

Strategies Used In Teaching Written Language Skills In English To Students With Hearing Impairment: A Case Of Government Special School In Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

*Sitara J.R ¹, **Dr T. Geetha ²

¹*Research Scholar, Dept. Of Special Education, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.*

*HST Physical Science, Govt V & HSS for the Deaf, Jagathy, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala-695014
Communication Address: C/o Col Harikrishnan N, Colonel Training A, DG NCC, R K Puram, West Block Main, New Delhi, Vasant Vihar-110066.*

sitara.hari@gmail.com

²*Former Dean, School of Education Faculty and Prof. Dept of Special Education
Director, Dept of Women Studies.*

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

geetha.sped@gmail.com

Abstract

Developing literacy in English while using Indian Sign Language (ASL). Despite not having a written form, ISL is a fully accessible language for learners with HI, allowing them to build on past experiences, mediate information, and engage in critical thinking and reasoning. This study sought to examine the methods employed in teaching written English to students with hearing impairments (SWHI) in special education. In this study, a descriptive survey design was employed. This study included a sample of 5 English language instructors, 8 SWHI, and 1 school headmistress. Utilizing questionnaires, schedules for observation and interviews, data was gathered. The computer application excel, which makes manipulating numbers simple, was used to examine the data in large part. Narrative data was used to convey qualitative data. It was found that teachers lacked a solid understanding of the projects and tactics that may be utilized to enhance writing among SWHI. Instead, they employed frequent copy writing, the teaching of new vocabulary, sentence construction, and copying phrases. This was unable to raise students' writing ability to the necessary degree. The study suggests that teachers of students with hearing impairment often receive training on how to teach writing. Teachers for SWHI should receive comprehensive training on how to spot students who have writing challenges. The management of the school should see to it that SWHI receive proper writing instruction. Early exposure to Indian Sign Language should occur, and English language instructors should continually assess how well their remedial programs are working.

Keywords: Hearing Impairment, strategies, Literacy, Writing Difficulties, Written Language, SWHI - Students with Hearing Impairment, Children with hearing Impairment - (CWHI)

Introduction

We know that deaf and hard-of-hearing students are frequently required to learn to read and write in English while also building a language for communication. As a result these students have a very difficult time acquiring literacy abilities through the elementary school levels. According to Burman, Nunes, and Evans' research, children who have a significant hearing loss and whose first language is British Sign Language (BSL) need to be literate in order to communicate effectively in a society that predominantly uses spoken language. They argue that the level of writing and spelling ability possessed by these children may be so low that there is no method of assessment that can accurately measure their level of proficiency.

Due to the crucial role that language development plays in a child's acquisition of literacy, language development is vital while taking into account aspects that are significant in teaching SWHI (Sandra, 2005). The family environment has an impact on how quickly children with hearing impairment (CWHI) pick up language. For CWHI to learn languages, their environments must be linguistically diverse. Around 80% of deaf students are taught in mainstream public settings in the United States, alongside their hearing counterparts (Salend, 2001). Their progress in school is influenced by the development of their first and second languages as well as their literacy skills.

Over the past twenty years, kids' literacy proficiency in American schools has increased. Additionally, the majority of kids' writing abilities fall short of expectations for their grade (Lee, Grigg & Donahue, 2007). Many of the graduates still lack the reading and writing skills necessary for college or

careers. English is not the official language of Kerala. In schools, it is taught as a second language. In primary schools, English language instruction is a significant component of the curriculum. The four language skills—listening (or receiving information signed), speaking (or using signs), reading, and writing—are taught. The main English curriculum has as its goal that every student should be able to speak and write English well enough to be able to communicate effectively, independently, and correctly in daily life. Additionally, students are encouraged to develop writing abilities so that they can successfully communicate in English, transmit information, and express themselves in a meaningful and legible manner. To accommodate SWHI, the English curriculum for elementary schools has been modified (KCF, 2020). The majority of SWHD parents (95%) are deaf, therefore until they attend school, the children are language-deprived whether the language is spoken or signed. A subsequent delay in language development results from this. A kid can grow effectively and in an organized manner thanks to early language development. This enhances thinking abilities, which are crucial for composition writing (Adoyo, 2002).

English is often used in Kerala's formal sectors, including courts, parliament, the civil service, education, the media, and commercial and personal correspondences, despite the fact that it is not an official language. However, due to the concurrent usage of Signed English (S.E), Signed Exact English (S.E.E), Signed Malayalam, and Indian Sign language, SWHI may become confused. According to the findings of a study carried out by SCERT in Kerala, the percentage of educational institutions that suffered a drop in their performance

increased from 39 percent in 2012 to 47.6 percent in 2015, going from 16 to 20 schools. In 2015, the average score across all fields was 158.48 out of a possible 200 points. This result was much lower than the expected average mean score of 250, which was determined by comparing it to the performance of schools on the SWHI.

From standard one to standard twelve, written language skills are taught, although many SWHI have graduated from high school with no real understanding of how to communicate in written English. More than 30% of SWHI graduates lack basic literacy skills. Many individuals and kids who are deaf yet have outstanding writing and reading skills exist at the same time. This study, which was conducted at the Government Special School in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, where the researcher is a secondary school teacher, examined ways for teaching Written Language Skills in English to SWHI against this context.

Background to the study

According to studies, SWHI have a harder time learning new languages and develop their writing abilities more slowly than their hearing peers. When evaluated on contextual conventions, contextual language, and story construction, SWHI performs in the low-to-average range for all three categories. They produce sentences that are both shorter and structurally simpler as a result of their work. According to the findings of a study that looked into the topic, students in Kerala who are learning English as a second language (L2) make mistakes when they write the language down. SWHI requires assistance in order to increase their vocabulary and grasp words with multiple meanings. The goal of this study is to peek into the methods used to teach SWHI written English.

Purpose of the Study

This study set out to assess the methods employed in teaching English-language writing to SWHI.

Objective of the Study

To define the methods for teaching English-language writing to SWHI.

Theoretical Framework

The foundation for this research was Schumann's (1976) theory of second language acquisition. According to this theory, the social and psychological aspects of a learner are equally important in the process of acquiring a second language, and this theory served as the basis for this research. According to Schumann's theory, the difficulty of learning a second language will increase in proportion to the number of unfavorable social factors that influence a second language learner's (SLL) connection with the language being learned (the target language). Schumann, on the other hand, makes the point that a learner will have more success picking up a language if they have strong associations with it and are strongly driven to do so.

The study by Schumann (1978) sheds light on how SWHI react to English language instruction. They notice that they are rejecting its use and would rather communicate through sign language. Schumann does, however, suggest that the SLL will eventually become proficient in the Target Language if they are given support and guidance throughout the period of cultural shock and are encouraged to continue studying it. This illustrates how teachers may help learners by enhancing their language environment and addressing any problems they may be having.

Schumann argues that the main element in second language learning is motivation. The student must be motivated to study the second language for goals like advancing his profession, finding job, or getting into college. According to Lambert's (1975) research, motivation was a key factor in language learning. Because they are so unmotivated to learn the English language, this is essential for the learners with hearing impairment. Through activities that promote language learning, the instructor may play a significant role in inspiring students to learn the language. Additionally, instructors must

keep in mind that some students with hearing loss may also have other disabilities, so they must establish effective teaching strategies to help these students learn English.

Conceptual Framework

According to the conceptual framework, educational methods affect students' written language proficiency. Writing, shared writing, guided writing, and writers workshops are among the educational methods.

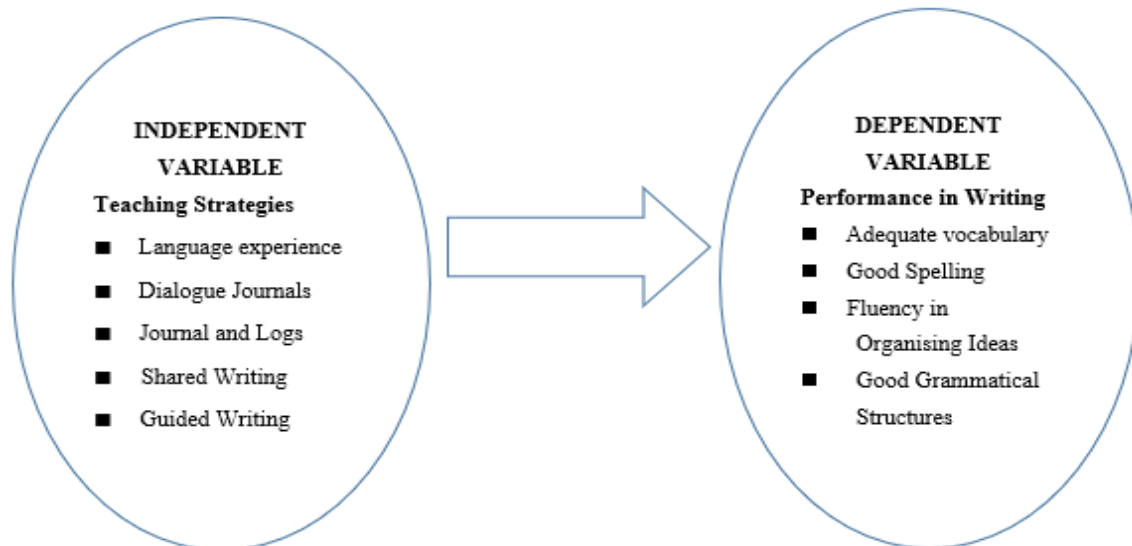


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study: Teaching approaches in written English language and performance among learners with HI

According to Koutsoubou (2004), the use of sign language in the writing process only significantly improved some subgroups of SWHI and particular writing-related elements. Groups of SWHI were created based on their level of written and sign language proficiency. Both groups were exposed to directed composition writing from picture stimuli and sign language video stimuli. It was discovered that while visual stimuli helped some people relax, sign language video stimuli helped more people

relax. This suggests that SWHI's members differ from one another personally. The educator must diversify their teaching methods in order to fulfill the needs of every student.

Hedge (2005) identifies three primary teaching strategies that may be applied to the instruction of written English and the associated activities. These include collaborative teaching and learning, which includes creating a class magazine, keeping a

class journal, collaborating on projects, reading aloud, and exchanging letters and journals; shared teaching and learning, which involves doing both; role play, which Hedge claims involves newscasting and peer teaching. These techniques are presented in terms of instructing hearing learners, although there is no proof that they have been effective in instructing SWHI in written language. Shared reading and scaffolding writing have also been recommended as additional effective approaches for teaching and mastering written English (Trupe, 2001; Hedge, 2005; Medwell, Coates, Wray, Griffiths, & Minns, 2006).

According to the findings of a study that involved 325 Deaf children in grades 4 through 10, written training that is presented as a process is more successful than education that focuses the emphasis on generating a writing product (Kluwin & Blumenthal, 1992. pp. 41-53, quoted in Shirfin & Polania, 2007). When you teach writing as a process, you lead your students through the same phases in the writing process that seasoned authors do. This is called modeling professional writing behavior for your students. Writing procedures often start with a pre-writing or preparation step, followed by composing, rewriting for organization and clarity, editing, and publishing. A "process method" is flexible and incorporates input while text is being created, as opposed to being a sequential sequence of stages or procedures. When writing texts, students are encouraged to employ a range of techniques. Instead than concentrating on the final product, this article focuses on the concept formulation and expression process. Although studies on the efficiency of "process approaches" in improving writing norms (grammar and mechanics) have produced conflicting

findings, a process approach places a focus on the thought processes that go along with composition. Higher ratings on writing-related criteria including substance and ideas, organization, audience awareness, and voice are produced by using a process-based approach. A process-based approach to writing teaching was shown to frequently lead to changes in grammatical complexity. The researchers claim that the pupils' higher sense of freedom of expression may be the cause of this increased intricacy (Kluwin & Blumenthal, 1992, cited in Brown, 2000).

During the course of a typical group brainstorming session, everyone in the group will use a whiteboard or some flip chart paper to record all of the ideas that they come up with. Because there is synergy caused by the open flow of ideas, brainstorming sessions with large groups may be quite productive. One person's idea will motivate another to interact with others and take part in activities (Burgstahler, 2008). In addition, students should be exposed to a wider variety of vocabulary through group brainstorming than they would be otherwise able to get individually (Paulus, 2006). "Brain writing" or "electronic brainstorming" allows individuals to share their ideas with a group through the sharing of written thoughts on paper or through a computer network. Brain writing or electronic brainstorming avoids some of the social interaction dynamics that might obstruct the free flow of ideas in large group brainstorming. One member of the group writes down an idea, another member of the group reads it, adds comments and their own thinking, and then passes it on to another member of the group. Students can participate in a group conversation online through a threaded discussion in computer labs and online classes. This tactic also gives students time to come up with and

organize their thoughts. This approach is probably more successful with students who have advanced literacy skills. One drawback is that students who have trouble spelling or have a limited vocabulary may find it challenging to communicate their ideas in written form. Without the instructor's facilitation, some students could find it challenging to completely appreciate the viewpoints of their peers (Enns, 2006).

When it comes to idea generation, having individual guidance might prove to be extremely helpful. According to Deaf educators that favor a bilingual/bicultural approach, the student's first language (ASL) should be used for the formation of concepts as well as discussion of the subject matter. This will allow the student to completely communicate her thoughts and feelings regarding the topic. During the course of the talk, the person who is leading the discussion takes notes for the student in English (either in the form of a web, an outline, or individual notes) (Paul & Quigley, 1994, cited in Brokop & Persall, 2009). In addition, it would be helpful to go over and develop a list of the terminology, idiomatic expressions, and phrases that the student would wish to use while writing on a specific topic. This might be done by going through the student's notes on the topic and going through their vocabulary. According to Luckner, Sebald, Cooney, Young, Muir, and Luckner and Handley (2006) and Luckner and Handley (2008), there is a paucity of evidence-based teaching practices that specifically satisfy the language and literacy requirements of children and adolescents who have high intelligence (HI). In addition, there is a paucity of research on pedagogical approaches or therapies that focus on the growth of SWHIs' expressive language, bilingualism, or metalinguistic awareness. It

is advised that language and literacy training with SWHI should aim to fulfill four goals in order to be effective. These goals should be founded on Cummin's theory of interdependence and should also take into mind the specific language requirements of SWHI.

- (1) In order to expose kids to a language they can understand, it should be engaging and dialogic in style.
- (2) provide possibilities for language acquisition by resolving communication issues and combining new language with existing understandings.
- (3) It needs to strive to increase language proficiency.
- (4) It ought to make explicit analogies between ISL and English in order to raise metalinguistic awareness, for instance.

SWHI uses an educational strategy called Strategic and Interactive Writing Instruction (SIWI), which is created to meet each of these concepts. Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) state that there are several teaching methods available for Written English. Field excursions, practical exercises, music, projects, group and pair work, story-telling, conversations, poetry, debates, and presentations are among them. Which of these methods is appropriate for teaching written language to SWHI is not mentioned, though. According to Kenya Deaf Resource Centre (KDRC) (2009), language experience, conversation journals, shared writing, guided writing, and writers workshops are five educational methods that may be employed with hearing-impaired students. Therefore, there is a need for tools to be developed that might enhance evaluation and help instructors set goals for the writing growth of their SWHI. The success of learning is

influenced by the choice of instructional methodologies and the accessibility of resources such teacher assistants, nursery assistants, interpreters, note-takers, and audio technologists (Petty, 2004; Otieno, 2010). A teacher can select from a wide range of Petty's (2004) suggested tactics, including collaborative reading, guided discovery, role playing, debate, and demonstration. This study aims to identify the methods employed in teaching class seven students with hearing impairment written language skills in English.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was employed for the investigation. This study employed a descriptive survey to gather views and gather data about the methods employed in teaching class seven SWHI students written language skills in English. The 75 SWHI, 8 English instructors, and 1 Headmistress of the Special School were the focus of the study. In order to represent 17% of the target population, a sample of five English language instructors, eight SWHI, and one headmistress were employed in this study. Questionnaires, observation schedules, and interview schedules were all employed to gather data for this study.

Using a similar population that was not a part of the study, a pilot study was used to determine the instrument's validity and reliability. A method of expert judgment was used to determine the content validity. Three English language instructors, the

Headmistress, and three SWHI from class 7 participated in the pilot research. On the pilot sample, the test-retest procedure was used to evaluate the instruments' reliability. The pilot participants were given the instruments again, separated by a two-week gap, while still being subjected to the identical beginning circumstances.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts and percentages, were used to examine quantitative data. Tables and pie charts were used to illustrate the data, from which inferences based on the study's factors might be drawn. Observation schedules' qualitative data was documented and transcribed. The gathered qualitative data was categorized and arranged into topics that were relevant to the research. To discuss the results, the data was then presented in a narrative format. This allowed for an evaluation of the data's value in addressing the research issues.

Discussions

Strategies Used in Teaching Writing

The aim of this study was to identify the teaching methods for English written language skills to SWHI. Given that SWHI would not benefit from some of the educational tactics utilized with hearing learners, they were taken into consideration. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Strategies used in teaching writing

Strategy	Respondents	Percentages %
Teaching new words & using	2	40.00%

them in sentences		
Continuous writing	2	40.00%
Copying sentences	1	20.00%
Total	5	100.00%

According to Table 1's findings, all respondents had a limited knowledge on how to teach writing to SWHI. According to Badger and White, writing continuously and teaching new words in sentences both aid in the development of writing skills (2000). However, this demonstrates that the respondents' understanding of a wide range of additional teaching methods for English-language written language skills is limited. Harrison & Warnke have provided an overview of such tactics (2004). Writers' workshops, shared writing, guided writing, dialogue journals, journal and logs, and language experience/writing are a few of them. Harrison & Warnke (2004) even noted a few writing assignments that could appeal to kids. Writing wall tales on posters, manila sheets, or large volumes is one of them, as well as writing stories, essays, and poetry; recounting or reworking stories; class diary entries; and writing about shared experiences. The conclusions differ from

those of American research on the goal of writing for SWHI by Conway (1985) and Williams (2004). When given genuine opportunity to write, deaf or hard-of-hearing students can and do write, according to a significant common pattern documented in the research. Williams (2004) added that strategies for teaching writing to hearing children could also work for deaf or hard-of-hearing students. The teachers don't seem to have looked into ways to teach writing to hearing students. The fact that approximately three quarters of the respondents had never attended any Continued Rehabilitation Educational (CRE) programs or any specialized training on education of SWHI would be the most plausible explanation for why the respondents had few strategies. Additionally, utilizing the observation schedule, it was tried to determine the quantity of compositions written each month. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of compositions written monthly

Class	No	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
4	1			-	
5	2			-	
6	2			-	
7	3				-

8	3				-
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According to Table 2's findings, the monthly number of compositions written by students was below average. Students are asked to compose at least one composition every week. The writing speed was insufficient for linguistic experience. They must write more often in order to develop good sentence construction and cohesive writing skills. According to Farooq, UL-Hassan, and Wahid (2012), learners struggle to combine two complete sentences as a result of the teacher's traditional approach to teaching grammar and the learner's lack of practice.

Conclusions

According to the study's findings, teachers of SWHI tended to rely more on conventional techniques like continuous writing and teaching new vocabulary by utilizing them in sentences. The results show that professors occasionally employ methods that are contrary to what students want, which negatively affects students' ability to master written language skills in English. As a result, teachers lacked enough awareness of the initiatives and tactics that may be employed to enhance writing among SWHI. This study is significant for instructors and curriculum designers since it shows that not all of the techniques they employ or suggest are necessarily suitable for SWHI.

Recommendations

The following suggestions have been made based on the results and conclusions of the study:

- It is advised that SWHI teachers regularly get in-service training on writing instruction methods and projects that might

help students' writing.

- In order to create activities and tactics that guarantee these pupils learn the material being studied, teachers must cultivate empathy for SWHI.

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