Development of Story Writing Skills through Communicative Approach at Secondary Level in Pakistan

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Abstract

The main aim of this study was to observe the effect of communicative teaching on story writing skills among 9th graders. Relevant literature revealed that story writing skills can be increased through a communicative approach. Quasi-Experimental design, that is, pretest posttest nonequivalent control group design was used. Threats to internal/external validity were undertaken properly. Two groups were selected to collect data to achieve the above-stated aim. The creative compositions related to story writing skills were evaluated in the light of scoring rubrics. The data were analyzed using t-statistics. The communicative approach is recommended for teaching dialogue writing.

Key Words: Communicative Approach/Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Story Writing, GTM, Secondary Level

Introduction

The importance of the English language is accepted throughout the world because it has become a library language as well as a tool for international communication and the language of science and technology. It has achieved the status of a compulsory subject in academic institutions of Pakistan from early grades up to graduation level. Story writing is an important language skill that is also a focus of advanced schools for its students. The writing-related to daily life is story writing. In Pakistan, research conveys that maximum learners don't acquire proficiency in story writing. Rahman (2002) reported that maximum learners depend on memorizing rather than consuming their intellectual talent. They are not inculcated any training of story writing skills improvement. The foremost cause of this condition is the teaching methodology used in the classroom. Maximum teachers exercise the grammar-translation method (GTM) of teaching English which is obsolete nowadays (Ali & Javed, 2004). Because of the pitiable worth of teaching English, story writing is not advanced appropriately and the percentage of failure in English is the uppermost at the secondary school level (Rahman, 2007).

Writing is a high order thinking process used to enhance the intellectual abilities of students. The importance of writing can be decided from the reality that writing is an ability acquired through conscious effort and essential for the people living in a specific area to communicate the world beyond their limits. Most of the examination systems prefer to judge the abilities of students through analyzing their writing skills. Learners can produce written text in many different forms to facilitate communication. Writing is a skill that does not evolve instantly or without conscious effort. Writing is a formal, highly dynamic process essential for communication in certain situations/stories. Writing is a medium in which we can use efficacious and well- comprehended story to transmit our message to the reader. Story writing should not be confined to the impractical formats commonly used in schools as a part of traditional teaching. It should be made communicative as well as functional. For this purpose, it is needed to use such skills as having the capacity of developing productive writing in a real situation. Story writing can be made functional through the perception of linguistic features of the language in which text is

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processed i.e., grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, etc. It should try to make their students competent in writing to ensure their real success in academic and professional life (Samiullah, 2015).

Teaching writing to students is a controversial matter. One of the views of educationists is to use the CLT as a source of improving the written dissemination of students. The teachers are not aware of this goal that communicative work can be used to refine the written communication of students. The teachers use traditional methods for the instruction of story work which demolishes the effectiveness of work for it. English teachers focus more on content-based knowledge of the subject and have no time to teach the story writing through the use of the proper approach. The current situation demands to eliminate the past practice of evaluation of stories in terms of grades and to evaluate them by providing feedback to raise the writing quality in the composition of students. The teachers can use approaches of humanities discipline to teach story writing to students. The other teachers usually have no command on the proper approach of teaching story writing, and they have opinions to put the burden of teaching writing skills to English teachers. Students generally follow the cut, copy, and paste mechanism to write the story of their taught in schools. Students concentrate more on attaining good marks through the cramming of ready-made material relevant to the laboratory work. They do not know how to present their composition work in written form. A story is described as writing for a specific purpose/event that concentrates on recognizing and analyzing situations, matters, functions, or investigations that have occurred in concrete form. It includes the experiences that happened within life or discoveries occurring as a consequence of research phenomena or even experiments performed in the laboratory. It also includes events that have been mentioned in the literature. The central idea of story writing is to convey the reader about the results derived from the happenings related to the above issues. Simplicity and objectivity of story writing attract the reader's attention and interest conveniently. The story is a well-organized pattern of composition work. The act of concentrating interest in the story is to fulfill the function of communication with different sorts of readers. Today, it is the demand for real life i.e., the job market to be proficient in technical skills such as story writing.

Absence of apt guidance and training is one more obstacle in an increase in story writing skills. Rahman (2002) detailed that in Pakistan, the subject matter is conveyed to the schoolchildren through rote memorization. The independence to discourse in the classroom is wanting. The story writing skills can be improved at the school level (Siddiqui, 2007; Iqbal, 2011). The above-stated situation motivated the researcher to see the effect of the communicative approach to improve high school students' story writing skills.

Statement of Research Problem

This research intended to discover an effect of Communicative Teaching on improving story writing skills, of schoolchildren in high school, which are lacking among learners due to marks/grade consciousness, reliance on memorization of readymade notes, and ineffective teaching methodology.

Delimitations

The research was demarcated to 9th grade learners. The focus was on the subject of English. Story writing skills were undertaken in this study.

Objectives of the Research

More precisely this was the objective of the research:
1. To find the outcome of CLT on the story domain of writing.

Research Question

The researchers tried to answer the following questions:
1. Does CLT aid in the progress of the story domain of writing? To what extent skills like grammar, fluency, form, mechanics, plot construction, and vocabulary related to the story writing skills improved or not as per scoring rubrics?

Literature Review

The story means the description of an event and story writing is the type of creative writing that is no way quality of plagiarism with a beginning, middle, and an end with characters and dialogues as cited by Harmer (2004). This skill can be enhanced among the students by communicative language teaching (Iqbal, 2011).

The story is a highly structured document created through a systemized process. The story can develop the writing skills of students that are appreciated in higher education or practical life i.e., in the job market. The teacher or instructor has to cross the pedagogical barriers to realizing the significance of story writing to students. A clear, comprehensive, and systematic story can be produced through the reflective exposition of events occurring in the life (Samiullah, 2015).

Pakistan is an underdeveloped country. Pakistan is struggling hard to keep pace with other countries in education. According to Rahman (2007), the teaching methodology used in Pakistan does not fulfill the demand for standards of education. Teachers are not guiding the pupils appropriately for developing writing skills. Siddiqui (2007) told that in Pakistan's schools' teacher is an active participant in the classrooms. Learners remain passive in most of the classrooms taught by Pakistani teachers. They observe the activities of teachers in the classrooms and copy the written text from the whiteboard/blackboard. The classrooms in the school lack a communicative environment to polish the writing skills of students. Fatima (2012) described that there is a need to make the education system of Pakistan up to date. Our system of education is promoting to teach technical skills like report writing through cramming. The traditional teaching has no fruitful effects on the report writing skills of students. Due to the drawback of our education system, students do the cramming of stories to pass in the exam. This routine practice induces hindrances for teachers to use new approaches for the teaching of story writing. Consequently, students are not conscious of the significance of story writing.

Samiullah (2019) said that the communicative approach focuses on such activities in the classroom that play the role of precursor for the initiation of flexible discussion in the classroom. Classroom activities should comprise of purposeful and real communication such as searching and transforming information, analyzing language interferences and learning skills, attitudes, and values in one's own culture. The purpose of the communicative approach is to produce communicative competence in learners. The activities used for this purpose in the classroom are role-played, pair work, group work, information gap activities, games, dramas, simulations, etc. Task-based activities are the characteristics of the communicative approach.

In the mainstream of institutes due to addiction to memorization of notes, the artistic ability of intellectual cognizance is not established rightly, reasoned Siddiqui (2007). Schooling supports cramming of information. Pupils just get respectable grades, but story writing is not enhanced in this state of affairs.

Siddiqui (2007) opined that educators implement tight controls and deliver grammatical constructions. In such a sort of English teaching situation, there is a lack of natural/communicative atmosphere available to scholars. Likewise, Hayes (2007) highlighted the suppression of youngsters expressively and mentally by fathers, instructors as well as seniors. The kids are constantly anticipated to be submissive and obedient thoughtlessly. Due to these causes, schoolchildren do not grow self-reliance for the story writing skills. It occurs merely due to the low quality of instruction and poor pedagogic services at the institute. Rahman (2007) found that pupils make sure of satisfactory performance in memorized subjects, but the show is much reduced in elementary intellectual capacity and comprehension of any theme. Also, conceptions in the schoolbooks are incompatible to the mental level of kids. In such a state, the learners have the only choice to cram and the story writing ability is not improved.

Rasool (2009) reported that an extensive course outline with the unfavorable attitude of school management is a difficulty in the tactic of increasing story writing skills. The educators face an issue of accomplishment of course in accord with claim and hope of institutional management. In about 40 minutes for English lessons, the attention of the tutor is the accomplishment of course topics, leaving hardly any time for story writing. The scholars are inactive and quiet hearers. This state does not benefit scholars in recognizing their ingenious powers. Progressively these natural talents die within them as if the capability is not used, finishes inevitably.

From the preceding argument it might be determined that in Pakistan, the instructional method is centered on the structural approach. Outdated GTM stresses the rote-learning of structural forms as well as constructions. Bajwa (2004) reported that by using grammatical style, the communicative ability is not created that is why

Pakistani students are inept to express themselves properly through the script. In the same way, critiquing grammatical method, Cooze (2006) had not been contented with the structural method in language teaching.

The mainstream of scholars feel trouble to write their idea, Harmer (2004) reported, but it should be necessary to form the habit of story writing. In the same concern, Coombe (2009) views that educators, managers, and school administrators are accountable to increase the writing talents of pupils. Graham & Johnson (2003) indicated that there is a substantial concern that pupils do not improve their story writing skills up to the mark for the school even. A common reason is that institutes do not do a decent job of educating this intricate skill. Griffith (2006) suggested CLT for the development of story writing domains. Similarly, Zafar (2009) perceived that CLT might be beneficial to promote story skills because it syndicates the practical as well as structural aspects of language. Siddiqui (2007) mentioned that an institute ought to support youngsters in the progress of intellectual expertise together with story skills. Raji (2009) indicated that a little significance is granted to the talent of story writing. In schoolrooms, the extra worth is granted to write grammatically accurate sentences whereas Fatima and Zubeda (2009) speak out that story writing skill is best learned in a collaborative environment. Iqbal (2011) too, favored the communicative approach for the development of story competence. The communicative approach develops communicative competence in the learner. Communicative competence is the learner's capacity to explicit his/her meaning in the desired speech and to communicate productively in factual situations. Samiullah and Qadeer (2018) related that the communicative approach deals with the proficiency of how to communicate in real situations. They again stated that in the communicative approach teacher acts as a facilitator or mentor who involves the learner in different communicative activities. They further narrated that the communicative approach is an elected approach covering a wide range of strategies that distinguish it from other methods of teaching in extent. The principle of the communicative approach is to assign the role of facilitator to a teacher to manage student-centered activities in the classroom to engage learners in authentic and meaningful communications. The activities in the classroom serve the purpose to induce intelligible input in students for the creation of required skills in learners. They also delineated that in the practical application of the communicative approach teachers should plan learning tasks having clear objectives according to the needs of learners. The design of learning material should be relevant to the learning task appropriate for the accession of the target language and realistic skills. The communicative approach is an eclectic term covering broad-ranging teaching procedures and tasks in the classroom. Samiullah (2015) argued that during writing through the communicative approach, students become competent to construct their ideas into sufficiently good written form according to the goal of writing in the existing situation. Communicative activities always happen in a social context. Social contact requires to involve two or more interlocutors in a communicative setting at a definite time and place. He explained that communicative procedure is initiated through the exposition of dialogue to promote the determination in learner for the discussion about a topic or setting It was also stated that reading, writing, discussion, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation keep the learner dynamic and active in the classroom than passively receiving the lectures related to the subject matter. The communicative approach involves the learner in fluency-based tasks in the classrooms for creating confidence in them for expressing meaningful communication. Authentic communication is the key to achieve success in learning in real-life situations.

Samiullah (2013) specified that communicative competence is a means to share or exchange information, news, or ideas in the target language. Communicative competence comprises of four components: grammatical competence, discourse competence, socio-cultural competence, and strategic competence. All components of communicative competence are interconnected. These components cannot go beyond one another like beads in a string.

Samiullah (2013) quoted the four different components of communicative competence.

Grammatical Competence

Grammatical competence specifies the grammatical forms such as the potential of identifying phrasal, linguistics, morphological, and syntactic physiognomy expressions used to form words and sentences.

Discourse Competence

Discourse competence particularizes the interrelation of range of verbalization, drafted words, and terminologies

that give meaning to contents.

Socio–Cultural Competence

Socio-cultural competence deals with the axioms of application of language for social interaction according to the norms of society to which an interlocutor affiliated.

Strategic Competence

Strategic competence refers to the potential of an individual to use proper strategies to overcome any sort of deficiencies in the learner's ability to communicate.

Samiullah (2013) construed that the communicative approach takes into consideration the interaction of teachers with students for the generation of ideas in the classroom. According to this concept, the communicative approach can proceed in any of the four categories:

1. Interactive/dialogic communicative approach: the instructor and learners analyze perceptions, creating new interpretations, arranging precise interrogation, concentrating, and making contributions to different ideas.
2. Non-interactive/dialogic communicative approach: the instructor examines, quits, prospects, and engages the learner on different viewpoints.
3. Interactive/authoritative communicative approach: the instructor poses learners to a series of queries and responses to conclude to a common point.
4. Non-interactive/authoritative communicative approach: the teacher gave importance to his/her thinking and presents his/her ideas.

Samiullah and Qadeer (2018) related that in the circumstances of writing, the communicative approach reflects upon the purpose of writing, the authenticity of words to be communicated, and the social environment in which communication occurs for the initiation of writing. The learners are encouraged for writing to ameliorate their writing skills. The communicative approach concentrates on the social nature of writing and does not provide a substitute for process pedagogy. The communicative approach is revolving around the functional aspects of the written discourse and supports the concept of development of writing can occur through meaningful communication in real life.

Griffith (2006) gave the idea of the use of a communicative strategy for flourishing the writing competencies of learners. According to Ali and Javed (2004), the communicative approach should be applied to various levels of teaching pedagogies to judge its effectiveness. There is a need to prosecute research on the effect of a communicative approach on listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Research work is needed for the communicative syllabus design. Students' attitudes towards the communicative approach can be measured by giving lessons to them through the communicative approach of teaching and observing its effects (Samiullah, 2015). Communicative teaching has been proved effective in improving the learning of the English language in Pakistan. So, there is a need to study its effects in the field of the story, more specifically on the development of story writing skills at the secondary level.

Writing is generally instructed isolated from skill-based learning. The act of rote-memorization is depicted in the writing story. When the story is read or written it resembles the recipe in a cookbook and fails to convey its purpose to the reader. The students are not able to write their experiential work in the written form which has been experienced by them in life even at the Bachelor's or master's level. The reason behind this is that they have not been trained in writing the story of their experiences. They generally copy senior students' work from their notebooks or memorize to gain good grades or a high percentage of marks but do not develop their writing skills of story domain. They neglect self-effort and rely on making a copy of others' work. This problem can be resolved by creating the habit of self-writing in students in the early stages of life through the induction of different approaches of teaching in the ELT classroom. Keeping in mind this situation, researchers intended to research to see the effect of the communicative approach on writing stories in Pakistani secondary school.

Method and Procedure

The details regarding method and procedure are as under:

Design

The general plan of this research was a quasi-experimental design. More precisely, the Pretest Posttest Non-Equivalent Control Group Design is used. Two schools, one each from the public and private sector, were selected for the experiment.

Sample

The total participants in experimentation were 206. Convenient sampling had been used.

Instrument

The instrument for collecting data was the test to evaluate the story writing abilities at the high school level. The tasks were modified from the related literature. The test was authenticated by the professionals' opinion.

Data Analysis

The data were examined in subsequent ways by using t-statistics with the help of SPSS:

- Over-all evaluation of experimental and control groups in story writing talents.

Results

Table 1 shows the evaluation of gain and effect sizes of together the control and experimental groups in terms of story writing skills.

Table 1. Overall Comparison from Pretest to Posttest Gain Scores of Control and Experimental Groups

Group		Pre-Test Mean	SD (Pre-Test)	Post-Test Mean	SD (Post-Test)	Gain	Effect Size	t-value	Sig (2-tailed)
Control (N=101)	Story Writing	1.19	0.31	2.09	1.05	0.90	0.02	1.22	0.33
Experimental (N=106)	Story Writing	1.30	1.05	8.50	4.373	3.88	0.59	5.39	0.00**

Table 1 display that the control group developed in story writing. The progress was not significant in story writing skills. Generally, in an over-all score of story writing abilities, the control group developed insignificantly. The experimental group was upgraded more significantly in average totals of story writing because the experimental group got effect sizes better than the control groups.

Findings

Significant differences were found from the analysis of the data by comparing experimental and control groups that with the help of CLT the story writing abilities of high school students might be improved significantly in comparison with the traditional teaching based on cramming.

Conclusions

The following conclusion was made from the findings and data analysis:

The story domain of writing might be advanced significantly by using Communicative Teaching among boys and girls in the public and private sectors.

Answers to the Research Questions

The replies to the research questions are ahead number-wise:

1. Yes. CLT is beneficial in improving the story writing skills like grammar, fluency, form, mechanics, plot construction, and vocabulary related to the story writing skills in the light of pre-test and post-test data analyses. The tests had been assessed in the light of scoring rubrics. They were improved with CLT up to a significant extent.

Recommendations

These recommendations are suggested:
1. CLT may be useful to teach play/drama writing.
2. CLT may be valuable to teach poetry composition.
3. CLT may be advantageous to teach prose writing.
4. CLT may be worthwhile to teach the writing of an imaginative and argumentative essay.
5. CLT may be suitable to teach dialogue writing.
6. CLT is recommended to teach listening, reading, and speaking.
7. CLT may be handy to teach any genre in English.
8. CLT may be handy to teach plot construction in story writing skills in English.

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