Relationship between teaching strategies and students' achievement in English writing skills at secondary level

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Abstract- To use appropriate teaching strategies has been a great challenge for English language teachers where English is used as second language. This paper presents the relationship between teaching strategies and students' achievement in English writing skills at elementary level. The sample of the study was taken from government schools of Lahore city. One section of 10th grade was taken from each school. In case of more than one sections, only one section was selected randomly. An English writing achievement test based on persuasive writing along with scoring rubrics was administered to students of SSC. Test was developed from curriculum of English language of secondary level. Through test writing skills were assessed on three domains of writing i.e. generation of ideas, organization of ideas and language conventions. To determine the use of teaching strategies, questionnaire was developed on 5point scale to know students' perceptions about the use of teaching strategies.Findings showed that there was significant relationship betweenlecture, pair work, questioning, presentation, grammar, translation, oral, written feedback and students' achievement.

Key words: secondary school certificate, teaching strategies, English writing skills

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching strategies are used by teachers to improve students' achievement at any level of education. In Pakistan although English language teachers put efforts to develop writing skills but due to lack of appropriate strategies and insufficient practices students are less able to acquire effective writing skill. Literature showed that some strategies are more effective than others in terms of attainment of learning outcomes in English writing classrooms. There are various ways to teach writing but the best can be done through practice writing. By going through the process of writing that is planning, revising and editing, effective writing skills can be developed. Flower and Hayes (1980) highlightedthat writing process includes three components i.e. planning, organizingand reviewing. Planning and organizing is concerned with generation and organization of ideas to make writing aligned and purposeful. Prewriting involves gathering and locating ideas on a given topic, develop and organize those ideas through brainstorming. White and Arndt (1991) recommended the use of WH questions for effective writing (who? what? where? when? why? and how?) as good practices to generate ideas. This strategy is based on the concept of 'socratic dialogue' and yields ideas on the topic for developing creativity in the learner. Brainstorming is effective strategy for generating ideas in English language classrooms (Kleine, 1987). Graham and Perin (2007) elaborated that prewriting helps in generating and organizing writing.Kleine (1987) suggested that techniques of gathering ideas about a topic can be classified into three groups such as brainstorming, questioning and using concept diagrams to gather and organize ideas at the same time. Through brainstorming students think about ideas and they are able to express their ideas with their peers. They develop mind map and discuss these points one by one. In this way, they get chance to list their ideas. Research has proven that by going through the prewriting practices, writers are able to produce effective piece of writing (Bolaji, 2014; Brandon (2001) and Kendall &Khuon (2006); Raimas, 2002; Hyland ,2004; Hayes & Flower 1980; Constantinou, 2019). When the task is completed, then at the end, revising and editing is done as well as conventions with the required purpose of writing. Editing is concerned with getting meanings clear and to attend to details of accuracy like spelling, punctuation and grammar. Process approach is non-traditional approach. Widiningrum (2013) named this process as matured process of writing.

Extensive reading is another strategy that is used in English language classrooms to improve students' learning. When students read extensively, the ability of their mind to accept ideas is increased. It helps the students to improve their skills in three domains of writing i.e. generation of ideas, organization of ideas and

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language facility and conventions. As a result when topic is assigned to them in English writing classroom they extensively generate ideas.

Graham and Perin(2007) recommended that students should read each other's writing in pairs and groups. They also explored that 'questioning' according to the need of student is effective practice for teachers to teach writing. Through questioning, teachers are able to develop prewriting, planning and organizing strategies. Similarly, teachers also get feedback about their writing. Writing important points on board to give help to students are the most common ways used by teachers in English writing classrooms. In addition,providing appropriate material to studentsas well as provision of model text are useful practices to develop effective writing.Another way of keeping students engage in the process of writing is group work. Group work is student centered strategy that develops cooperative learning as well as skills of problem solving and communicating. Khabbazbashi, Khalifa, Robinson and Mifsud (2017) discussed that if group work is done actively under the guidance of teachers it helps to attain intended learning outcomes more efficiently.

Writing skills can be improved through effective feedback. It is fundamental aspect of writing process. It is helpful for both teachers and students as teachers identify proficiency level of their students which guide them to plan their teaching and feedback provided to students help to correct errors in their writing.In this way students are able to improve their writing more effectively and efficiently (Brooker, Lloyd, Robinson, and Casals, 2017).

Feedback on students' work as well as drill are also useful practices for teaching spelling, consistent with Swanto, and Din (2014). Teachers give oral and written feedback on students' work and after that they come to know about their mistakes pointed out by their teachers. They try not to make it again. It is therefore recommended that for improving spelling mistakes drill and feedback are the useful practices. For teaching accurate spellings in classrooms, drilling may be used to memorize where students are weak in spellings. Through drilling students learn the spellings by heart and there are less chances that they will write incorrect.

Literature shows that extensive reading is highly recommended strategy to improve writing proficiency in students of secondary level. It motivates and gives confidence to learners. The Ahmed and Rajab (2015) discussed that extensive reading has positive effect on students' writing skill. They argued that limited reading habit is the cause of poor proficiency in writing.

Giving assignments to improve their writing is valuable strategy for students. Hinkelman (2018); Bernausand Gardner (2008) described that practice allowed the learners to develop effective piece of writing. They highlighted the reason that through practice activities in the form of classwork or giving homework, students focus on all the domains of writing such as generating and organizing ideas as well as language facility and conventions. They suggested that assignments should be given according to the current proficiency of students so that they can be able to develop complex writing skills accordingly.Writing abilities of the students are enhanced if teacher motivates the students for writing and engage them in process of writing, make them feel that writing is social activity as well as give timely feedback on students' work.

It can be concluded that for teaching writing the best practice is involving students in the process of writing to create effective piece of writing. If teacher focuses on practicing writing, it will be easy for students to sequence ideas by keeping in mind the degree of importance. They will come to know how to introduce and organize the writing, what is to be included in main body and how to conclude the topic by keeping in mind language conventions.

Purpose of the study

Students of secondary level face difficulties in learning English as compulsory subject. Writing skills can be improved by using appropriate teaching strategies. Variety of teaching strategies are used for teaching English writing skill and relationship of each strategy is different with students' achievement. Through this study researcher intended to find out teaching strategies and their potential relationshipon students' achievement in English writing skillsat Secondary School level.

Hypothesis of the study

Following were hypothesis of the study:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between teaching strategies and students' overall achievement scores at SSC on persuasive writing
H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between teaching strategies and students' achievement

scores on generation of ideas on persuasive writing

H_{03}:There is no statistical relationship between teaching strategies on students' scores on organization of ideas on persuasive writing.

H_{04}: There is no significant relationship between teaching strategies and students' scores on language conventions on persuasive writing

II. METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was used for this study. Out of 180 government female high schoolsfrom Lahore city 24 schools were selected randomly. In these schools one section of SSC was selected as sample. Independent variable of this study was teaching strategies and students' scores were taken as dependent variable. Two instruments were used in this study. An English writing test was developed and administered to students to determine their achievement in English writing skills. Test was developed to measure the intended learning outcomes given in National curriculum of English language 2006. Test contained question related to persuasive writing and it was developed from intended learning outcomes taken from curriculum of SSC. Scoring rubric was developed to score essay type test to reduce scoring complexities and to increase reliability of scoring.Likewise, a questionnaire was administered to students of SSC to determine the teaching strategies used by their teachers.

Validity of the test: Content validity of the test and questionnaire was determined by experts' opinion. Content analysis of the test tasks intended to measure the language skills. Opinions of experts were sought for usefulness, adequate coverage of the content and relevance of test and questionnaire items to measure the construct.

Reliability of rubrics and questionnaire

Reliability of instruments were measured through Cronbach alpha. Reliability of scoring rubrics and questionnaire was $\alpha = .84$ and $\alpha = .80$ respectively.

Findings

Mean score of students on persuasive mode of writing

Table 1 shows the overall mean score of SSC students on English writing test. Total marks of test based on persuasive writing was 30.

Table 1   Overall Mean score of SSC on students' writing skills on persuasive mode

SSC(n=167)	
M	SD
17.05	4.92

Table 1 shows mean scores of students of SSC on English writing test. Test contained 30 marks and mean score of students is 17.05 with SD 4.92.

Mean scores of students on three domains of writing

Out of total 30 marks of essay type test, 10 marks were assigned to each domain. There domains were scored separately by considering the criteria given in rubrics.

Table 2   Mean Scores of SSC Students in Three Domains of Persuasive Writing

Dimensions of writing	SSC (n=167)	
	M	SD
Developing ideas	5.78	1.67
Organizing ideas	5.63	1.62
Language facility and conventions	5.69	1.99

Table 2 demonstrates that mean difference between three domains of writing in English writing test. Table shows that there is not much difference between the mean scores on three domains of writing. However,mean score of language facility and conventions is comparatively higher as compared to developing and organizing ideas. It showed that students performed comparatively better in LC as compared to other domains.

Correlation

Correlation coefficient was determined between overall achievement scores of students on persuasive writing and the use of common teaching strategies at SSC. Common teaching strategies are used simultaneously to teach generating and organizing ideas along with language conventions. Common teaching strategies are used to teach all domains concurrently.

Table 3 Relationship between common teaching strategies and overall achievement scores of students at SSC

Common strategies at SSC	Overall scores	Generation of ideas scores	Organization of ideas scores	Language conventions
Editing	.017	-.072	-.071	-.029
Presentation	.159*	.068	.116	.020
Written feedback	.113	-.080	.053	.155*
Peer review	.020	-.010	-.003	-.039
Self-review	.095	-.025	.030	.009
Extensive reading	.173	.091	.141	.106
Pair work	.203**	-.038	.070	.171*
Group work	.155	.044	.134	.086
Model text	.097	-.046	-.027	.071

*$p<.05$. **$p<.01$

Table 3 shows that Pearson coefficient of correlation is significant between the overall achievement scores of students and presentation strategy (r= .159, P<.05); overall scores and pair work (r = .203, p <.05). For the use of remaining teaching strategies i.e. editing, written feedback, peer review, self-review and model text and overall scores no significant correlation was found.

In case of generation and organization of ideas, there is no significant correlation between achievement scores on generation of ideas and organization and use of teaching strategies.

Relationship of students' achievement scores on language conventions and common teaching strategies showed that only two strategies i.e. written feedback (r=.155, p<.05) and pair work(r=.171, p<.05) showed significant correlation. Remaining strategies (editing, presentation, peer review, self-review, extensive reading, group work and model text) did not show significant relationship with the achievement scores on language conventions.

Correlation between teaching strategies used to teach generation of ideas and students' scores

Correlation was conducted between teaching strategies used to teach generation of ideas and scores of students of SSC on English writing test.

Table 4 Correlation between teaching strategies and students' achievement in generating ideas.

Teaching strategies at SSC	Achievement scores on generation of ideas
Lecture	.365**
Brainstorming	.112
Questioning	.402**
Oral feedback	.396**

**p<.01

Pearson correlation between use of lecture and students' scores on generating ideas was found significant (r= .365, p<.01). Similarly, significant positive correlation was found between questioning and students' scores (r=.402, p<01); as well as oral feedback and students' scores (r=.396,p<.01). There is no significant relationship between brainstorming and students' scores on test.

Correlation between teaching strategies and students' score on organization of ideas

Correlation was conducted between teaching strategies used for organizing ideas and students' scores

Table 5 Correlation between teaching strategies and score of students on organization of ideas

Teaching strategies at SSC	Achievement scores on 'organization of ideas'
Lecture	.152
Oral feedback	-.070
Questioning	.130

p<.05

Table 5 shows no significant relationship between teaching strategies (lecture, oral feedback and questioning) and students' scores on organization of ideas.

Correlation between teaching strategies and students' scores on 'language conventions' at SSC

To determine the relationship between teaching strategies and achievement scores of students on language facility and conventions, Pearson Product moment Correlation was conducted.

Table 6 Relationship between teaching strategies and students' scores on 'language conventions'

Teaching strategies	Scores on language conventions
Oral feedback	.234**
Lecture for punctuation	.152*
Grammar (GTM)	.138
Translation(GTM)	.245**

*p<.05, **p<.01

Table 6 shows that relationship between oral feedback and students' scores on LC is significant (r=.234, p<.01). Relationship between use of lecture for teaching punctuation and students' scores is significant (r =.152, p<.05). Similarly, significant relationship was found between translation and scores of students (r=.245, p<.01). There was no significant relationship between use of grammar and students' scores on language conventions.

III. DISCUSSION

This study found out relationship between English writing skills and students' achievement in writing classrooms. The results of the study revealed thatEnglish writing skills of students of SSC are less developed. Present study found that there is significant positive relationship between lecture, pair work, questioning,presentation, grammar, translation, oral and written feedback and students' achievement scores.
It is common belief that students of secondary level face lot of difficulties in writing English. There may be various reasons of low achievement in English writing and among them teaching strategies are one of them. Research shows that appropriate teaching strategies have resulted in attainment of writing learning outcomes. Literature showed that English writing skills of students of secondary levelare not much developed. Naeem (2011) found that students of secondary level have less developed writing skills. There are various reasons for this and one of them is use of inappropriate strategies. He highlighted that teachers focus on memorizing the content. They prepare their studentsaccording to examination point of view. Students' achievement scores at SSC level showed that writing skills of students of secondary level are not much developed and they performed average on English writing test. National curriculum of English language (class I-XII) focuses on developing English writing skills in students by going through the process of writing. Curriculum is updated according to the international standards and needs of students. It encourages by going through the process instead of giving attention to only the product of writing.
Finding of the study showed that pair work is frequently used by teachers of SSC. Pair work is also useful strategy in English writing classroom of secondary level. If teacher actively use this strategy through careful planning it will result in developing writing skill. Effective teachers supervise the students during pair work and give suggestions and feedback to enhance their writing skill (Baker and Westrup, 2003). If teachers of SSC frequently use this strategy then writing learning outcomes may be increased.

It was found that Feedback has fundamental role for developing writing skills in students of English language. Khan (2013) and Sawalmeh (2013) discussed that feedback is important to speed up the writing proficiency in students. After receiving feedback from teachers, students improve their errors that leads them to develop effective piece of writing. By using feedback strategy teachers are able to comment where students are mislead in generating and organizing as well as language conventions.
This study shows that teachers of SSC use questioning technique to attain the learning outcomes and it has good relationship with students' achievement. This finding supports with Khan (1999) and Kleine (1987) who recommends inquiry and questioning in every teaching learning situation for developing English writing skills. Good and relevant questions improve students' ability to write effectively. Students get ideas through questioning by producing piece of writing.
Present study showed that another teaching strategy used by teachers of SSC was lecture. Bolaji (2014) found that lecture is traditional and conventional method of teaching in which teacher speaks in front of the class and talk about the topic.There is less student teacher interaction in classroom. However, if lecture is used with discussion then it has positive effect on the performance of students.
Findings of this study are significant in the sense that although teachers of SSC used both student centered and teacher centered strategies but due to less effective use of these strategies, students are less capable to improve writing skill. Therefore, inspite of the efforts put by teachers writing skills of students are not much developed due to maximum use of text book in classroom. The major reason of textbook based teaching is traditional examination system.
Single National Curriculum (SNC) for the purpose of uniform education system is being introduced from preprimary to XII. Under federal Minister of Education Shafqat Mehmood, SNG for class I-V has been unveiled. Along with curriculum change at all levels and all school systems it would give better results if government replace the traditional system of assessing students with improved way of assessment. Similarly, reason if the text based task is cognitively demanding it is most likely that students will focus on the process of writing rather than the product. There is a need to re-define the concepts of uniformity and standardization.

Uniformity of education never mean to have uniformity in pedagogies, methods and activities. Likewise, socio-culture and economic realities should not be ignored while devising the curriculum. Diversity should be encouraged in a modern progressive Pakistan.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Present study measured English writing skills and determined the relationship between teaching strategies and students' achievement in English writing classrooms at secondary level. Findings of the study revealed that writing skills of students are not much developed. Teachers of 10th class uselecture, pair work, questioning, presentation, grammar, translation, oral and written feedback for teaching English writing skills. The findings are significant in the sense that teachers of 10th grade use student centered strategies. Although more focus is on are also followed in classroom but not used in true spirit.

There are variety of teaching strategies to develop English writing skills but they all can't be used at once. If teachers of 10th grade from government and private schools focus on these strategies for improving writing skills, hopefully it will raise the quality of teaching writing.Writing skills of students may be improved by using useful strategies. If teachers of SSC use group work, extensive reading, discussion, unseen task beyond textbook then writing skills of students can be improved. Similarly, there should be unseen questions in examination so that teachers prepare their students beyond the concepts given in textbook and get their students ready for examination.

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