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DEVELOPING ENGLISH WRITING SKILL AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH COOPERATIVE LEARNING METHOD

Dr. Amna Saeed[1], Dr. Tanveer Iqbal[2], Prof. Dr. Mumtaz Akhter[3]

[1]*Assistant Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab*
[2]*Associate Professor, Department of Education, the University of Lahore*
[3]*HOD, Department of Education, the University of Lahore*

[1]amna.ier@pu.edu.pk, [2]tanveer.iqbal@ed.uol.edu.pk, [3]mumtaz.akhter@ed.uol.edu.pk,

Corresponding Author: *
Dr. Shamim Ullah (shamimullah.ier@pu.edu.pk)
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ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed to develop writing skill among 7th grade elementary school students in the subject of English. Present study employed Quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group pretest-posttest research design. Participants of the study were 7th grade students from a public sector school of Lahore. Experiment was conducted on two intact groups for the period of 16 weeks. Each group was comprised of 30 students. The English Writing test was developed following test construction principles. Experimental group students were taught by cooperative learning techniques Jigsaw to develop English writing skill among students and control group students were taught by traditional teaching method. Study findings revealed that a significant difference was found between experimental and control group students' writing skill in English. It is recommended that jigsaw technique might be beneficial to develop writing skill among elementary school students in the subject of English.

Keywords: *English writing skill, Cooperative learning, Jigsaw technique*

INTRODUCTION

Cooperative learning encourages learning, further friendships and respect among students of different groups (Attle & Baker, 2007). Gillies (2016) argued that when too much variety in a group, the excellent results for every student. Learning from someone depends on each other in a supportive manner for different learning projects. Hanze and Berger (2007) argued that students usually work in groups of four in cooperative learning. They can break into pairs for many activities by using this style and so get back together in groups speedily for others. It is crucial, however, to set up schoolroom protocols and norms, that guide students to participate, stay on work, encourage, some others, help to each one, share, resolve problems, and also give and take response from companions.

Ideally collaborative learning or its activities would ask students to be much progressive contestant in their personal learning. They share and talk about their ideas and take interest in debates and arguments to perform various functions in the groups to designate their learning (Chen & Goswami, 2011). Despite collaborative or cooperative learning being established in teaching practice for decades now, it has also been understanding that activities of small groups are not forever very surprising, some

important challenge turnout to be students' non-participation in favour of other students. They focusing on individual academic goals while inattention on collective goals and teachers' problem remain unsolved (Rudnitsky et al., 2017). Major characteristic of cooperative learning is working with peers. In this approach students work on a project in groups and oftentimes they are rewarded either completely or partially for the achievement of the whole group. Cooperative learning features have been a part of education for a long time. Different forms of cooperation have always been essential for example to take part on school sports team or to create school newspapers run by students (Prince, 2004).

Earlier to World War II (1939) many social theorists such as Allprot, Mead, Shaw and Watson, started establishing the theory of cooperative learning after determined group activity which was very efficient and impressive in quality, quantity and whole creativity when it compared with individual work (Gilles, 2014). Nevertheless, it was not until 1937 when a researcher may establish that those people who worked in collaboration to attain shared goal were much successful in achieving final results as compare to those who struggled separately to accomplish the said goals. Moreover, they investigate that those who work independently had a greater probability of displaying competitive behavior (May, 1937).

The theory of cooperative learning represented learners as active receivers of information in sharing knowledge and answers in groups, involving in the process of learning collectively rather than being a passive receiver of knowledge. The idea of Lewis's contribution to cooperative learning is supported on establishing relationship between group members (May, 1937).

Cooperative Learning Strategies

Cooperative learning is structured, monitored and facilitated by the teacher all the time to use and achieve collective goals in project (e.g., complete a chapter) some assignment and course of study can be modified to this kind of learning and may disagree from two to six members with discussion continuing from some minutes up till entire period (Jonson & Jonson, 2017).

The strategies of cooperative learning are not very difficult only almost they need very small to no formulation. Many of them continues less than five minutes, with this short period of time every last student in class being participated and engaged. Different teachers may start by applying only one scheme in their own teaching and so assess the results in various classes of school. Many strategies like Circle-The-Sage or Think-Pair-Share, such as example, are not at all time taking and do not need each of two a prolonged planning (Rigacci, 2020). Strategies of cooperative learning that may be exercise in class includes:

Think- Pair- Share

This is a cooperative learning strategy which encourages involvement of students. It can be used for different grade levels and different class situations. Students understand through questions by using these three important steps:

1. **Think**; they think individually about the question that has been present to create idea of their own.
2. **Pair**; students are divided into pairs to share their thinking, this practice facilitate students to clear their ideas and to consider others idea.
3. **Share**; students share their idea with a whole class or a large group, usually presenting idea to a group with the favour of companion. Additionally, the idea of students has become further refined by using these three steps (Ragacci, 2020).

Think-Pair-Share strategy is key of every problem that all teachers encounter when they asked a query in class; having other students' response every time. Many students do not even feel contest to think on expected answer, not to acknowledgment of speaking up. This take place for some grounds, likely not merely due to a need of preparation or knowledge, but merely due to a lack of self-confidence. Furthermore, query on "wait time" find that normally teachers give only one second to think after they call for a question. The strategies of cooperative learning as well engage introverted and lazy students, who

demands time before they feel able to answer the question. In this strategy a teacher put a question to the whole class, at the time that he or she would do some basic information or at some point of the lesson (Ragacci, 2020).

It depends on the level and the age of the students, it may be something that demands individual explanation at any point or not. Students have some time to understand about expected answer or to write down it and at that time they rotate to their class fellow seated side by side to them and achieve some time to talk and share about what they have perfectly learn. When this activity reaches toward final stage, the instructor indiscriminately selects some pairs and call for them to shortly discuss their responses or answers (Rohman & Shola, 2022).

Use of his scheme with success not merely for little students but also used in teachers training curriculum and it is amazing how overmuch mutual fundamental interaction increase their perception. Most of time pairs will win where individual student may be credibly failed. The strategy of Think-Pair-Share may also be practiced to have learners think over on a content, even when no accurate thinking is required. This is easy and virtually renowned strategy of cooperative learning that, may be basic one to be used (Rohman & Sholah, 2022).

The Jigsaw Techniques

Jigsaw method was presented by Elliot Aronson in (1978). Jigsaw is a well renowned technique to engross students in their learning process. Through this technique student grasp a lot of material quickly, minimize listening time and share information with other groups and they are separately answerable for their learning. This technique lessens interaction between groups and creates an environment of respect and cooperation (Amenda & Guadi, 2017).

In Jigsaw technique groups discuss and share information. Students start with their home groups; every member is given one selection of the topic students then instruct their own group mates. Students share and focus on information on a plan overlapping all parts of the content (Amedu & Guadi, 2017). Slavin (1995) said the aforesaid as Jigsaw, take out that every students gets complete information, preferably than only the information pertinent to their part of the topic. The skilled team performs their role as usual but home group members are less reliant on one another, the reason is that they have all the information that their group members are teaching them.

Jigsaw method is a very famous way of teaching and practicing specific content. This method is helpful for instructional activity and it can be practiced for many days. It is very helpful when practicing with large content. It becomes the duty of each member to teach the other member and share information; even question can be asked to assess their knowledge. This technique makes improve communication and problem solving skills. Observing that entire members of group take part in the group and teacher will be able to get information what students already knowing about the subject matter. These details let teachers to adapt his lesson according to the understanding of students (Aronson, 2002).

Circle the Sage

This technique is very effective for involving students to answer the question. Teacher ask a question and prepare all the students to answer this question repeatedly, this is how the answer is learning by all the questions. This technique is effective for both intelligent and average learners. High grade achievers get a chance to prove themselves on the other hand average students learn the answer by repetition. Students who could not learn or missed the opportunity to learn the concept will be able to learn again (Kagan & Kagan, 2009).

Timed -Pair- Share

Communication consists of four language skills reading, writing, listening and speaking. The above-mentioned strategy focuses on listening-learning technique. Time-Pair share is a complete and effective way for students to interact, share and then exchange the information. The process begins by the teacher, she presents the topic to the class and then gives time to ponder and discuss and then groups will be made by the teacher. They will then share information. In these groups' participant A shares information

with participant B. Participants then exchange roles (Kagan & Kagan, 2019).

Using these technique participants who are shy gets chance to express themselves students talk and share and also force other students to listen to them. This technique can be utilized to teach any topic related to the subject" English" because it depends on language competency, other subjects like literature and history it may be used to ask for opinions or individual interpretation (Kagan & Kagan, 2009).

Agree -Disagree Line -ups

This is another creative way to make students more social. Agree-Disagree line ups allow students to share ideas with other class fellows instead of only sharing with their neighbour. Teacher announces one statement like I feel my point of view matters in this class such as "the process of electricity should not be raised. The students who agree make one line at one end and the student who disagrees stand at the other end. The students stand in between and closer to one another in time pair share technique students stand closer to those who possess the same idea as they have. The teacher can also line up students for their views (Kagan & Kagan, 2009).

Numbered Heads

Students of the class are divided into groups and allotted a number. Teacher will make groups then gives a specific topic. Teacher then calls a number and every student with that number has to stand up and they will answer the question. This is how every student gets a chance to express themselves. In this way all students participate in the discussion, share their opinion. Students are gifted to build on, join similar ideas among the groups and enlarge the discussion. Students get a chance to discuss a concept before they discuss it in front of class. This technique supports students to become involved and engage in the process of learning (Kagan & Kagan, 2009).

Rally Coach

Students are more comfortable to share and give feedback to students instead of teachers. This is another useful and effective method in the process of cooperative learning. In groups students who know the answer solves the problem while the other student concentrates guidance where necessary and provides support. Roles are then exchanged. Rally coach uses interaction and feedback when doing exercise in class. Students learn to practice sharing, solving and then share information. Simultaneous interaction is conducted because all the students are active at the same time in class either in problem solving or coaching as well. Peer teaching is not much useful because some students are slow learners. However, using Rally Coach technique slow achiever students receive help from high achievers (Kagan & Kagan 2009).

This type of ability and interaction mostly helps students in building their base (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Cooperative learning is a process that contains versatile learning techniques to improve students understanding of a subject by using a structured plan of attack using step by step this method; it helps clear the concepts of students. These steps include analyze, create and apply concepts of Jean Piaget, Kholberg and Vygotsky which are progressive key points and helpful in both in individual and social setting because in this technique students try to get actual life learning (Majoka et al., 2010).

Writing Skills

The most practical and applied type of the language is writing, if the writing skills are more improved than a person could work more efficiently. A person could read, write and speak in a good way. There has been a great change in teaching method of English in ultramodern age from teacher centred learning to student centred. Reading and writing gives a chance for active engagement of students and teachers in writing skills. Cooperative learning is an important scheme for producing reading and writing power. It furnishes a choice for teachers to teach their students in different situations of cooperative learning at which point interpersonal interaction is achievable in the company of students (Munawar & Chuaduary, 2019).

Language is divided into two main classes by its nature productive skills and receptive skills. Listening and reading are observed as receptive skills and writing and speaking are considered as

productive skills. The learner begins learning to pass on with written shape as they start out to connect with some others at school. As compare to others language skills, writing skills are complex. Though sometimes first language speaker of the English can undergo complications in a difficult circumstance. In learning process of language students' academic achievements is an indicator of a success (Javed et al., 2013).

Stages of Writing

Person who can write efficiently is set on second stage of learning. The first level is named copying. The process to tells information from board. The process of learning writing and becoming well known and expert in language. The next stage is leading writing toward the free writing where students are independent to select any topic they need (Allati & Belhamidi, 2016).

Bashyal (2009) identify the following three stages of writing process:

Writing as a Mechanical Activity

This is the process in which a child enhances experience by learning the rules of language e.g. spelling, punctuation etc.

Writing as Linguistic Activity

While performing this activity student are given free chance to practice for accurate writing or without mistake paragraph or sentences. Teacher should guide and control the students when they are writing.

Writing as an Act of Communication

A person can communicate through writing by writing an e-mail, message or text to the other person hence improving writing skills (Bashyal, 2009).

Different Writing Problems

Writing is well thought out as the hardest skill to acquire particularly for the foreign language learners. In learning process writing is well thought out as an important element and it can be hard for students unappreciated and even punished for many students (Zourez, 2010). In writing process many students can face barriers i.e. in collecting and processing information particularly if those procedures do not support and guided by the teacher. There are numerous reasons that prevent learners from acquiring high writing skills. One of them is known as language composition. All languages have its personal composition for instance in English language the sentence start out with subject, verb and object like in Arabic language and that you can start out with subject and thus verb and object and change is also controllable i.e. verb afterward subject (Allati & Belhamidi, 2016).

Linguistic Difficulty

Following are the basic linguistic problems:

Spellings

When students write any text be it their mother tongue or second language when here are mistakes in texts. Spelling error do not normally prohibit the reader from understanding what the writer is attempting to say, but they cannot make any positive opinion. For this ground, it is recommended for learners to effort to take off them from their piece of writing approximately possible. Big reading always facilitate to cut down the spelling mistakes.

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Punctuation

If the students are not aware of punctuation, then they may use wrong punctuation.

Grammar

The grammatical error is very usual particularly among students who are foreign language learners. Normally these learners make grammatical error because they go wrong in using right English tenses of verb for explicit thought or they do not use the right form of verb. They can also go wrong in using definite articles in good order or placing words in the right way (Allati & Belhamidi, 2016).

Physiological Problems

The attitude and style of students affect the learning process. If students are not willing to write or the topic; they do not like then the writing they make may not be good (Alfaki, 2015).

Motivation

Motivation helps students to perform better function in the process of learning. It produces great results and help students to enhance their confidence and improving their performance in language learning. Students should be given such topics which motivate them (Zourez, 2010).

Anxiety

This is condition when students not feel easy, this situation effect their writing performance and they do not produce good results. Wynne and Cadet (1996) states that there are four main conditions that can cause anxiety for students when they are writing.

1. Adapting to a new writing style.
2. Tight deadlines.
3. Difficult assignment which they not understand.
4. Criticism that they received.

Statement of the Problem

Johnson and Johnson (2014) argued that method of cooperative learning is an important mode to prepare students to meet challenges of life. It is possible through with building combined efforts throughout the school life for twelve years or more than that students produce ability they want to bring off cooperation at social group and international level. Therefore, researcher conducted the present study to develop writing skill among elementary school students by using cooperative learning method in the subject of English.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was:

1. To developEnglish writing skill of 7th grade elementary school students through cooperative learning method

Research Methodology

Present study employed Quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group pretest-posttest research design. Participants of the study were 7th grade students from a public sector school of Lahore. Experiment was conducted on two intact groups for the period of 16 weeks. Each group was comprised of 30 students. English Writing Test was developed by following the test item rules. Content for the test of English writing skill was included spellings, tenses, parts of speech, capitalization, punctuation and sentence structure. Lesson plans were developed and different activities were designed to conduct the experiment. A table of specification was developed for item development. An item analysis was conducted to examined the item difficulty and discrimination. Experimental group students were taught by cooperative learning techniques Jigsaw to develop English writing skill among students and control group students were taught by traditional teaching method. Inferential statistics were applied to find out significant difference between control and experimental groups.

Results

Table 1

Comparison of Pretest-Posttest Scores of 7th Grade Elementary School Students' English Writing Skill (Control Group)

Measures	N	M	SD	t-value	df	Sig.
Pre-Test	60	25.34	4.78	-17.38	59	.000
Post Test	60	33.74	5.27			

Findings of the study revealed "a significant difference between pretest-posttest scores of 7th grade elementary school students' writing skill in the subject of English" at p<.05 level of significance.

Table 2
Comparison of Pretest-Posttest Scores of 7th Grade Elementary School Students' English Writing Skills (Experimental Group)

Measures	N	M	SD	t- value	df	Sig.
Pre-Test	60	28.51	4.27	-2.79	59	.001
Post Test	60	31.67	8.43			

Findings of the study revealed "a significant difference between pretest-posttest scores of 7th grade elementary school students' writing skill in the subject of English" at p<.05 level of significance.

Table 3
Comparison of Control and Experimental Group Pretest Scores in English Writing Skill

Measures	Groups	N	M	SD	t-value	df	Sig.
Pre-Test	Control Group	30	25.17	2.53	-.472	58	.538
	Experimental Group	30	25.71	6.30			

Findings of the study found "an insignificant difference between control and experiment group pre-test scores of 7th grade elementary school students' writing skill in the subject of English" at p<.05 level of significance.

Table 4
Comparison of Control and Experimental Group Posttest Scores in English Writing Skills

Measures	Groups	N	M	SD	t-value	df	Sig.
Post-Test	Control Group	30	30.85	2.77	-5.45	58	.000
	Experimental Group	30	36.62	5.62			

Findings of the study revealed "a significant difference between control and experiment group post-test scores of 7th grade elementary school students' writing skill in the subject of English" at p<.05 level of significance.

Discussion

The present study was aimed to develop writing skill among 7th grade elementary school students in the subject of English. The results of the study revealed a significant difference in English writing skillscores in post-test between experimental and control groups. The post-test scores of English writing skills confirm the significance of cooperative learning method. Arbab (2003), a student from Air Force College for Women in Pakistan performed a research work at Master's level, which explains the outcomes of cooperative learning. She performed experiment using pre-test and post-test method. The result shows a very positive outcome of cooperative learning as comparison to other methods of teaching. A further experimental study by Kousar (2003) was performed at master level with a name of an experimental study. The Effects of Cooperative Learning on Social Studies Achievement. The experiment was performed on forty students of class seventh using control groups. The result showed best performance as compare to traditional methods. Parveen (2003) conducted a study with name "an experimental study of cooperative learning on social study achievement of students of 8th Grade" the time duration was two weeks. An experimental group of 18 students was formulated with a control group of 17 students was formulated. The distribution was made on annual examination marks in the subject of social studies. Experiment time period was two weeks. It explained that

cooperative learning was not much effective as compare to traditional methods.

A study was conducted by Iqbal (2004) the effects of cooperative learning on academic achievement of secondary school students in Mathematics. This is PhD level research which was done in Rawalpindi University of Arid Agriculture. The researcher used pre-test and post-test design. Student of class 10th was the population of the study and they were divided in to control and experimental groups. To teach experimental group model of cooperative learning: student team achievement division (STAD) was used. Time period of research was ten weeks. A test was designed to measure students learning skills. Again traditional method was used for control group and cooperative method was used for experimental group. The study proved cooperative learning to be more advantageous and helped as compare to other methods. The researcher established that the results of control group and experimental group were same in the start of experiment. The scores of high achiever of control and experimental groups in post- test were same, but significance difference was found in scores of low achiever of control and experimental groups. The performance of low achievers was improved by using cooperative learning method. Some other importance of this method was determined on retention of test, the best performers of control and experimental group were not performing significantly but low achievers were performed much better. The overall results of the study proof that method of cooperative learning gives better results than traditional methods of teaching but it has to perform under the guidance and strict supervision of teacher.Saad (2017) conducted elementary level study with the topic the role of cooperative learning method in teaching of science. Quasi experimental design was used in this study. Time duration for the study comprised of 13 weeks. It was held in public sector girl's school. Two different groups were formulated 1st was used with traditional and 2nd used experimental method. Findings of the study showed that experimental group students performed best. It was well-advised to practice this method more and more so that students will be able to perform better.

Conclusion

The present study was aimed to develop writing skill of 7th grade elementary school students in the subject of English. A significant difference of post-test scores was observed between control and experiment groups which shows the effectiveness of jigsaw technique to develop writing skills among 7th grade elementary school students in the subject of English.

Recommendations

Recommendations of the study are given below:

1. A significant effect of cooperative learning on elementary school students' writing skills in the subject of English was revealed by the findings of the present study. Therefore, it is recommended that cooperative learning techniques be used by classroom teachers to develop students' writing skills in English.
2. The present study was delimited to only one technique (jigsaw). However, future studies may be conducted using other cooperative learning techniques to develop students' writing skill at the elementary, secondary, and university levels.
3. In this research, the cooperative learning framework was applied to only one school subject, this cooperative learning method may also be tested in different school subjects at the elementary and secondary levels, as well as with various groups of students, including special students and slow learners.

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