and its impacts on the students of higher education in the province of the Punjab, whose target is to communicate in the English language irrespective of the majors they study during their undergraduate program. There is no doubt that students, when engaged continuously in L1, especially during their academics, do not demonstrate well in the target language. English being a language of importance, needs extra efforts on the part of the language instructor who is, in fact, supposed to improve the language skills of the students of higher education, but things get worse when the major is not English but science-related subjects which the undergrads study for four-eight semesters with the hope that after graduating their proficiency in the English language would be as it was expected. But while teaching in the 3rd semester, the researcher came to know that frequently there are errors of different nature committed by the students, and hence, it was thought to research and find a solution for the

improvement of the writing skills of the students.

L1 in our social system is either Urdu or any Punjabi dialect, which is frequently used, and the researcher does have experience of watching the students' overuse of L1 both in and outside the classroom, which leaves a lot for language teachers to look after. Generally speaking, the undergrads with major in veterinary sciences mostly take the English language for granted on the plea that they have nothing to do with English language proficiency, and as a result, their English language is distorted, and the time comes that when do not know whether they are committing any language error or not. On the other hand, there are certain academic benefits of L2 for the teaching of English writing skills in the same language; it directly connects the learner with language and its linguistic culture. In the first phase, the students committed errors regarding the use of the subject-verb agreement, wrong form of the verb, incorrect use of singular and plurals, unclear reference of pronouns, and incorrect use of prepositions all of them fall in the first category of errors which are grammatical errors, in the pretest that has a high percentage of 44. The second category of errors committed by the students is spelling errors, whereupon they committed spelling errors like inaccurate orthographical, phonetically inaccurate, and morphological incorrect spelling errors, which 24 percent in pretest results. While dealing with the third category of errors, the students committed errors of over use of the comma, inaccurate punctuation, and use of sentence fragments instead of using a complete sentence; these are syntactical errors. Again they are in a high percentage, that is 32 percent. When these results were compared with post-test results, there was a fair decline in errors by the students in all three categories. They were dropped with a marked difference of percentage from 44 percent to 26 percent, 24 to 12 percent, and 32 percent to 18 percent. In

all three categories, the result difference of pretest and posttest is 18, 12, and 14 percent.

Language writing proficiency to a fairly good extent.

Conclusion

Hence, we can conclude that, as it has been seen, as the results reflect, that four weeks of training of the students impacted their writing skills positively and enabled them to write grammatically and syntactically fair English, which is the academic objective of the undergrad studies. The said creative writing technique as a pedagogical intervention in L2 can improve the writing skills of the students at the undergraduate level if there is minimized use of L1 in all mainstream courses. In the light of the results, the study suggests that this approach is also helpful in improving University veterinary sciences undergraduates' English

Suggestions

In the light of the conclusion, the study suggests that:

- 1) There should no use of L1 by the teachers irrespective of their academic discipline.
- 2) The students should be taught all academic courses in L2.
- 3) The teachers should be discouraged to use L1 when engaged in promoting writing habits based on different academic disciplines.
- 4) Creative writing technique may be used by the teachers other English language instructors.

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