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**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Improving Narrative Writing Skills through Reading-to-Writing  
Strategy Instruction: An Experimental Study**

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**ABSTRACT**

The current experimental study aims at exploring the usefulness of teaching reading-to-writing strategies in promoting narrative writing ability among middle school learners. The study was done in Shikarpur district and used 60 students randomly selected into experimental and control groups. Both groups got the regular writing instruction, whereas only the experimental group was instructed on the basis of a structured reading-to-writing method. The pretest and posttest design was used to measure the clarity, mechanics, and structure of narrative writing. Statistically significant positive change in the experimental group was obtained in comparison with the control group, and the effect was observed on all components measured. The results have indicated that reading strategies can be successfully incorporated in writing instruction in order to develop narrative writing skills of the students. This paper supports the pedagogical usefulness of reading-to-writing strategies in language classrooms, especially those that are under-resourced in education settings.

**KEYWORDS** Reading-to-Writing Approach, Narrative Writing Skills, English Language Learners, Writing Instruction, Strategy-Based Learning, Secondary Education, Experimental Study, ESL Writing Pedagogy

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**Introduction**

Writing involves many different mental and language tasks and requires people to make use of various organizational skills (Hyland, 2003). Compared to other genres, narrative writing greatly helps develop creativity and effective communication of ideas, especially at the secondary school stage (Derewianka & Jones, 2016). On the other hand, most students in Pakistan, and school systems everywhere, experience trouble with narrative writing as they receive too little training in writing skills and too much focus on memorization (Rahman, 2011).

In the last few years, the reading-to-writing method has been noticed as a useful way to help students become better at writing. Because of this approach, students can gather and use vocabulary, sentence structures, and the way information is organized in reading, which can be used in writing (Hirvela, 2004). In this way, reading serves to help students with their writing skills rather than being treated on its own. According to Grabe and Zhang (2013), teaching reading and writing at the same time allows students to improve their ability to create structured and significant works.

Since middle school students are moving forward in their language development, it is important to create strategies that link reading and writing activities. Because it requires imaginative and untangled storytelling, narrative mode gets the most out of this approach (Corden, 2007). Even though reading-to-writing has many benefits, it is not

used often, especially in developing countries, as the traditional lecture system is still preferred (Shamim & Kuchah, 2016). Thus, many students find it hard to write creatively and effectively.

In addressing this issue, the study looks at how reading-to-writing instruction improves narrative writing among 8th graders. The purpose is to find out if a planned mix of reading and writing helps students to improve their expressions, language skills, and how they write sentences. The focus on narrative writing is meant to help students develop important creative and critical thinking skills that benefit them in school and after graduation.

Although writing is very important for academic achievement, Pakistani students at the secondary level still face difficulties when composing narratives. This is caused by there being few ways to combine critical reading and writing into the teaching process. Using usual methods, students are largely focused on remembering and practicing grammar, which makes it hard for them to structure thoughts, pick correct words, and form a clear narrative. The process of learning to write by closely studying role models from writing has shown positive results abroad yet is still not popular here. Therefore, we should assess if getting students to use reading strategies can greatly increase their writing skills, especially when it comes to being clear, precise, and proper sentence structure.

## **Literature Review**

Learning and using language often depends on writing, mainly narrative writing. Nevertheless, it is one of the hardest abilities to learn, especially for non-native speakers of English. A lot of researchers have argued that it is important to combine language skills with critical thinking when instructing writing (Hyland, 2003; Graham & Perin, 2007). The reading-to-writing method has become well-known for using the relationship between reading and writing to increase writing prowess in narrative text.

Reading and writing are considered reciprocal and help reinforce each other as the main theory behind their integration (Grabe & Zhang, 2013). Exposure to a variety of words, grammar, and how texts are arranged comes from reading, and this can influence and improve a person's writing. According to Hirvela (2004), when learners experiment with writing, they start to see how writing is put together clearly. This perspective is also backed by Shanahan (2006), who says that if reading and writing are taught together, learners tend to improve in both fields, especially when they observe and use the same literary devices found in the texts they read.

By using narrative writing, students improve their meaningfully expressed thoughts since it requires them to be creative and well-spoken (Derewianka & Jones, 2016). However, many ESL learners deal with significant problems in narrative writing since they do not know many words, have poor grammar, and struggle with how to organize ideas (Hashemian & Heidari, 2013). In this case, using a reading-to-writing method helps students a lot. When students read narratives, they become familiar with the way stories are built, get the hang of plot patterns, and learn useful descriptive language, helping them to write their own compositions (Corden, 2007).

Lots of studies have proven that teaching students this way helps them write better. Tierney and Shanahan (1991) showed that giving students instruction in both reading and writing at the same time helped them do better than students who learned

each separately. From her meta-analysis, Stotsky (1983) reported that learning writing improves when reading and writing are connected and practiced together. Latest research by Zarei and Keshavarz (2011) indicates that doing reading-to-writing activities helped Iranian EFL students write better-structured and more connected narratives.

It has been pointed out in Pakistan by Rahman (2011) and Shamim and Kuchah (2016) that traditional ways are the main means of instruction, leaving out opportunities for skill-based instruction. Usually, students memorize essays or paragraphs, but don't learn how to structure or build-up their ideas. For this reason, a lot of Pakistani students find it hard to write effectively. Teaching reading-to-writing strategies might help students learn more through creative and analytical thinking.

The quality of a narrative depends on having good clarity, the correct grammar, and changes in sentence structure. It has been proved that special reading books support each of these learning benefits. For example, Kim (2001) observed that using stories with simple arcs brought improvement in the coherence and clarity of the ESL students' writing. Graham and Perin (2007) also pointed out that learning to combine sentences and grammar together with reading increased students' ability to form better sentences and use proper grammar. Andrade's 2005 recommendations let educators use rubrics to assess and follow a student's growth in writing stories.

Posting material and supporting students in the right way are both important for the success of reading-to-writing. Cumming (2001) claims that when students are frequently involved in reading and writing for some time, they learn the language rules better. Manuscripts benefit from having feedback from peers or the teacher, because it supports thinking and revising, which are necessary for good writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Evidence in the literature indicates that reading and writing should be taught together to help students' narrative writing in ESL. Although it is shown to work in international studies, there isn't much local proof to back up these claims, especially in PA's rural areas lacking resources. This study is aimed at finding out how instruction on reading-to-writing strategies can enhance the narrative writing of eighth-grade students in terms of clarity, grammar, and sentence structure.

The narrative language is crucial in discourse realization and narration of realistic and casual events. According to Snow (2019), the language of narrative is central in conveying series of events and building meaning in a discourse. In the same way, Hussein (2009) points out the importance of discourse to have a particular length and structure, and the role of narration to bundle thoughts into meaningful structures. Monologic forms are frequent in the discourse production process, and events are described in a sequential manner with the help of discourse markers and transitional means. Berman (2024) relates cognitive understanding and knowledge to narrative language. In his argument he claims that narration does not merely need linguistic structure and frames of thought sequence but the force of social dialogue and the dictates of culture. All these factors determine how people narrate and make sense of experiences. The development of narrative language starts early in life.

According to Hipfner-Boucher et al. (2015), Observing events and telling stories improve communicative and narrative competencies in children. The acquisition of these skills is also reinforced by incidental learning that is dependent on frequent exposure to different types of stories. Shafiee Rad et al. (2013) also note that children feel quite

naturally inclined to listening to and reading stories, and this is the good chance to develop narrative language skills. Sabirov et al. (2021) supplement that the narrative competence is reinforced by cause-and-effect reasoning since children at the cognitive level perceive and respond to information. Nevertheless, the development of narrative skills is not the same in all children.

According to Olson and Land (2007), children with hearing problems might not develop correct language and this eventually affects the narrative competence. As highlighted by Mastan and Maarof (2014), reading and writing skills depend on each other; children who read have higher chances of learning how to write including writing narratives. On the same note, listening goes hand in hand with oral language development, which assists in constructing narratives. Rianto et al. (2022) emphasize the significance of the pedagogical methods in classroom. The "Round Table" method is one of such approaches which promotes group writing. This is a group work activity, in which every student is expected to discuss his/her point of view. These impressions are recorded and subsequently transformed into separate written pieces. Peer review then follows, and the students get to learn the strengths and styles of each other, this is not only good in critical thinking but also in writing fluency. Mason (2017) offers the so-called reading-to-write concept, which may be treated in both pedagogical and theoretical perspectives. Pedagogically it combines reading and writing activities in aid of language building. In theory, it concentrates on the mental skills of the students to process and regurgitate textual information. Combined reading and writing are effective in developing language skills in both situations.

According to Ugboja et al. (2018), reading and writing are essential in the learning process. The students are first taught the pronunciation then how to construct sentences and then the harder vocabulary. Narrative composition is thus reached after students go through guided writing. This step by step development helps them to picture things, break down ideas into words and create meaningful writing or text. Reading and writing are integrated to speed up the language development process since both skills are reinforced in the process. Delaney (2008) reiterates the significance of writing proficiency in academic performance, especially at the secondary academic level, whereby the curriculum aims to require cognitive learning in academic performance by way of comprehension and application of knowledge. Coherence and cohesion form part and parcel of narrative writing which entails ideation, coding, decoding, revision, and editing. Also, Ugboja et al. (2018) emphasise the importance of meaningful and purposeful writing activities. Students are also recommended to think critically and visualize contents when provided with writing tasks.

Peer review activities also boost learning as it enables students to be exposed to different points of view as well as to enhance themselves based on the collaborative feedback. These activities open up their thinking scope and lead to writing proficiency. Interrelation of reading and writing is also confirmed by Wang and Wang (2017). They add that although reading may be more frequently stressed in the classroom, lack of writing practice may impair the development of students. Writing is a demanding and laborious process that gets enhanced with reading habits, which should be encouraged. The two skills are related in social interaction since writing is usually a form of communication directed to an audience which brings the writer and the reader together. Delaney (2008) suggests the use of reading exercises and subsequent writing exercises in which a student is advised to write in his/her own words what he/she has read. This will not only reinforce reading and writing abilities but also encourage self-thinking. The underlying model upon which this model was built was proposed by Widdowson (1996)

and has been already adopted in several educational establishments, mostly on the secondary level. Scholars and educators have both recognized and valued its effectiveness.

### **Material and Methods**

The research design used in this study was experimental where the main aim was to test the effectiveness level of collaborative methods, that is, reading-to-writing instructional approach in improving the learning of the English language. The study was carried out in the southern district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan Dera Ismail Khan. Two classes (randomly chosen) were taken in a government middle school in the Shikarpur district. The writing instructions were standard in both classes, but only the experimental group got explicit reading-to-writing instructions on top of the regular lessons.

These were divided into groups of 25 students each, whereby the students were matched on the basis of age, ethnicity, academic background and other demographic factors to make them comparable. This study targeted at the students of Government Girls High School, Sherazi, D.I. Khan in Grade 8. The pre-test was conducted to help identify the current level of knowledge and English writing skills of the students. In accordance with the outcomes of this test, students have been split into two equal groups, i.e., Control Group (CG) and Experimental Group (EG).

Then instructional materials and lesson plans were made specifically regarding both groups. The six-week intervention including guided writing exercises and reading short stories of choice was conducted with the experimental group. The teaching agenda encompassed the study of the narrative construction in terms of characterization, plotting and languages stylistics. Then students used this information to write their own stories. The control group meanwhile proceeded with traditional writing instruction and did not receive any introduction to model texts or guided reading-to-writing assignments.

The information was gathered through pre- and post-test aimed at assessing the major areas of the writing performance such as clarity, sentence structure, and mechanical accuracy. Assessment consistency was guaranteed through the use of validated scoring rubrics. In order to calculate the efficiency of the intervention, within-group improvements were investigated using paired sample *t* -tests, whereas independent sample *t* -tests were used to compare the two groups.

Since the study was experimental in nature, convenience sampling method was first used, whereby the sample targeted was that of students in the same school. There are 117 eighth-grade students, and the sample size was 60, which was picked through the simple random sampling technique. To facilitate an unbiased selection, the lottery-style draw (the so-called Fishers Bowl method) was used. The pre-test scores of the students were used to assign the final grouping because it was possible to balance the groups in terms of Control and Experimental cohorts.

### **Results and Discussion**

The current study was aimed to assess the Effectiveness of Reading-to-Writing Strategy Instruction in Enhancing Narrative Writing Skills: A Case Study. For this purpose, researcher formed two equivalent groups on the basis of pretest score i.e control

and experimental. Control group was taught conventional way whereas experimental group was taught through reading to writing strategy. After intervention, posttest was conducted and compared and analyzed the control group and experimental group's score by using paired sample t-test and independent sample t-test to assess whether reading to writing strategy is effective or not? This chapter deals with result and discussion. Overall three parts contain in this chapter. First part includes descriptive statistics, second part the basic assumption of parametric test including data normality test and third part includes the inferential statistics.

**Table 1**  
**Frequency and Percentage wise information of Controlled and Experimental Group**

Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Exp: Group	30	50.0
Cont.: Group	30	50.0
Total	60	100.0

The sample was balanced with 30 students in each group, the experimental and the control one. The number of the students involved in the research was 60.

**Table 2**  
**Score of students in Reading to Writing (Clarity) Strategy**

Clarity				
Rubric	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
Number of students	29	23	6	2
Percentage (%)	48%	38%	10%	4%

Prior to the intervention, most students (86 percent) had a poor or average clarity in their narrative writing.

**Table 3**  
**Score of students in Mechanics**

Mechanics				
Rubric	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
Number of students	39	15	3	3
Percentage (%)	65%	25%	5%	5%

Table shows that 65% of the students wore poor mechanics (grammar, vocabulary, tone) indicating that there is a lot they need to do before the teaching process.

**Table 4**  
**Score of students in Structure**

Structure				
Rubric	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
Number of students	41	11	5	3
Percentage (%)	68%	18%	8%	6%

Most students (68%) had difficulty in being structured in narrative writing and thus they required explicit teaching on the same.

### Posttest Analysis

**Table 5**  
**Score of students in Clarity**

Clarity				
Rubric	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
Number of students	2	4	28	26
Percentage (%)	3%	7%	47%	43%

There was a good improvement with instructional intervention as 90 percent of the students obtained a good or very good clarity post-intervention.

**Table 6**  
**Score of students in Mechanics**

Mechanics				
Rubric	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
Number of students	1	2	39	18
Percentage (%)	2%	3%	65%	30%

The post intervention change was large: 95 percent of the students improved to the good or very good category in mechanics.

**Table 7**  
**Score of students in Structure**

Structure				
Rubric	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
Number of students	1	3	34	22
Percentage (%)	2%	5%	57%	36%

After intervention, the organization of narrative writing was much better with 93 per cent falling in good or very good grades.

**Table 8**  
**Demonstrates Mean difference in the students Narrative Writing on Posttest Score**

Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Test	t-cal	Sig.
Control Group	30	21.2667	4.44067	.348	-10.48	.000
Experimental Group	30	32.8333	4.09443			

$P < .05$

The performance between the experimental group and the control group showed a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in favor of the former after the intervention.

**Table 9**  
**Demonstrates Mean difference in the students different components of Narrative Writing on Pretest Score**

Group	Components	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Test	t-cal	Sig.
CG	Clarity	9.0667	1.83704	.285	-2.71	.787
EG		9.3667	5.78037			
CG	Language skills	6.8333	2.27556	.995	1.28	.203
EG		6.0667	2.33317			
CG	Format, content, organization	6.4333	2.51456	.991	-.995	.334
EG		7.0667	2.51798			

There was no considerable distinction between the groups on the pretest scores, which demonstrated the same baseline writing skills.

**Table 10**  
**Demonstrates Mean difference between Control and Exp. Group students regarding Clarity in Narrative Writing Score**

Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Test	t-cal	Sig.
Control Group	30	9.0667	1.83704	.792	-14.11	.000
Experimental Group	30	16.5002	2.22447			

$p < .05$  The clarity scores were significantly higher in the experimental group after the intervention ( $p < .05$ ).

**Table 11**  
**Demonstrates Mean difference between Control and Exp. Group students regarding mechanics (Language skill) in Narrative Writing Score**

Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Test	t-cal	Sig.
Control Group	30	6.8333	2.27556	.732	-7.19	.000
Experimental Group	30	13.3667	4.42160			

$p < .05$

The posttest outcome indicates that the mechanics of the experimental group improved significantly.

**Table 12**

**Demonstrates Mean difference between Control and Exp. Group students regarding structure (format, content organization and transition) in Narrative Writing Score**

Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Test	t-cal	Sig.
Control Group	30	6.4333	2.51456	.832	-7.20	.000
Experimental Group	30	12.7667	1.52414			

$p < .05$  Structure scores of experimental group were significantly higher in comparison to control group, which proves effective intervention.

**Table 13**

**Demonstrates Mean difference between pretest and posttest score experimental group students regarding Narrative Writing Score**

Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	t-cal	Sig.
Pretest	30	16.9333	4.01663	.73333	-19.63	.000
Posttest	30	32.8333	4.09443	.74754		

$P < .05$  They found a significant increase in overall score writing narrative after the intervention ( $p < .05$ ).

**Table 14**

**Demonstrates Mean difference between pretest and posttest score experimental group students regarding Clarity Score**

Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	t-cal	Sig.
Pretest	30	7.9833	1.09686	.14160	4.96	.000
Posttest	30	13.6167	15.10987	1.95068		

$P < .05$  An outstanding improvement of writing clarity is observed among the experimental group students after the intervention ( $p < .05$ ), which demonstrates the effectiveness of instructional strategies.

## Discussion

The results showed that reading-to-writing tasks had multiple facets or components of the reading-to-write construct, a similar finding was reported by Asencion (2004) who reported that analytical and response essay writing tasks produced more instances of critical thinking than summarization. Although the quantitative aspect of the present study did not involve direct comparison of the cognitive processes in different tasks, it became clear that response essays placed higher cognitive load on both high- and low-proficient learners. This strengthens the opinion that, the reading-to-writing instructional approach is better than the traditional methods in improving the narrative writing abilities of students.

These findings can be affiliated with other studies in the past which show that there is a high correlation between the development of reading and writing skills. As an example, the students who were prompted to work on writing tasks that focused on reading showed significant progress in telling a story, organization, and style. Yet, the response essay task appeared to demand more critical treatment, and the linguistic proficiency or lack of experience with this type of tasks might have affected the performance of the learners.

Kent and Wanzek (2016) have underscored the importance of transcription skills (grammar, spelling, and handwriting fluency) as a basis of writing proficiency. On the same note, Brimo et al. (2017) affirmed that reading comprehension, syntactic knowledge, and writing fluency were strongly correlated. As students work on texts, they acquire syntactic patterns and rhetorical forms and this makes it easier to develop propositions and more conceptual learning. Nevertheless, when a child is not exposed to a variety of reading materials, it may become harder to acquire the mentioned key skills.

The major benefit of linking reading to writing instruction is the improvement in the coherence of student writings. According to Delaney (2008) coherence is central to understanding reading as well as good writing. By being aware of the connections between these processes, the students will be more prepared to build up logically organized texts. Coherence in this study was achieved with the aid of activities like text analysis, critique and enhancement- these are stages in which the students understand the organization, vocabulary, grammar and the purpose of the texts.

Ugboja et al. (2018) stated the significance of such analytical activities, claiming that the traditional teaching of writing does not always go beyond simple analysis. In comparison, reading-to-writing strategies offer feedback, scaffolds and self-expression. These techniques help to engage the creativity and start thinking of the students in terms of coming up with their original ideas instead of copying the content that lacks any context and coherence.

In addition to this, Ugboja et al. (2018) believe that reading-to-write ought to be understood as a dynamic skill that is influenced by task requirements as well as idiosyncratic learner variables. All reading-to-write activities are not equally beneficial- summary writing, to take one example, does not always lead students into the cognitive early-response essays or mixed-texts assignments that are more cognitively challenging.

Constructive conception of reading-to-write focuses upon the interrelation of reading and writing in meaning-making. However, this study found that there was a weak relationship between the overall reading skill and reading-to-write skill. In line with this observation, Wang and Wang (2021) reported that simple reading comprehension does not strongly indicate or predict success in integrated reading-writing tasks. Although good reading skills assist in writing development, it is not enough in itself.

## **Conclusion**

This paper sought to investigate the usefulness of Reading-to-Writing Strategy Instruction in promoting narrative writing abilities among pupils. The results obtained at the end of the findings were that students taught using a reading-to-writing strategy showed a tremendous improvement in narrative writing than their counterparts taught by use of traditional strategies. The given approach not only develops the skills of critical thinking and self-expression in students but also helps to create a more student-based learning process.

When students read prior to writing, they gain a better comprehension of text structure, vocabulary and grammar. This kind of instruction reinforces their transcription, syntactic abilities and sets them up to written production. Furthermore, reading exposes the learner to a variety of genres and this enables the learner to internalize the stylistic and organizational characteristics and this is carried over to the

improved coherence of their compositions. By means of text analyzing, criticizing and enhancing activities, students receive the ability to represent their ideas in a coherent and valuable manner.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of the research findings, the following recommendations can be made:

- To improve the narrative writing aspect in students, English language teachers are supposed to implement reading-to-writing method in their classrooms.
- The element of response-based essay writing activity ought to be introduced at the elementary level as an aid to building analytical and narrative writing skills.
- Curriculum planners and educational authorities are requested to conduct professional development sessions (workshops) to elementary teachers. These ought to be directed at the adoption of the reading-to-writing strategy and the development of the suitable classroom activities aimed at teaching narrative writing.

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