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# The Problem of English Writing Skills at UG Level Students: Review of Literature

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The present research paper is an outcome of the qualitative research of a minor research project carried out by the researcher. Review of literature refers to the knowledge of a particular area of investigation of any discipline which include theoretical, practical, and available research studies. It makes researchers aware of what is already done and what still needs to be done in the particular area of research study. It helps researchers to find out the research study gap and scope for further research study. The research articles from authentic sources, peer-reviewed research papers and books have been selected for the review of English writing skills at UG level students. Research design may be exploratory, experimental, descriptive etc. to tackle issues and problems of writing skills among degree students of Hingoli district.

Keywords: Theoretical, Practical, Exploratory, Experimental, Descriptive

### **FULL PAPER**

As human beings, we need a language for our interaction or communication in our daily life. English is the language of information and also known as lingua franca of the world. If someone wants to learn any language, we need to get mastery over four basic skills of language i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The students of the English language are not well aware of these four basic skills of language. While learning in the classroom, the most negligible skill is writing. Writing is told in the classroom by the teacher only for an assessment and examination point of view. Teachers are not taking any extra efforts for the development of writing skills among the learners of English. For effective writing, the students should be voracious readers first. The college students are not able to write effectively in English because of a negligible attitude towards learning a writing skill. The researcher has pointed down the lacuna of students in writing and doing research for the development of writing among the degree college students in Hingoli District. The researcher has conducted a review of literature to know the research done earlier and to find out the research study gap for his present research.

Victoria Magaba's research paper entitled "English Writing Challenges of First Year Students: A Case Study of a University in the Eastern Cape." His research is on writing skills of the first-year students in South Africa where English is learned as a second language (L2). The study is based on written scripts of one hundred eightyfour (184) students using different forms of writing like report, assignment, language test, business correspondence, research paper, answering open-ended questions on extracts and others. He often used written scripts of students to identify the problem area of students where they needed to make them correct with the proper writing solutions. It is worthwhile to state from his research, writing is a process that requires proper planning. He mentioned in his research that the writing should have a proper beginning, middle and end related to the subject of writing. Researcher focuses on three stages of writing such as-drafting, revising, and editing in writing. Written documents should contain meaning, grammar, structure and spelling, the use of appropriate words in the context that are fundamental to avoid ambiguity for appropriate clarity in writing. In academic writing, it is not only focused on grammar but also the content style of writing. He has explained problems of students in writing like poor language skills, lack of proficiency, the lack of coherency and consistency in arguing/supporting a point, poor organization, and many others.

Dr Rashid Hasan Taha Mohamad wrote a research paper entitled "Challenges Faced by Students on Writing Skills in ESL Contexts". The research paper highlights challenges faced by students in writing with ESL contexts. He found in his research some of the major challenges faced by students in writing such as lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, the poor spelling of English words, students' readiness, and lack of exposure to books and reading materials. It is a great challenge before teachers to teach writing skills to the students. This research study tries to point out the problems faced by both the teachers and students while teaching as well as learning writing skills at

elementary level. General knowledge of the subjects and vocabulary are also playing a leading role in the writing activity. He advocated different strategies of writing like pre-writing, warm-up writing, collaborative writing using sentence starters and guided writing. He told various techniques to teach writing skills that will help to develop writing skills of students. While developing writing skills, students should have to think properly and read deeply. He focused on the common challenges faced by students at the time writing assignments, distraction, mental fatigue and tiredness, inconsistent legibility, uneven writing tempo, many careless errors, poorly planned papers, and reports in writing. He shows serious concerns to the elementary students by facing certain challenges like vocabulary. It plays a leading role in the construction of sentences; the students should habitate themselves with new words using different vocabulary to make their daily communication effective. He also said that grammar plays an important role in the writing and understanding the meaning of written text. He posits that the students should be well aware with the form and structure of words, morphology and how these words are arranged in sentences called syntax. Students can make mistakes in subject-verb agreement, pronouns, tenses, articles, prepositions, and basic sentence structures. Grammar activity can be improved through reading and grammar based related written activities. Poor spelling is one of the serious concerns of students while learning writing skills. The learner should have a good habit of spelling as per the pronunciation of words. Memorization of spelling would help students with the good spelling of words. Students' readiness is mandatory for the writing before entering into the classroom. The lack of exposure to books and reading material is another serious concern for elementary students to write good sentences and paragraphs. If the students are not reading books and other material sources, their ideas and vocabulary will not be generated as effectively in writing. Reading and writing are interrelated activities in teaching and learning. At elementary level, the students have a lack of motivation is a significant challenge before learners.

The researcher talked about challenges faced by the teachers in teaching writing skills. While teaching in English classroom, the teacher comes across different kinds of challenges to teach writing skills like improper development of analytical and cognitive skills, insufficient words stock and writing mechanics, no feedback on their writing, lack of vocabulary, weak argumentation, failing to structure ideas effectively, poor grammar and syntax skills, hard and unfamiliar topics. Finally, he suggests that the teacher should choose the correct approach to teach writing skills by taking feedback from the students and other teachers.

Jeen Peter & Prof. G. Singaravelu wrote a scholarly research paper entitled "Problems in Writing in English among High School Learners." Writing is a fundamental skill that contains all-inclusive knowledge and abilities to express one's ideas and thoughts through written words. The main objective of their research paper is to find out the problems of writing skills among students in high school. The study is carried out on a descriptive survey randomly selected 1200 students studying in VIII std. in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. They adopted a diagnostic test to collect the data and analysed it descriptively. In this research study, they found different types of

problems in the writing of students like grammar, syntax, spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary. They also identified the influence of mother tongue in writing of English. They defined the importance of writing as a herculean task. It is one of the most important skills among the four basic skills of the English language. In the digital era, they pointed out that the usage of English writing has not decreased from teaching learning of English. Now we can see emails, faxes, online chats, websites, blogs, and website updates that require fluent English writing to communicate needs and demands effectively. Writing significantly is a need for good academic achievement. The researchers are trying to find out the problems of writing in Higher Secondary School. Learning English in higher education has its own importance in higher education. Teachers should teach all the subjects in English and the language of examination should be English. It helps to develop writing skills among the learners of English. He emphasized that writing in English is significant for the academic development of students. The researcher has carried out a review of literature pertaining to the problems of writing. He found the gap to carry out his research successfully. He came across certain problems in the acquisition of writing skill in English. The learners are not well aware of the requisite features of the different genres of writing. For effective writing, the learners should have to develop the habit of reading. There is no proper coherence and cohesion in the writing of students. Learners failed to choose the appropriate words in writing of the context. The learners are facing the different grammatical problems in usage of subject-verb agreement, active and passive voice, and tenses. Besides these problems of prepositions, pronouns, and articles. The researcher found syntactical errors in the writing of learners because they are not well aware of the basic sentence structure. The common problems among the students are the spelling of words. The students are unaware of punctuation marks, even though they don't know the capitalization of words at the beginning of a sentence. Interference of mother tongue diversity affected writing of students. These are certain problems pointed out by the researcher through his research study.

Khaled Alostath's research paper entitled "Teacher's Perception of EFL Students' Poor Writing Skills: The Challenges, Causes and Remedies" the research study explores factors and causes behind school learners academic writing from teacher's perspective. The main objective of this research paper is to identify the factors that create obstacles in writing, analyse them and recommend solutions to fill the gap. The research study contains data of 27 English teachers and teaching from a private university in Istanbul. The present research study finds that teachers faced many problems while teaching writing skills to their students due to various reasons. He talks about some of these challenges-lack of vocabulary, lack of motivation, weak grammar competence, coherence and cohesion, curriculum related problems, lack of clarity, focus of written assignments and demotivation of teachers. These are some of the problems facing the learners of English in writing skills. He stated that writing is the significant skill of language production and complex to learn. Bacha and Mohan rightly pointed out that 'the literature assumes that the writing is not the simple task that can be quickly learned by the students of ESL or EFL. Bilal stated that 'the students have poor writing skills because of two reasons: the teacher and the learner.

Some research scholars commented that teachers' pedagogical absence and lack of teaching writing leaves a negative response on the minds of students about writing skills. He also stated that 'the teachers fail to provide their students formative feedback on the writing but they don't know how to motivate the students to write. Students face two critical problems which Kroll categorized as 'syntactic accuracy' and 'rhetorical competence.' He believes on the certain qualities of the writer to write an essay:

- a) Writer should be focused on the intended topic.
- b) The essay should have a proper beginning, middle and end.
- c) Create and manage paragraphs effectively.
- d) Nourish compatible point of view.
- e) Ideas should be logically written.
- f) Usage of coherence and cohesion in writing.

The writing should have a certain kind of strategy for writing. While writing, the writer should have to follow certain strategies like planning, editing, revising, and proofreading. He stated that the constrained education instructing the writing curriculum instructions and practices concentrating on teaching the theoretical concepts of writing with no actual application. He also said that for effective writing, it is not limited to good grammar structure and understanding the proper writing mechanism (spelling, capital & abbreviations etc.), well organization of ideas, choice of words and original content (plagiarism free). Teachers should be aware of this writing mechanism to their students. Both teachers and students should need to be aware of punctuation, vocabulary, structure, and spelling and characteristics of well written paper. Teachers should teach two different approaches to writing-writing as a product and writing as a process. The study gives insightful pictures to teachers and curriculum designers.

Peter Yang writes the book entitled *The Art of Writing*. In this book, Yang talks about the four basic principles of writing such as Economy, Transparency, Variety and Harmony. These four principles are fundamental for the great writing that everyone needs to be well aware of it. He said, 'writing is not merely a fundamental skill but an artistic pursuit!' (Yang, XI). However, artistic writing comprises these four principles, serving as a necessary foundation for everyone to enrich their writing. Economy is a matter of using the fewest words to produce the most fruitful meaning. While writing, the writer should not use crutch words, avoid repetition, write with conviction, streamline writing, remove unnecessary cases like which is and that and use positive simple sentences for the lucid comprehension. Writers must be economical in their use of punctuation. Writers should make appropriate use of active and passive voice in the sentences. The second principle of writing is transparent writing that is lucid and explicit. Transparency in writing leaves no space for doubt and assures the intelligibility of writers' innovative ideas. Intention of the writers should be cleared in his/her writing. The writer should make use of

figures of speech that can greatly illuminate the writing of the writer. Figurative language is to promote understanding of abstract or high-level concepts. The language of writing should be simple and lucid, an easy to understand for layman. The writer should avoid use of cliches (phrases) that have lost their charm due to overuse. The writer should stick to one interpretation and avoid the ambiguity. The third principal is variety. Variety in writing is like a variety in food. The writing lacks variety and it becomes boring and unartistic. The writer should make use of varied sentence structure to create rhythm in his/her writing. The varied sentence structure improves the flow of writing. The writer should avoid excessive repetition of sentences with the same syntax. The structures of paragraphs should be varied to maintain a balance in the writing. The writer should use a variety of words, helping the writer to choose a varied style in the writing. A variety in writing is important for avoiding repetition and improving syntax in writing. The fourth principal is harmony. The sentences, paragraphs- moreover, the prepositions, arguments must operate in harmony for effective writing. Harmony of language and thought describes the essence of effective writing. Reading is more important to write effectively. The role of a writer is to contribute to society and culture. Yang opines 'before you can write, you must learn to read' (Yang 73).

O'Brien Terry wrote a book entitled *Little Red Book of Modern Writing Skills*. The book emphasizes on the writing skills that are crucial in academic development. The author talks about the formal and informal way of writing used in our everyday walks of life. It covers the writing of letters, minutes, memos, resumes, poetry, novels, short stories, reports, essays, and creative writing. The book is very helpful in getting a master 's over the writing of English. The author talks about the 3 R's- Read, Record and Recall. The success of the great writer depends on these 3 R's. O'Brien asserts that 'the best way to develop effective writing skills is to practice, practice and practice.' For effective writing, the writer must read the literary works of great writers to construct their work, style, diction, syntax, and semantics. It is worthwhile to state that 'If the writer wants to be a good writer, be a good reader first.' The writer should have an appropriate knowledge of figures of speech to enrich his/her writing. O'Brien talks of the steps in the writing process such as research, plan, draft, revise, and proof. These five steps are very important for any writer to become a good writer.

Mr. Vipul Godhaniya's (2014) Ph.D. research work entitled 'Developing Writing Skills in English of Undergraduate Students in North Gujarat' is a genuine research study that helps to develop undergraduate student's writing skill in English from the North Gujarat region. The researcher has developed models for writing skills in English. His emphasis is on the improvement of writing skills to the undergraduate students learning in different disciplines like engineering, management, technology, science, law, humanity, and education in the North Gujarat region to learn English as a second language. In his study, he talks about the different kinds of problem that are persistent in acquiring the writing skill such as the poor teaching-learning condition in colleges, the overall school environment, lack of guidance for the effective writing,

lack of support from teachers to improve the writing of learners and lack of writing activity-based teaching-learning in the classroom. He also asserted technology plays a very vital role in the development of writing skills of English learners. Nowadays, technology is present in the form of computers, television, internet, google translator, google docs, blogs which improves the proficiency of English learners in writing skills.

Further, he emphasizes on a number of reasons such as negligible attitude of the teachers towards writing skill in the classroom, lack of foundation of English, the lack of writing skill in the syllabus of UG, the poor reading habits, inappropriate socioeconomic background, and lack of exposure. The researcher has selected different colleges in the North Gujarat region to evaluate the writing skills of English learners. He has provided certain kinds of questionnaire and interview methods with teachers as well as students from different courses. The questionnaire is open-ended questions filled by students and teachers of different colleges in North Gujarat. He has carried out the systematic review of literature to point out the research study gap for his present research. He reviewed the various research studies done on the writing skills of language.

In his research study, he talks about the various elements of writing with the help of authors, critics, experts, and educationists in the field of language. It is worthwhile to state that the research study has given more emphasis on the process of writing skills, writing as a complex phenomenon, types of writing, components of writing, writing: assessment and evaluation and the role of teachers in the development of writing. He recommended certain ways to develop writing skills-development of writing skills through speaking, reading, implication of syllabus design of writing skill in universities and affiliated colleges of North Gujarat, activity-based tasks to motivate the students in developing writing skills in English, feedback assessment of writing and to develop the writing skill through pictures.

The findings of his research study is as follows:

- The learners are not able to write simple and complete sentences in English.
   They do not have knowledge of basic skills of language-Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.
- 2. Students are not aware of the general rule of written communication in English.
- 3. Learners come across certain problems like subject-verb agreement, tenses, punctuation, spellings, preposition, coherence and cohesion, organization of ideas and other aspects of language.
- 4. Teachers should motivate students to write and give assessment feedback on their writing.
- 5. Students do not have the habit of reading except their curriculum textbooks.

The researcher has given some recommendations to the learners of English to develop their writing skills. He provided some suggestions to the institution to

organize essay writing, story writing, letter writing, slogan writing, article writing and research paper writing competitions to encourage learners to practice writing skill.

Ghousia Nusrath Nisar (2019), Ph. D. research work entitled as 'Current Problem in English Language Teaching in Rural UG Colleges in Malur: Suggestions Towards Improving Writing Skills'. In this research study, he defines the language by giving the definitions of various renowned Linguists and scholars like Ferdinand de Saussure, Edward Sapir, Max Veinreich, Noam Choamsky, Lyons, Muharrem Ergin, and Michel Halliday. However, language plays a very crucial role in the life of human beings. It is used to express, share ideas, thoughts, and feelings to each other. Language has its own importance for the purpose of completing daily routine communication. Without language, human beings cannot communicate to each other for their daily needs. The social reformer and an eminent Indian scholar Raja Ram Mohan Roy emphasized on European education in India. English is a link language that plays a crucial role on the national platform. Pandit Nehru was a strong supporter of the English language because he could see the usefulness of language as an international medium of communication. The Radhakrishnan Commission made a strong recommendation of English in the Indian Education system in 1948-49. The four fundamental skills of the English language are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. There are certain kinds of lacunas among the learners of English to obtain the four basic skills of language. The researcher has given some recommendations to improve these four skills. He conducted an extensive review of literature on teaching learning of writing skills in English. In his review of literature, he surveyed secondary sources like books, journals, and critical evaluation of these works in relation to the research problem investigated. The review of literature helps the researcher to find out the research study gap in concern research that helps to eliminate the duplication of research which has already been done earlier. Theoretical analysis of methods applied to the field of study. Cluster and random sampling method is used to analyse the data of this research study. He has selected Malur government UG college students. Approximately, he had chosen 1500 students, among them 58 students were from B. A. course, 40 students were chosen from B. Sc. course and 49 students who were willing and spontaneously responded. The researcher took 147 students as the sample group. He has used two methods of analysis quantitative and qualitative analysis to carry out this research study. In the qualitative method, he has conducted interviews, group discussions, field visits and observations. In the quantitative method, he used questionnaires, surveys, and tests to collect data. Questionnaires are circulated among the students and teachers of UG College in Malur to collect the accurate data for this research study. The researcher has given an extensive analysis of data collected through questionnaires. Finally, he gave suggestions for the improvement of English writing skills in his research study.

Anjaiah, Manda's (2017) Ph. D. research study entitled "Using Writing Conferences to Develop Writing Skill at a Tertiary Level: An Experimental Study". It is rightly pointed out that writing is one of the most difficult skills of language in schools and colleges. English writing lacks cohesiveness and coherence that displays

deficiency in written communication in English. Even the students of English medium school cannot write fluently and clearly in English. Exam oriented teaching learning in colleges make students ignore writing skill. Students writing in English lack coherence and cohesiveness and show deficiency in grammar, syntax, semantics, vocabulary, spelling, use of small and capital letters, punctuation marks etc. Exam and result oriented teaching learning in schools and colleges make them ignore writing skill. The activity of writing involves collection of ideas, planning, selection, arrangement and ordering of information. In writing skills, feedback from the teacher is the most important to stimulate learning and action among students. The main objective of this study is to understand an interactive process of teacher-student conference by exploring students' perception, writing conferences from student's perspective, and studying the conference interaction through written form. This study is intended to examine writing conferences on students' writing skills at engineering college in Hyderabad. For the data collection, the researcher has used students' written scripts, student's questionnaire, teachers' questionnaire, teachers' feedback, studentteacher writing conferences, classroom observations, informal discussion with the teachers and students. The researcher pointed out that writing conferences help to develop the writing skills of students.

Ravichandran M. (2013), Ph.D. research study entitled "A Strategy to Develop Communicative Competence in Writing Skill at Degree Level Students". The researcher rightly pointed out that the major problem of a degree level student is to get mastery over the sound system. The second problem is to grasp the structure of the English language and the third problem is to learn the vocabulary. The researcher has conducted extensive research on the literature available and found out the gap for his further research study. He identified the communicative approach is the most appropriate approach to the skill of writing among the college learners/students. Communicative competence is a unique concept that applies both the spoken and written form of language. The researcher followed competence of UG students, research tools with reliability and validity, sampling frame, data collection, and statistical techniques used in the present research study. He has conducted a test to know the writing competence through identification of sound and letters, words and meanings, application of word meanings in sentences, letter writing and composition. Such a test is helpful to identify the writing accuracy and competence of learners and students in English. He has selected 100 students as per the test construction. Communicative skills can be developed through oral and written communication. Oral communication includes listening and speaking skills whereas written communication contains reading and writing skills. In the final part of this thesis, he has given detailed data analysis with graphical presentation. He also pointed out "there exists no significant difference in the students' ability to use written English taught through either traditional method or the communicative approach" is invalid. According to the researcher, it is worthwhile to state that 'to study the impact of communicative approach on the retention ability of the students to use written English.'

Swati M. (2016), Ph.D. research study entitled "Use Differentiated Instructions to Enhance ESL Writing Skills: An Exploratory Study". The present research study is carried out to explore differentiated writing instruction can affect writing skill of ESL upper primary school. The researcher used quasi-experimental research design where mixed methods like qualitative and quantitative forms of data collection, analysis and interpretation were carried out to understand the effect of differentiated instructions to enhance ESL writing skills. The researcher has used five different tools such as textbook analysis, questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and final writing test. The researcher analysed the textbook of class VII English 'Our World through English.' He used the text to teach and present the writing skills in the classroom. He collected responses from the teachers and students through questionnaires. The analysis of the research study has been presented as per the syllabus and curriculum at upper primary levels. The writing tasks were given in the text like letter writing, dialogue writing, travelogues etc. These tasks were either simple or complex for the learners. Sometimes they feel boredom or a feeling of frustration among the learners. The researcher's responses from questionnaires revealed that the major type of writing they practiced was letter writing or writing answers of questions in examinations. He revealed that the teachers were not aware of the benefits of the process approach of teaching writing. Teachers were not aware of teaching writing strategies in the classroom. The teachers were mainly focused on the writing from the examination point of view and not make them aware about fundamental skills of writing. Teachers need to understand and review various teaching and learning strategies in order to understand and make differentiation a common practice in English classrooms. The research study proved that differentiated instruction is used to teach English writing skills at upper primary school level.

The above is an extensive review of literature carried out to find the research study gap in the present research project entitled "Problem of Writing Skills among Degree Students of Rural Area (With Special Reference to Hingoli District): A Study." The above researchers have used different quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the problem of writing skills among the learners of English. However, there is no such study that deals with equally an important issue of the 'English writing skills'. These research studies missed out some aspects of writing skills. I found the research study gap in terms of writing skills in English language teaching with reference to Hingoli district. No one has yet done the research project on writing skills in English at Degree students of rural areas with special reference to Hingoli district. Therefore, the present minor research project is an attempt to conceptualize and understand the problem of writing skills among the degree students who are learning in rural and educationally backward areas like Hingoli district. I used to analyse the written manuscripts of students to find out the errors of their writing. By examining written manuscripts, I will give some suggestions and recommendations to improve the writing skills of students. Students are very poor in writing skill because they did not make the appropriate use of the small and capital letter, articles, tense, syntax and semantics, prepositions, violation of punctuation marks, misspellings, cohesion and coherence, practice of writing, negligence of students, proper evaluation of writing are

the recurrent errors committed by the students of Degree College in Hingoli district. These issues will be evaluated through the questionnaire prepared based on different kinds of writing tasks.

I have used various forms of writing like essay, letter, report, notice and agenda, curriculum vitae, email, paragraph, and precis writing to evaluate the writing skills of students. I have given written manuscripts to the students to solve questions using their own ideas, thoughts, and knowledge to reveal their writing skills. It helps researchers to identify mistakes and errors done by learners of the English language at UG level. The researcher performed the role as an observer of written manuscripts of students to avoid influencing opinions and changing atmosphere. The researcher reviewed some research papers, Ph.D. Thesis, and books to know the status of present study.

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