



An Effective Way of English Writing Skills of Grade 10 High School Students at Si Hlaung Village in Myanmar

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Abstract

The objectives of the research aim 1) to study the level of English writing skills of Grade 10 students at the high school in Si Hlaung Village, Yinmarbin Township, Sagaing Region, Myanmar, and 2) to propose effective ways to improve English writing skills of Grade 10 students in the same area. This research employed a mixed-method approach, including both quantitative and qualitative methods. For the quantitative part, the sampling groups were 20 students (10 male and 10 female) from the high school in Si Hlaung Village. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire focusing on grammar, sentence structure, coherence, and organization. The results showed that students' English writing skills were at a low to moderate level, with major difficulties in grammar and sentence construction. For the qualitative part, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 English teachers. The results of the interviews indicated that students lacked confidence and had few opportunities for writing practice. Teachers reported using peer feedback, group work, and basic writing exercises but lacked sufficient resources and training. The research proposes that effective strategies for improving English writing skills include using diverse teaching methods, integrating technology, creating a supportive learning environment, and providing regular feedback and teacher development programs.

Key Words: English Writing Skills, Grade 10 Students, Writing Difficulties, and Teaching Strategies

Introduction

English writing skills play a crucial role in students' academic and professional success, serving as a fundamental tool for communication, critical thinking, and self-expression. In Myanmar, particularly in rural areas such as Si Hlaung Village in Yinmabin Township, English writing skills are an essential component of the high school curriculum. However, challenges persist in achieving proficiency among students due to various factors



such as limited resources, inadequate teaching methods, and a lack of exposure to English outside the classroom. The transition to globalized education has placed increasing demands on Myanmar's education system to improve English language proficiency among students, particularly in writing. Writing is not merely about grammar and vocabulary; it involves organizing thoughts, expressing ideas coherently, and adhering to structural conventions. For Grade 10 students, who are at a critical stage of their education, effective writing skills significantly influence their overall academic achievement and readiness for higher education or career opportunities.

According to Haider and Chowdhury, CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) is ineffective due to constraints like the scarcity of qualified teachers in rural areas, and the absence of the ideal class size, resources, and teaching methods. While the majority of high school English teachers are qualified in terms of their educational backgrounds and training, only a small percentage of them have a strong background in the English language. Despite this, English proficiency among students hasn't improved. Because of their social standing, opportunities for higher education, and employment, students appear motivated to learn English, but they also appear to be afraid of it due to the teachers' systematic teaching techniques. (Haider, Z., M., & Chaowdhury, T.M, 2012)

At the personal, social, and international levels, language is crucial in the negotiation of power and relationships. English was well on its way to becoming a common language by the end of the twentieth century, and it was frequently used for international communication among those who did not understand this language and have English as a second or third language. Due to a number of factors, including colonial history, economics, information sharing, travel, and popular culture, English has truly become a global language. (Harmer, J., 2007)

Bryne (Bryne, D., 1979) defined writing as the process of turning our ideas into language. It is a very complicated talent that calls for both physical and mental effort on the writer's part. Writing is the last and possibly most challenging skill that students acquire, if they ever do, according to Walters. (Walters, L., 1983) The same sentiment is expressed by Bryne, who claims that writing takes deliberate mental effort and is neither simple nor automatic.

Dey, Sharma & Chawla, and Joshihave all highlighted the significant influence of location on English writing proficiency. Their studies revealed a notable disparity in the writing skills of students based on their locality. Specifically, students from urban schools

demonstrated higher performance in writing assignments compared to their rural counterparts. (Dey, S., 1991)

According to the studies conducted by Mohire a significant proportion of English teachers lacked professional preparation to effectively teach the subject. Additionally, Singh (1984) observed that teachers with postgraduate qualifications in English consistently outperformed non-postgraduate teachers in terms of teaching effectiveness. (Mohire, V.N., 1989)

Moreover, the lack of knowledge among teachers regarding various writing instructional methods hindered students' writing abilities. The analysis of teachers' linguistic and communicative skills concerning their classroom functions revealed that many teachers lacked sufficient writing ability. Although teachers demonstrated grammatical competence in evaluating pupil errors, their stylistic competence was comparatively lacking.

Objectives of the Study

This research paper employs both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the English writing skills of Grade 10 students in Si Hlaung Village, Yinmarbin Township, Sagaing Region, Myanmar. The study focuses on two primary objectives:

1. To study the level of English writing skills of Grade 10 students at the high school of Si Hlaung Village.
2. To propose ways to develop the English writing skills of Grade 10 students at the high school of Si Hlaung Village.

Research Method

The research method for this study adopts a mixed-method design, combining both qualitative and quantitative research elements. This method allows for a comprehensive investigation of the problems related to English writing skills among Grade Ten students, offering a deeper understanding of the subject matter and its impact on academic achievement.

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to thoroughly investigate the English writing skills of Grade Ten



students in Si Hlaung Village, Myanmar. The combination of survey data and qualitative interviews enabled a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing students' writing performance, including demographic, educational, and environmental variables.

Research Tools

The study utilized both quantitative tools (structured questionnaires) and qualitative tools (semi-structured interviews and classroom observations). Microsoft Excel was used for organizing and analyzing survey data, while thematic coding was applied to qualitative responses for pattern identification.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected through structured surveys and open-ended questionnaires administered to Grade Ten students and teachers. Interviews and classroom observations further enriched the dataset. Secondary data were obtained from academic journals, educational reports, and previous research studies relevant to English writing skills.

The research utilizes questionnaires to collect quantitative data from 20 Grade 10 students, assessing their proficiency in various aspects of English writing, including grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and coherence. Additionally, interviews are conducted with 5 high school teachers to gain qualitative insights into the challenges faced in teaching English writing and the strategies currently employed in the classroom.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential techniques (e.g., correlation analysis) in Microsoft Excel. Qualitative data, collected through interviews and open-ended responses, were transcribed and coded using a thematic analysis framework. Integration of both data types enabled triangulation of findings, ensuring validity and richer interpretation.

Finding of Research

1. Component I: Writing Experiences and Challenges of Teachers (20 Items).



Survey Question	Most Frequent Responses	Percentage of Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of Opinion
Which specific areas of English writing do you find most challenging for your students?	Organization and coherence	40%	2.8	0.48	Moderate
How often do you incorporate writing exercises or assignments in your English lessons?	Once a week	80%	2.8	0.45	Moderate
Which teaching methods or instructional strategies do you find most effective in improving students' writing skills?	Peer feedback and group discussions	60%	3.6	0.89	Moderate
How do you address individual differences in students' writing abilities and learning styles?	Small group instruction	60%	3.4	0.55	Moderate
Which writing-related challenges are influenced by factors outside the classroom?	Home environment and language background	80% (combined)	1.8	0.84	Moderate
How often do you integrate technology or digital tools to enhance students' writing skills?	Occasionally	80%	2.2	0.45	Moderate
How does the development of writing skills impact academic performance?	Neutral effect	40%	3.4	1.14	Low
How frequently do you collaborate with other	Occasionally	80%	2.2	0.45	Moderate



Survey Question	Most Frequent Responses	Percentage of Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of Opinion
teachers for writing instruction across subjects?					
Which resources or materials are most helpful in supporting English teaching?	Online writing tools or platforms	40%	2.4	1.14	Low
Does students' confidence in writing abilities impact performance?	Yes, to some extent	60%	2.0	0.71	Moderate
Have mass media tools helped reach disengaged students?	Agree	60%	3.6	0.55	Moderate
How do you ensure accessibility to mass media tools for all students?	Important	80%	3.8	0.45	Moderate
Have you encountered negative consequences using mass media tools?	Agree	60%	3.6	0.55	Moderate
How do you balance mass media tools with other methods?	Somewhat important	60%	3.4	0.55	Moderate
Advice for teachers using mass media tools	Important	60%	3.6	0.55	oderate
How do you involve students in selecting and using mass media tools?	Somewhat important	60%	3.4	0.55	Moderate



Survey Question	Most Frequent Responses	Percentage of Respondents	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of Opinion
How do you incorporate feedback from students on mass media tools?	Important	60%	3.6	0.55	Moderate
Ethical considerations in using mass media tools	Important	80%	3.8	0.45	Moderate
How do you stay updated on new mass media tools?	Important	60%	3.6	0.55	Moderate
How do you see the role of mass media tools evolving in the future?	Somewhat important	60%	3.4	0.55	Moderate

The survey results reflect the opinions of teachers regarding various aspects of English writing skills and the challenges faced in teaching them. Teachers identified organization and coherence as the most challenging area for students, and the use of peer feedback and group discussions was considered the most effective teaching strategy. Writing exercises were mostly incorporated once a week, and small group instruction was commonly used to address individual differences in students' writing abilities.

1. Interview Response Writing Experiences and Challenges of Teachers (5 - Questions)

Teachers believe that strong English writing skills significantly contribute to students' overall academic development and future opportunities. They expressed optimism that their strategies could help students improve.

Teachers emphasized the importance of motivation and engagement in students' success. To enhance motivation, they foster a positive writing environment by encouraging and cheering students.

1. Perceptions of Students' Writing Abilities and Challenges (10 Items)



Survey Question	Response Categories (Frequency & Percentage)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Opinion Level
Confidence in English Writing Skills	Very Confident (2, 10%), Confident (5, 25%), Neutral (12, 60%), Not Confident (1, 5%)	2.6	0.75	Moderate
Most Enjoyable Aspect of Writing	Expressing Ideas Creatively (3, 15%), Persuasive Arguments (3, 15%), Describing Events (9, 45%), Stories (4, 20%), Other (1, 5%)	2.9	1.09	Low
Positive/Negative Experiences in Writing	Strongly Positive (5, 25%), Somewhat Positive (4, 20%), Neutral (7, 35%), Somewhat Negative (4, 20%)	2.5	1.10	Low
Seeking Feedback on Assignments	Always (1, 5%), Often (6, 30%), Sometimes (10, 50%), Rarely (3, 15%)	2.8	0.79	Moderate
Helpful Writing Techniques	Outlining (5, 25%), Examples/Evidence (5, 25%), Sentence Variation (5, 25%), Peer Feedback (4, 20%), Other (1, 5%)	2.6	0.23	High
Confidence in Writing Tasks	Essays (3, 15%), Creative Writing (4, 20%), Letters/Emails (9, 45%), Reports/Summaries (4, 20%)	2.7	0.98	Low
Confidence in Writing Tasks (Repeat)	Essays (4, 20%), Creative Writing (6, 30%), Letters/Emails (8, 40%), Reports/Summaries (2, 10%)	2.4	0.94	Low
Importance of Writing Skills for Academic Performance	Very Important (4, 20%), Important (9, 45%), Neutral (3, 15%), Not Very Important (4, 20%)	2.4	1.04	Low
Self-Directed Writing Practice Frequency	Daily (2, 10%), Several Times a Week (3, 15%), Once a Week (6, 30%), Rarely (9, 45%)	3.1	1.02	Low
Improvement in Writing Skills Over the Year	Yes, significantly (1, 5%), Yes, Somewhat (13, 65%), No, Same (3, 15%), No, Worsened (3, 15%)	2.4	0.82	Moderate

The results of the survey on students' perceptions of their English writing abilities and challenges reveal the following key points:

Confidence in Writing: Most students rated their confidence as neutral, with only a small percentage feeling very confident.

Enjoyable Aspects of Writing: Describing events or experiences was the most enjoyable, while other aspects like expressing ideas or persuasive arguments were less favored.

Positive/Negative Experiences: Responses were mixed, with most students indicating neutral or somewhat positive experiences in writing.

Feedback-Seeking Behavior: Students often sought feedback but rarely did so consistently, indicating a moderate reliance on teacher input.

Helpful Techniques: Strategies like outlining, using examples, and varying sentence structures were widely appreciated.

Preferred Writing Tasks: Confidence was highest in tasks like letters and emails, with less confidence in essays and creative writing.

Importance of Writing Skills: Writing was considered moderately important for academic performance, though not universally valued highly.

Self-Practice Frequency: Students engaged in writing practice infrequently, with many practicing rarely outside class.

Skill Improvement: Most students felt their writing skills had improved somewhat over the year, though significant progress was less common.

Overall, students demonstrated moderate confidence and engagement in writing, with a need for enhanced motivation, strategy-focused teaching, and consistent practice.

1. Perceptions of Students' Writing Abilities and the Challenges (5. Questions)

Responses From Students

Challenging Writing Tasks: Students found tasks requiring creative expression and persuasive arguments particularly challenging due to difficulties in generating ideas and structuring arguments effectively.

Planning and Organizing Assignments: Most students relied on strategies such as outlining and using specific examples to plan and organize their writing effectively.

Impact of Feedback: Receiving insightful feedback positively influenced students' writing performance, improving their approach and understanding of effective writing practices.



Confident Writing Topics: Students felt most confident writing on familiar topics related to their personal environment, such as "My Parents" or "My School," as these resonate with their experiences.

Peer Feedback: Peer feedback was generally viewed positively, as students felt comfortable and supported by familiar peers, enhancing their motivation and enjoyment of the process.

In summary, students expressed mixed levels of confidence in their writing abilities but emphasized the value of structured approaches, relevant feedback, and familiar topics in overcoming challenges and building competence.

Result of Research Based on Objectives

Objective 1: To study the level of English writing skills of Grade 10 students at the high school of Si Hlaung Village

The findings from both teacher and student surveys reveal that the English writing proficiency of Grade 10 students in Si Hlaung Village is at a low to moderate level. Based on the student questionnaire (10 items), most students reported neutral confidence in their writing abilities, with only a minority expressing high confidence. Tasks such as writing essays or engaging in creative writing were generally found to be more challenging, while students felt more confident writing letters or emails, especially when the topics were personally relatable, such as "My Parents" or "My School."

Furthermore, students indicated infrequent self-practice, with 45% reporting that they rarely wrote outside of class. When evaluating writing improvement, 65% acknowledged some improvement over the year, though only 5% claimed significant progress. This suggests a gradual but limited development in writing skills.

Teachers' responses supported these findings. The most challenging areas identified for students were organization and coherence, as well as grammar and sentence construction. Writing exercises were typically assigned only once a week, and digital tools were rarely used, indicating limited exposure to diverse writing experiences. Teachers also observed that students lacked confidence and motivation, and external factors such as the home environment and language background significantly affected their performance.

Objective 2: To propose ways to develop the English writing skills of Grade 10 students at the high school of Si Hlaung Village

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Based on teacher and student responses, several strategies emerged as potentially effective for enhancing students' writing skills. Teachers recommended peer feedback, group discussions, and small group instruction as methods to address students' diverse learning needs. These approaches were found to be moderately effective and helped foster a collaborative environment for learning.

Interviews with teachers revealed the importance of motivating students through encouragement and creating a positive, supportive writing environment. Teachers emphasized that relevant feedback and student engagement were key to improving writing performance.

Students themselves identified helpful strategies such as outlining, using examples, and sentence variation, all of which contributed to better planning and organization. Additionally, they appreciated peer feedback for its emotional support and motivational value.

Conclusion

This study has explored the challenges faced by Grade 10 students in Si Hlaung Village, Yinmabin Township, Myanmar, in developing English writing skills, and has identified key factors affecting their academic performance. Through a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection, the research sheds light on significant areas of concern, including grammar, sentence structure, coherence, and organization in writing.

The findings reveal that students face considerable difficulties in generating ideas, organizing their thoughts, and producing coherent written work. Factors such as limited self-practice, low confidence, and external influences, including the home environment and cultural factors, exacerbate these challenges. Despite this, students recognize the importance of writing skills for academic success but often struggle with motivation and consistency in practice. Teachers, on their part, report that while they utilize strategies such as peer feedback and group discussions, there is still a gap in effective instruction tailored to the needs of individual students.

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