

Enhancing Writing Skills: A Review

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ABSTRACT

English is taught as a language from primary level in India. Fluency in English plays a key factor in job opportunities and gives confidence to the user while communicating. But most of the school and college students are unable to speak and write English properly. Among the basic skills writing is considered as very important. It is a big challenge even for the native speaker to be proficient in writing. The barriers can cause Indian students to develop a negative perspective on writing. Nowadays they tend to exhibit very little curiosity in writing. This paper is a brief review of methods, approaches, and strategies employed in the research done on English language teaching to develop writing skills.

Keywords

Writing skills, methods, approaches, strategies

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Introduction

Language skills can be divided into four such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills are equally related to and supportive of each other. Writing is considered as a very important skill among all the skills. Most people believe that writing is a talent but according to Sokolik (2003:106), "Writing is a teachable and learnable skill". Students often try to develop their writing skills in English but they could not be perfect in these skills because writing is not an easy task. It takes many years to develop writing skills and to be accurate, proficient, and fluent in these skills. Even if the student is very talented and gifted in other skills, he/she needs to enhance writing skills. It is a big challenge for both the native and the non-native user. These challenges can cause students to have a negative perspective on writing. Nowadays they have very little curiosity in writing. We can communicate our opinions, ideas, thoughts, messages and emotions with others through the writing process. It is very complex and difficult to learn. The written expression process is divided into three stages: planning, writing and revising the text (Wong, 2000). This paper is a brief review of methods, approaches, and strategies employed in the research done in the domain of developing writing skills.

Survey of Literature

In the year 2010, Luu Trong Tuan made an attempt to study 85 participants and came out with a paper entitled *Enhancing EFL Learners' Writing Skills via Journal Writing*. This paper investigated the learners' difficulties to write journals as well as other subjects in English. Data were collected from writing journal entries, essay writings and written assignments. The students were encouraged to write journals regularly to improve their writing skills. Writing fluency was measured through their writing speed. The students' achievement, writing journal entries and motivation were recorded through observation and interviews. Cooperative learning atmosphere and student-teacher centered writing activities helped them to write

journals. The researcher investigated that journal writing as an extensive activity to develop students' writing skills.

Dayra Piedad Ochoa Alpala and Nieves Medina Peña, in the year 2014, investigated a study on *A Virtual Room to Enhance Writing Skills in the EFL Class* with 32 students. They used action research method and the study showed that the students shaped their writing skills through the virtual classroom. Interviews, journals and student's artifacts were used to gather data. The result revealed that the use of a virtual tool encouraged students to write different types of text and online exercises. The virtual room helped the students to develop their vocabulary and improve the learning process. They were able to communicate and interact with their classmates through the writing process.

Montasser Mohamed and Abdel Wahab Mahmoud published an article in 2014 entitled *The Effectiveness of Using the Cooperative Language Learning Approach to Enhance EFL Writing Skills among Saudi University Students* and examined 211 students' writing skills by using a cooperative language learning approach. Data were collected from an attitude questionnaire and writing test. To measure the students' writing skills, grammar, punctuation and vocabulary tests were conducted. The use of cooperative language learning created a more interesting, funny learning environment in which they shared and exchanged their ideas. Students' thinking skills, planning and discussion were increased through cooperative language learning. The result indicated that the effectiveness of using the CLL approach helped them a lot to enhance their writing skills and all students had positive attitudes towards the CLL approach in improving their critical thinking, motivation and communication skills.

Kurnia Budiyaniti conducted an action research in 2014 titled *Improving Students' Writing Skills of Narrative Text through Brainstorming Technique* involving the second year students of State Islamic University Suska Riau to find out causes for their poor writing and also to enhance their narrative writing skill through brainstorming techniques. These techniques included such types as listing, clustering and freewriting. This research found that the students could not write properly due to a lack of vocabulary as well as a

lack of grammatical devices. Data were collected from field notes, observation and written tests. It was found that the brainstorming technique method gave students more opportunity to express their ideas and contributed in developing their vocabulary and essay writing skills. It was an effective technique to enhance students' writing skills. Besides, it improved students' ability to write better with creative thinking.

Nafiseh Hosseinpour and Reza Biria published in 2014 their study under the title *Improving Iranian EFL Learners' Writing through Task-based Collaboration*. This paper investigated the writing ability of 57 Iranian female intermediate EFL learners in a textbook evaluation course and also tried to improve their writing skills through task-based collaboration. The study was conducted to find out whether the integration of collaborative writing skills would improve students' writing ability and quality in terms of content, vocabulary, mechanics of writing and organization. Data were gathered from OPT, textbook evaluation checklist and analytical writing scale for rating the report and analyzed using SPSS software. It was revealed that the students working collaboratively could develop their grammar, vocabulary, content and writing skills. As a result, collaborative writing had significantly effectiveness in developing the writing quality skills in Iranian EFL learners. Lilis Suadah's article *Enhancing EFL Learners' Writing Skills through Blogging* came in 2014 and tried to find out the importance of blogging and how to use this technology in the classroom to enhance writing skills. Two approaches followed were extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners could improve their fluency in writing by using blogs and they could post their writing on blogs. It was found that the use of blogging gave a lot of benefits like encouragement to students, to write constructively, use English more frequently and maintain their motivation.

In the article published in 2015 and entitled, *Creative Writing as a Best Way to Improve Writing Skills of Students*, Joanna Pawliczak explained her survey on 33 students and attempted to enhance students' writing skills through creative writing. A questionnaire was used to gather the data. The survey was designed in the students' mother tongue, Polish, to express their thoughts and translated into English. Results revealed that the students' writing mainly focused on vocabulary, grammar, imagination, and self-esteem which were developed through the creative writing method. They considered that creative writing was the best way to develop students' writing skills.

M. Zaini Miftah's paper, published in 2015, *Enhancing Writing Skills through Writing Process Approach*, gave a new perspective in developing writing skills. They conducted action research on 15 university students. Data were collected from field notes, observation, and writing practice. They followed to develop writing skills in prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. The result showed that the students' skills in a writing descriptive essay enhanced. Their writing skills were enhanced in terms of content, organization, grammar and vocabulary. He suggested that the writing process approach could serve as an alternative strategy to develop students' writing skills.

Rania Adel Ibrahim Ahmed and Hussam Rajab published a

paper titled *Enhancing Elementary Level EFL Students' Reading Comprehension and Writing Skills through Extensive Reading Enrichment Program* in the year 2015. It was based on a quasi-experimental and longitudinal study with 112 primary students on reading comprehension and writing skills through EREP (Extensive Reading Enrichment Program). A sample t-test, an inferential statistical test and ANOVA tests were carried out for this study. Extensive Reading (ER) was found to promote self-efficacy and self-confidence. Besides, ER reflected the students' enthusiasm and motivation to engage in reading. The results indicated that the EREP enhanced students' reading as well as writing skills for EFL learners.

Muayad Muhammed Ali Awadalbari published a paper in 2015 under the title *Translation as an aid to enhance Students' Writing Skills at University Level*. He stated that writing skill is more important to translate mother tongue to English. Grammar, vocabulary and style were important elements of writing skills to translate L₁ to L₂. Academic writing skills taken up for the study focused on three areas such as strong writing, excellent grammar and consistent stylistic approach. While translating from native tongue to L₂, the translation method improved students' syntax, morphology, semantics and the correct use of lexis in different types. He believed that students can improve their writing skill by translating native texts to English.

Angela Lumpkin, in 2015, under the title *Enhancing Undergraduate Students' Research and Writing* examined the students' exploration of fundamental contents and knowledge. Data were collected from feedback forms and writing assignments of 90 participants. Four assignments were given to evaluate students' writing skills. She stated that students would be able to describe, apply and analyze the principles and issues in sports ethics like sports law, strategic planning, financial management and event management. Findings showed that the students had a positive impact on research and writing. As a result students' writing skills could be enhanced through four sequential writing assignments.

Aaron David Mermelstein investigated in 2015 on *Improving EFL Learners' Writing through Enhanced Extensive Reading*". He looked into methods of reading and writing skills for EFL learners through ER (Extensive Reading) to enhance their writing skills. As many as 211 students participated. Data were collected from observation, descriptive writing and feedback. He followed several approaches such as direct instruction, group work, pair work, class demonstrations, using grading rubrics and peer teacher assessment. Data were analyzed based on the criteria established by Jacobs *et al.* (1981) in terms of content, organization, language use, mechanics and vocabulary. It was found out that ER protocols can attain significant and extensive among learners. As a result ER methodological design was very useful to enhance students' writing skills as well as creative thinking.

Serpi Uçar and Yeliz Yazıcı published a research paper in 2016 on *The Impact of Portfolios on Enhancing Writing Skills in ESP Classes* which studied the impact on 52 Turkish undergraduate learners in ESP classes. They used a portfolio assessment technique as well as a conventional method to improve writing skills and sub-skills of elaboration, organization and vocabulary learning. Besides,

they used a paired sample t-test. Data were collected from the questionnaire. The result revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between two groups in sub-skills of focus, elaboration, organization and vocabulary. The students were found to have positive thoughts toward portfolios to improve writing skills in ESP classes.

Ahmet Yamc and Mustafa Ulusoy published a study in 2016 which was titled *The Effect of Digital Storytelling in Improving the Third Graders' Writing Skills* and analysed the effect of digital storytelling to improve the writing skills of rural students. They conducted an action research design with 26 students. New literacy theory and sociocultural theory were used. Besides, digital story assessment rubric was used to evaluate the quality of the digital stories. They have followed techniques like interviews, audio and video records and student diaries to enhance writing skills. Data were collected from observation, field notes and interviews. Digital storytelling helped the students to create comprehensive writing, word count and story elements. The result showed that digital storytelling improved the students' words of choice, ideas, organization, sentence fluency and writing quality.

Muhammad Fareed, Almas Ashraf and Muhammad Bilal, in 2016, had a research study on *ESL Learners' Writing Skills: Problems, Factors and Suggestions* with 30 ESL Learners. They investigated the problems of students' writing skills. Data were collected from group interviews and writing samples. They found that the students had a lack of ideas, anxiety, lack of vocabulary and lack of grammar. These were the main problems of the students. The researchers intervened with remedial measures such as reading skills, writing competitions and grammar structures. It was suggested that constructive feedback, motivation and creative writing tasks would help students to enhance their writing skills. The result revealed that students were able to develop in their writing ability.

In their article published in 2016 under the title *Role of Cooperative Learning in Enhancing Students' Writing Skills in Pakistani Colleges: A Review of Literature*, Muhammad Siddique, Manvender Kaur and Sarjit Singh found that the selected set of students exhibited poor writing performance in their examination because of following conventional methods and teacher-centered method of teaching. This paper indicated that large classes, owing to compulsion to complete the work in time and the need to maintain discipline followed the conventional method. The authors suggested to develop students' writing skills through encouraging group work, face to face interaction and discussion with students. They also revealed that the employment of cooperative and collaborative learning strategies helped the students to improve their descriptive writing skills.

Muge Gunduz conducted a study in 2016 on writing skill strategies under the title *Developing Writing Skills via Blogs* with 103 participants. Data were collected from the questionnaire. The questionnaire was analyzed in terms of "the effective use of blogs to enhance writing skills" and "developing critical thinking skills". It showed that using blogs can provide interesting writing skills and authentic creative thinking. Blogs could be a useful tool to motivate students to develop writing skills and they could interact

freely with others.

Research on writing skills has a capitulated perceptive outcome. Özgür_en Bartan, in his paper published in 2017 and titled *The Effects of Reading Short Stories in Improving Foreign Language Writing Skills*, enquired the effects of reading short stories to improve foreign language writing skills on 54 students. He has followed the Read for Writing model and also approached Talk for Writing model for this quasi-experimental study and data were collected from short stories, lesson plans, story selection control lists, reading and writing syllabuses, questionnaires, scoring strategies, and an analytic story assessment rubric. As a result, the Read for Writing model has given a positive impact on students to develop student's language style, content, communicative achievement, creative thinking, and writing skills through short story writing. Students were highly motivated and their writing skills were developed.

Parlindungan Sinaga and Shelly Feranie published a paper in 2017 under the title, *Enhancing Critical Thinking Skills and Writing Skills through the Variation in Non-Traditional Writing Task*. They classified the impacts of non-traditional writing tasks for the physics education and physics study programs through a quasi-experimental method. They used instruments to test conceptual mastery, critical thinking skills and rubric writing skill. Data were analyzed using the Pearson product-moment and Kuder-Richardson method. It was found that students' critical thinking skills, conceptual mastery and writing quality level were developed. They revealed that there was a strong correlation between conceptual understanding and writing quality and there was a weak correlation between critical thinking skills and writing quality.

Emrah Akda and Yonca Özkann conducted a study in the year 2017 on writing skills under the title, *Enhancing Writing Skills of EFL Learners through Blogging*. They conducted a case study with 14 students through formative assessment and also used blogs or blogging as a research tool to develop writing skills. Data were collected from observation, blog posts and interviews. Informal assessment of paragraph and diagnostic assessment of writing were used to evaluate writing tasks. The result showed that blogging benefitted the students in developing their writing skills and vocabulary knowledge. The use of blogs could enhance students' interaction via written language and their motivation ultimately improved. Students stated that a blog could be an effective tool to develop writing skills.

Tobin Redwine, Holli R. Leggette and Brooke Prather came out with a study in 2017 entitled *A Case Study of Using Metacognitive Reflections to Enhance Writing Skills and Strategies in an Agricultural Media Writing Course* after experimenting with 16 students. This case study research focused on understanding, controlling, describing, and predicting the individual writing patterns. Data were collected from observation. After reviewing the investigators found that the students were taking efforts to think about writing strategies and transferability of writing strategies and writing skills. It revealed that students' metacognitive awareness of knowledge transfer, writing strategies and of writing skills was found to be on the increase.

Nora Lucía Marulanda Ángel and Juan Manuel Martínez García published a paper in the year 2017 entitled *Improving*

English Language Learners' Academic Writing: A Multi-Strategy Approach to a Multi-Dimensional Challenge. This paper examined the effect of multifaceted academic writing on pre-service teachers' composition skills. They conducted action research with 16 students and followed to measure analytical rubrics. Academic writing had four key elements such as process writing approach, systemized feedback, ongoing tutoring in a writing lab and repeated test-taking practice. Data were collected from observation, descriptive paragraphs, essays and TOEFL integrated essays. Academic writing genres were analyzed in terms of syntax, vocabulary and discourse. The result revealed that the multifaceted academic writing has improved pre-service teachers' vocabulary, syntax and language.

Aydin Aliyev and Khayala Ismayilova published a paper in 2017 under the title *Improving English Writing Skills of Non-Native Undergraduate Learners with the help of Movies Supported by Online Technologies*. The study was conducted with 32 participants. The researchers took efforts to find out the effectiveness of using movies and contemporary online technologies in English classes to enhance the writing skills of students. Data were collected from a questionnaire. Two movies were given to evaluate the students' writing skills. The students' writing ability, motivation, getting ideas for better writing and innovations got developed with the help of using movies and online technologies. The movies based on the concepts of education technologies enriched their vocabulary and creative writing ability. As a result, the use of movies and online technologies had a positive perception among undergraduate learners.

Maslawati Mohammad, Naiman Ghazali and Harwati Hashim conducted a case study in 2018, *Secondary School Students' Perceptions on the Use of Google+ towards Improving ESL Writing Skills*, with 12 secondary school students. This article investigates the opinion of secondary students on the use of Google+ towards the teaching of ESL writing skills. Data were collected through group interviews as well as an individual interview. Data were analyzed by using of Burnard's method. The students gained a lot of benefits in engaging themselves and attending the lesson with interest. As a result, the use of Google+ helped them to develop writing skills in three aspects such as enjoyment, knowledge development and attractiveness of learning circumstances. Besides their IT skills, creative thinking and writing skills were developed through Google+ method.

Nidya Indrilla and Dyah Setyowati Ciptaningrum published an article in 2018 titled *An Approach in Teaching Writing Skills: Does it Offer a New Insight in Enhancing Students' Writing Ability?* The quasi-experimental study probed the effectiveness of scientific approach to enhance the writing skill of the select students. Data were collected from written composition tests and analyzed through intra-class correlation in SPSS 20 for Windows computer program. The result revealed that the scientific approach followed was more effective than the usual conventional approach. The scientific approach enhanced the students' quality of expression of their thoughts. It could develop their writing ability, potential and behavior.

Firdaus Habibi, Ismalaning Eviyuliwati and Sunardi Kartowisatro carried out a study in the year 2018 under the title *The Effect of Reflective Journal Writing on Students'*

Writing Ability of Narrative Text with 273 students. This quasi-experimental study investigated the effect of reflective journal writing on the writing ability of narrative text of the select students. They followed social media line application in writing narrative texts as a research tool. The students were examined and instructed to read a passage entitled *Issumboshi and the Legend of Malin Kundang*. Reflective journal writing could be used as one of the techniques to develop writing skills. It helped the students to enhance their ideas, organization and clarity of language. It was found that reflective journal writing was useful in enhancing students' writing ability of narrative text.

Rebecca M. Achen published an article in 2018 under the title *Addressing the "My Students Cannot Write" Dilemma: Investigating Methods for Improving Graduate Student Writing*. This article investigated the students' shortcomings in their writing skills. She conducted the action research with 18 students in attendance. Data were collected from peer reviews, rough drafts, rewritings and a sample t-test. This paper recommended student participation in activities related to writing, discussions and workshops to improve their writing quality. Peer review was lacking as a revision strategy. Some students felt that making a rough draft was very useful to improve their writing skills and a few students accepted rewrite practice because it exposed them to specific corrections to make. The result showed that students' writing skill could be enhanced through investigating method.

Melior Md Yunus and Wan Illina Wan Ishak published an article in 2018 under the title *Enhancing Writing through Digital Storytelling: Storybird*. They conducted an action research with 40 participants to find out whether poor writing skill of students could be refined through storybird. A mixed-method approach was adopted for this study. Task-based learning and classroom observation were used to collect data. Storybird was an effective tool to develop creative ideas, critical thinking and writing skills. It was found out that most of the students interact online as a motivating activity to enhance their writing skills. Storybird not only allows one to write stories but also creates little books on its own. It offers the possibility to write collaboratively. As a result, Storybird was found to be an effective tool to improve students writing skills and the students had positive attitudes towards the use of Storybird to enhance their writing skills.

In the article entitled *Improving Students' Writing Skill in Narrative Text by Using Storybird at Grade X Teknik Komputer Jaringan 1 of SMK Yayasan Pendidikan Persada Indah (YPPI) Tualang*, Refika Andriani and Devi Wahyuni examined ways of improving writing skills in narrative texts using Storybird. They conducted the action research study in 2018 with a set of 20 students. The researchers worked collaboratively with teachers and students. Data were taken from observation checklist, writing test, field notes and interview. Based on the data analyzed the researchers stated that the students' writing skills could improve in a narrative text through Storybird. The students participated very enthusiastically and they had positive attitudes towards Storybird. The result indicated that the use of Storybird in teaching writing narrative text was very effective to enhance students' writing skills. Additionally, it improved students'

vocabulary, language style, creativity, and mechanics of writing.

Fatin Khairani Khairul Azam, Fadziana Fadhil and Melor Md. Yunus published a paper in the year 2019 under the title *Enhancing ESL Learners' Writing Skills via ProvWrit*. They conducted action research in quasi-experimental design to investigate the effect of using proverbs to enhance writing skills via game-based learning. In this action research, four students participated. Data were collected from quasi-experiment design as well as writing tasks. Quizzes in Kahoot, an online forum learning platform and PinUp were used as research tools. Proverb writing enhanced students' critical thinking, creativity and writing skills. They hoped that proverb writing would be an effective tool to enhance learners' writing skills in the 21st Century classroom.

Dang Thi Ngoc Anh published an article in 2019 under the title *EFL Student's Writing Skills: Challenges and Remedies*. This paper inquired the challenges a student encounters while learning to write in English and identify factors that encumber their writing skills. He followed a mixed approach and 22 students participated. Data were collected from the questionnaire, books, newspapers and documents. Data were analyzed by means of descriptive statistics and comparative methods. The findings revealed that the foremost problems were a lack of vocabulary, limited knowledge of grammar and inadequate writing skills. It was suggested that motivating students, developing apt writing materials and improving teaching curriculum design were the key factors to develop writing skills.

Hadeel Mohammad Al Kamli came out with a study in the year 2019 under the title *The Effect of Using Mind Maps to Enhance EFL Learners' Writing Achievement and Students' Attitudes Towards Writing at Taif University*. This article investigated the effect of using the mind map strategy to improve EFL learner's writing skills. A mixed-methods approach and quasi-experimental design were used. As many as 128 students participated. Data were collected from a questionnaire and a paper-and-pen achievement test. This study was conducted to identify mean scores of both the groups toward writing attitudes and writing achievement, to investigate students' views concerning difficulties to write in English and to identify the strategy to overcome the difficulties in writing. The researcher suggested using the mind map strategy to organize ideas and grammatical and linguistic knowledge. The result showed that the strategy of mind mapping had given positive impacts and it helped them to write better in English.

In their article published in 2019 with the title *The Use of Pictures in Improving Students' Writing*, Yasmine Liong Pui Kwan Abdullah and Melor Md Yunus studied on the effectiveness of pictures in helping to develop writing skills. Data were collected from 24 participants with the help of a Likert scale questionnaire and a writing task. It was a quasi-experimental study. Data were analyzed using frequency count. The students' writing abilities got improved through the use of pictures. They were able to get ideas from the pictures and could better understand the situation by looking at them. The result showed a positive reaction from the students on using pictures to enhance their writing skills. The pictures were an effective tool to improve their writing skills. The researchers suggested that the use of picture methodology in teaching is an efficient tool to enhance

students' writing skills.

Ratna Winahyu Hadiyanti and Udik Budi Wibowo published an article in 2019 titled *The Effect of Personal Journal Writing on the Writing Interest and Writing Skills of Third-Graders*. They examined the effects of personal journal writing on writing skills. A group of 84 students participated. They followed a quasi-experimental design to collect data and administered writing tests and interest questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and independent-sample t-test were used to analyze the data. Journal writing involved a crucial role for the children to write freely without hesitation and it motivated them to write more journals. As a result, personal journal writing improved writing interest. It had given a positive perception for English learners.

In the article published in 2020 with the title *Developing Writing Skill of ESL learners using Task Based Language Teaching*, K.Karunasree and Sabitha Francis researched the students' writing skills to improve through TBLT (Task Based Language Teaching) method. Data were collected from interviews, questionnaires, field notes and classroom observation. They gave assignments and documentation as research tasks. The result indicated that the TBLT method encouraged students' writing skills, collaborative learning, learner-centered activities and real-life interaction. They were able to write paragraphs and essays meaningfully and coherently by using the TBLT method in the classroom.

Nurchahya and Ikariya Sugesti carried out a research in 2020 on *Enhancing Students' Writing Ability and Creativity through Project-Based Learning on Greeting Card*. They examined the use of projected based learning on greeting cards to enhance students' writing ability and creativity. A group of 32 students participated in the project. They conducted an action research study to identify problematic situations and find the right way to solve the problems in writing. Data were gathered from observation, interviews and pictures documentation. In order to analyze students' writing skills, the researchers implemented a project based on topics like preparation of birthday cards, mother's day cards, congratulation cards, teacher's day cards and thank you cards and provided them with a vocabulary list related to each topic. The students participated in very enthusiastically and effectively. The project-based learning improved not only students' writing ability but also their attitudes and behavior. The result showed that the use of PBL was capable of enhancing the students' writing ability as well as creativity.

Conclusion

Finally, as a result, all the researchers under review have adopted some techniques, strategies, methods and approaches to solve writing problems, and also they have used these methods and techniques to enhance writing skills. In view of all the factors pointed out above, techniques and strategies have been effective and showed positive impacts on students' writing skills. Almost all of them have collected data from questionnaires, interviews, writing tests, and classroom observation. In all the experiments and studies, students have participated very enthusiastically. In order to enhance students' writing skills, teachers should follow some techniques, approaches, strategies and methods

in their teaching, all the reviews point out. If a teacher plans his/her strategies taking these points into consideration, his/her students would be able to develop their writing skills successfully and effectively.

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