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IMPACT OF VISUAL AIDS IN IMPROVING WRITING SKILLS OF ESL LEARNERS



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**ABSTRACT:**

English language is the most effective language of the world which connects two nations, two cultural and two human beings of the world. Moreover it is important to note that knowing English generate opportunity for one in building career in this global world which is full of challenges as well as opportunities. Among all other communication skills in English, Writing Skills plays a vital role in professional field. But it has been

noticed in rural areas of India both at the school and college level, where the medium of instruction is mother tongue, the basic standard of learners general in English and specific in English Writing is not up to the mark. With a view to this fact, the research paper discusses a study on impact of visual aids in improving writing skills of ESL learners at primary level. The research paper discusses about the review of related literature, needs, problems, hypothesis, limitations, research procedure, methodology, findings, scope and implications of the research.

**KEYWORDS**

*Communication Skills, Writing Skills, ESL (English as a Second Language), Primary Level*

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## INTRODUCTION :

In Gujarat, it has been observed that many ESL learners at Graduate level, especially those from regional medium schools do not have the required writing proficiency. It has been noticed in rural areas of Gujarat both at the school and college level, where the medium of instruction is mother tongue (L1), the basic standard of learners in English is not up to the expected level. In spite of learning English for about six to seven years and still being unable to write a paragraph correctly and coherently calls for an investigation. There is an extreme need to help these learners improve their academic writing skill in English language. With a view to these fact, the main purpose of this study was to help ESL learners at the Primary level in Gujarati medium primary schools of Gujarat to improve their writing skill in English through strategic use of visual aids like pictures.

The research is inspired by Nirmala's study (2008) on Teaching Writing Using Picture Stories as Tools at The High School Level: The Movement from Other Regulation to Self Regulation in which she has experimented picture stories with the concept of the movement from other regulation to self regulation to improve writing skills. With a view to this research, researchers have selected the primary level learners of rural school of Gujarat to assess the impact of visual aids in improving writing skills in English. The researchers had used selected visual aids specifically pictorial illustrative images such as pictures as tools for the present research to improve writing skills in English. With a view to facts of learners background in L2 (English), the researcher had focused only on the beginner level grammatical points of the selected components.

Nirmala's (2008) study entitled 'Teaching Writing Using Picture Stories as Tools at the High School Level: The Movement from Other Regulation to Self-Regulation' (M. Phil. Dissertation, 2013) had the objectives to help out rural ESL learners to improve their writing skills in English at High School level. The researcher had selected pictures and picture stories as tools in teaching learning process to improve the writing skills of the learners. The study shows that she was able to inspire learners towards improving their writing skills. The performance level was improved. Williams (2014) stated that a visual image is a simple thing, a picture that enters the eyes. It means learners remembers the thing easily what they see. The uses of pictures can be proved effective techniques in teaching of general in English and specific in improving writing skills. The review of literature motivated the researcher to experiment with the teaching process with the help of pictures as teaching aids to improve the writing skills of ESL learners at primary level.

The hypothesis of the study is that the Upper primary learners of ESL have basic problems in writing in English and the use of pictures will improve the writings skills in English of these ESL learners as the context based exposure to writing in English will stimulate learners to improve their writing skills in English. The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of the select visual aids like pictures in improving writing skills in English of ESL learners of VIII standard of the primary school of Gujarat. The study also attempts to know the significant change in English writing skills of the ESL learners with the help of pictures. The study attempted to answer following main questions:

- Will the uses of pictures be helpful to improve English Writing skills in English of ESL learners?
- Do the uses of pictures in the class-room stimulate learners to improve their English Writing?

The study involved 20 students of standard VIII of Gujarati Medium Primary School of District

Anand, Gujarat. The main aim of the present study is to examine the impact of select visual aids specific in pictures and pictures stories to improve the writing skills of ESL learners of VIII of Upper Primary School of Gujarat. The research procedure is inspired by Nirmala's study (2008) on Teaching Writing Using Picture Stories as Tools at The High School Level: The Movement from Other Regulation to Self Regulation. Total 40 hours (20 sessions of 02 hours each) were allotted in span of 20 days to carry out the present research project. The main tools used for data collection are questionnaire, pre-test, post-test and teaching tasks for teaching writing in English. The study is carried out in three parts: 1) Analysis of Questionnaire to understand the problems in English Writing of ESL learners; 2) Uses of pictures as Visual Aids in teaching-learning process; 3) Assessment of impact of pictures in improving writing skills.

In phase I, In order to have an idea of the learners' present writing skill, a pre-test consisting of a picture task (panchtantra.com, 2014) was administered. A questionnaire was also administered upon the learners to understand their socio-economic background, the exposure to English, and their views and opinions about the teaching and learning of English. Phase II consisted of actual classroom teaching with the help of pictures (ehow.com, 2014) and picture stories (NCERT & GSBST, 2008) Textbooks, 2008 to improve the writing skills. Total 20 sessions (Each of 02 hours each) were allotted for this stage of teaching. The teaching was concentrated only on selected aspects of writing like tense (Simple Present Tense, Simple Past Tense, Simple Future Tense, Present Continuous and Past Continuous Tense), punctuation (Full stop, Comma, Exclamatory Mark), prepositions (in, under, on, at, with, near) and subject verb agreement (Basic rules). Different pictures and pictorial illustrative images were used in a period of sessions of two hours each. The researchers have provided full linguistic support and guidance in doing exercises and tasked on grammar components with the help of pictures. In every session one picture was given to the students and they were asked to describe them in L2. After each exercise, the feedback on their writing was provided to the learners. Common errors as well as individual errors were discussed for the benefit of the whole group. At the end of this stage, the post test (panchtantra.com, 2014)) was conducted to check the improvement in the writing proficiency of these learners. In phase III learners' writing was assessed in terms of grammar, sentence construction and developed creativity in writing skills in English. According to the level of the learners, few aspects of the above said fields of language were taken into consideration in assessing the L2 writing of the learners in the study. The collected data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Based on the study, analysis of the collected data is as under:

| Sr. No. | Learners (L) | Number of Errors in Pre-Test |                  | Number of Errors in Post-Test |                  | Improvement in Writing in English |                           |
|---------|--------------|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
|         |              | Errors (Nos.)                | Out of 100 Words | Errors (Nos.)                 | Out of 100 Words | Decrease in number of Errors      | Increase in nos. of words |
| 1       | L – 1        | 16                           | 41               | 08                            | 97               | 08                                | 58                        |
| 2       | L – 2        | 22                           | 60               | 16                            | 108              | 06                                | 48                        |
| 3       | L – 3        | 14                           | 57               | 07                            | 90               | 04                                | 58                        |
| 4       | L – 4        | 19                           | 42               | 08                            | 75               | 11                                | 33                        |
| 5       | L – 5        | 15                           | 55               | 10                            | 85               | 5                                 | 30                        |
| 6       | L – 6        | 19                           | 40               | 08                            | 58               | 11                                | 28                        |
| 7       | L – 7        | 18                           | 38               | 12                            | 55               | 8                                 | 17                        |
| 8       | L – 8        | 21                           | 42               | 12                            | 65               | 9                                 | 23                        |
| 9       | L – 9        | 19                           | 30               | 10                            | 63               | 9                                 | 33                        |
| 10      | L – 10       | 17                           | 46               | 06                            | 67               | 11                                | 21                        |
| 11      | L – 11       | 19                           | 38               | 09                            | 55               | 10                                | 17                        |
| 12      | L – 12       | 16                           | 46               | 08                            | 70               | 8                                 | 36                        |
| 13      | L – 13       | 18                           | 40               | 07                            | 68               | 11                                | 28                        |
| 14      | L – 14       | 19                           | 30               | 10                            | 48               | 9                                 | 18                        |
| 15      | L – 15       | 18                           | 36               | 09                            | 55               | 9                                 | 19                        |
| 16      | L – 16       | 19                           | 30               | 09                            | 50               | 10                                | 20                        |
| 17      | L – 17       | 10                           | 45               | 07                            | 54               | 03                                | 09                        |
| 18      | L – 18       | 12                           | 35               | 04                            | 55               | 08                                | 20                        |
| 19      | L – 19       | 08                           | 18               | 05                            | 35               | 11                                | 18                        |
| 20      | L – 20       | 05                           | 14               | 03                            | 22               | 02                                | 08                        |

•All the twenty learners have shown improvement in their writing skills in English. Learners' performance in pre-test indicated their poor proficiency in writing skills in English. Teaching of writing skills in English with the help of pictures helped learners to decrease errors in writing and increase their ability of writing.

•In pre-test most of the learners performance is very poor in writing. The average ratio of number of errors is 16.5 and the average ratio of number of written words is 39.5 of the 20 learners. The data suggests the existence level of students writing skills in English.

•In post-test, average ratio of number of errors is 8.2 and the average ratio of number of written words is 63.75 of the 20 learners. This shows the vast different in view of number of error decreased and

number of words increased in writing of the learners.

- The graph of the learners' improvement from the pre-test to post test tells the story of effectiveness of the visual aids in improving writing skills of ESL learners. The average numbers of errors in Pre-Test were 16.5 in 39.5 words. After the teaching phase the average numbers of errors were 92.3 in 49.5 words and 8.2 in 63.75 words respectively in improvement-test and post-test. This data indicates that the average numbers of errors decreased were 8.3 and average numbers of written words increased were 24.25. This result suggests the improvement in learners' writing skills in English.

Based on this study the findings were as following:

- Learners can develop their writing skills in English with the help of visual aids like pictures and colourful pictorial illustrative images etc.
- Systematic implementation of pictures under the guidance of the teacher is helpful in overcoming the challenges of teaching English to ESL learners especially developing their proficiency in writing skills.

Based on the findings of the study it is recommended that the effective choice of teaching tools, aids and comfortable teaching approach by the teacher can make the teaching-learning process interesting. The teacher can achieve the outcome that he/she desired from the efforts he/she has made. The students will enjoy their class if they find something innovative. Ariningsih (2010) states that If the process of teaching learning is innovative and interesting than students will enjoy the learning of the English. If the students understand the material, the purpose of teaching and learning will be gained. So this is recommended that teachers must be clever in choosing the techniques for the teaching and learning process in the classroom. A similar study can be taken up for rural ESL learners at the college or university level to check their proficiency in L2 writing and provide the required help for improvement.

#### CONCLUSION:

The study has achieved a little success in helping out ESL learners in improving their writing skills in English. It enhances their confidence level towards English Language. The positive attitude of learners towards English language and uses of suitable teaching techniques by the teachers can be helpful in effective teaching learning process of English language in India.

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