



Impact of Metacognitive Strategies on Creative Writing of ESL Students at College Level in District Lahore



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Abstract: *The main focus of the present research study was to find the impact of metacognitive strategies on the creative writing of ESL Students at the college level in district Lahore. Metacognitive strategies teach creative writing, develop confidence and enhance the critical thinking of ESL students. By using quasi-experimental research design the researchers observed the effects of metacognitive strategies on creative writing. Sixty ESL students from a private college were selected as the research sample these participants were divided equally into two groups. The control group was taught by means of the traditional method while the experimental group was taught by using metacognitive strategies. The pre and post-test questionnaire was used as a research instrument for data collection. The collected data was analyzed through SPSS and an independent t-test was employed to analyze the results of pre and post-test. The results showed that metacognitive strategies are more effective than the traditional method because it has a positive impact on ESL students' creative writing.*

Key Words: Creative Writing, Critical Thinking, Metacognitive Strategies, ESL Students, College Level

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Introduction

Through writing, we can express our feelings and emotions. We can convey information and knowledge. Writing is a mental act by using it we can discover ideas and can think about how to communicate. We can merge our thinking and ideas and convert them into a paragraph or statement for a dual process both impress and express. If our ideas and thoughts are clear in writing, it can produce

clarity in the mind of the reader and the reader can enjoy the writing by reading. According to Dana (1999) in his book the history of creative writing, he explains creative writing is the basic type of writing and plays a vital role to improve the critical thinking of students. Although creative writing is based on one's thinking and imagination it also covers the part of fiction and nonfiction areas of literature. George

Cram Cook was the first person who introduced the first creative writing course among the students of Iowa in 1896. His main concern was to urge the aesthetic sense of poetry among the students. So, in his class students practised creative writing to improve their writing skills.

To improve critical writing, different methods and strategies were applied to make it easy and time-consuming. Cer, (2019) conducted research to study the effects of metacognitive strategies on writing skills. According to this research metacognitive strategies develops the quality of writing by its process flow. This process flow is the basic part of metacognitive strategies. However, he found metacognitive strategies more effective rather than the others. These strategies are planned to improve critical thinking and develop self-confidence in the students of the English language. In the metacognitive strategies, the process of one's thinking that how a learner is thinking about the learning skill, plays a vital role to reduce anxiety and depression among the students. For example, when someone thinks about any task, he or she will be kept some questions in his mind regarding that task such as, what is it? How to carry it out? What will be the results? Its evaluation, validity, reliability, efficiency, resources, and failure and success all these things are included in these strategies. Through metacognitive strategies, one can enhance its cognitive process and understand how to use one's capability to maximize the learning process.

Statement of the Problem

There are different strategies that are used to teach English creative writing to ESL students. Scheller et al. (2017) stated that the use of a metacognitive strategy in order to get proficiency in English creative writing is very effective. Balta (2018) claims that the use of metacognition strategies has a lot of benefits as compared to other strategies to teach creative writing. Like every community, the

Pakistani community has its own dimensions, this research would give a better idea to our institutions, whether the use of creative writing and metacognitive strategies effects are the same in Pakistani context or different. Metacognitive strategies should be a part of the regular teaching method of English teachers. The methodologies of teaching creative writing should be devised in such a way that it is started at the school level and students will be more creative and useful when they reach a higher level of studies. Co-curricular activities related to creative writing can be planned in institutions to enhance creativity and productivity. The students performing well, in such events should also be recognized and rewarded. In this study, researchers focus only on the Pakistani community. This research would help teachers and students for choosing better strategies to learn creative writing at the standard level. This research is also helpful in developing confidence among the students and boosting their critical thinking.

Research Questions

The research was conducted to find out the answer to the following research question:

- What is the impact of metacognitive strategies on ESL student's creative writing?
- Metacognitive strategies or traditional methods which are better for creative writing?

Significance of Research

From the preceding research, we come to know in the Pakistani context no one worked on the impact of metacognitive strategies on creative writing at college-level ESL students. Therefore, the significance of this research is that it has filled the gap and has tried to present a new idea to cover and reimburse the problem of creative writing by using metacognitive strategies. This research work

is significant for a creative writing class. According to Dana (1999), creative writing is that part of writing which is neglected very badly and this research enhances the importance of creative writing and provides a solution to make learning easy. It is beneficial for English teachers to provide them with easy and effective strategies to teach creative writing in class. This research plays a vital role for ESL students of college level to achieve good marks in examinations.

This research increases the mental level of students to think about some things from a different perspective. This research helps to build self-confidence and motivate students to present their ideas openly. This research is beneficial for future researchers who are interested to get some new ideas about the strategies of creative writing. The findings and recommendations of this research work help the teachers and students in a better way. It also provides easy access to writers to improve their writing by adopting these strategies. This research guide college ESL teachers on how to teach essay writing, dialogue writing and short story writing in English class. ESL teachers of all classes and levels can also get benefits from this research by applying the same strategies to teach creative writing. This research is helpful for ESL students to develop the habit of creative writing and to understand its importance in literary society.

Limitations of the Study

The present study has given deep information to the ESL students of English creative writing through metacognitive strategies at the college level. This study also helps English teachers to teach creative writing through metacognitive strategies and its impact that would be positive. Creative writing is a vast field and it was difficult for researchers to research it in a short time, it was impossible for researchers to collect data from different colleges. Following are some research limitations. Firstly, the subject of

this contemporary research was only one private college. Secondly, research was conducted at selected colleges and the medium of instruction was English. Thirdly, the population and sample size were also limited. Lastly, the treatment period was also limited to only two months.

Literature Review

A literature review is valuable in helping to provide the research background and reveals what was previously done (Ahmad, Shahid & Farhat, 2023; Maitlo, Tumrani & Farhat, 2023). The review of the literature is contained in four parts, the metacognitive strategies, the previous research studies which have a positive impact on metacognitive strategies, and the previous research studies which have a negative impact, in the last learners' attitudes to words the metacognitive strategies are presented.

Metacognition comprises of together metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive strategies. Metacognition is one's aptitude to utilize previous data to plan an approach for pushing toward a learning task, take fundamental actions to give challenges, consider and evaluate results, and adjust one's system shifting (Flavell, 1979). Metacognitive data suggests how people can get knowledge about their mental processes to perform in different situations. While metacognitive rules suggest a change in individuals to make them able to control their organization in an effective way.

The following research displayed positive effects of metacognitive strategy on writing skills. Haffner et al., (2018) in their experimental research show that metacognitive is possible and provides initial proof for both the receiving and effectiveness. Saks & Leijen (2018) revealed a direct relationship between language learning strategies and learning outcomes based on learners' observations. It was explained that cognitive strategies have a

direct effect on learning results, whereas metacognitive strategies affect results indirectly. Bromley (2019) in his study analysed the instruction tool kit the results showed that the metacognitive strategy is helpful for learners. The suggestion says about metacognitive strategies have a positive impact on learning. Cer (2019) in his study investigated the effect of the "knowledge of cognition" and "self-regulation," which are processes of the metacognitive strategy for refining pupils' writing skills. In this study, 44 learners (21 controlled and 23 experiments) were included from an institute of the private sector. Learners of the experiment group were taught by using metacognition strategies, but the control group was taught in the old style. Findings displayed positive effects of metacognitive strategies. Teng (2020) conducted research on 120 Chinese EFL students to examine the effects of metacognitive strategies on creative writing. In this study two processes of metacognitive strategies were used one was group feedback guidance and the second was self-explanation guidance compared with a control group. This study explored the effects of the metacognitive method on students' creative writing, transfer ability, and metacognitive awareness. The results showed that group feedback guidance learners demonstrated the highest scores and metacognitive strategies strategy had positive effects on creative writing.

The research displayed the negative impact of metacognitive strategies on writing skills. McCarthy's (2018) from his research work pointed out that metacognition is not helping in improving performance in writing. From the above research, it becomes clear that every method of teaching cannot give only good results in all circumstances. Karlen, & Compagnoni (2017) conducted research on metacognitive strategy and its effects, the findings are showing no effective results as compared to other research.

Students' Attitude to Metacognitive Strategies

There is some research on the attitude of learners to metacognitive strategies. Feiz (2016) investigated the influence of metacognitive awareness on future English teacher's attitudes toward learning English in a Turkish context. The participants were 104, English teachers from a state university. The findings showed a statistically major relationship between the participant's perceptions of metacognitive awareness and their attitudes towards learning through metacognition. These results suggest that metacognitive responsiveness and taking sensible steps to understand the result in successful language learning. In another research by Jarrah, (2018) the findings indicate that these metacognitive strategies are helpful to show better results in writing. These strategies make learners self-regulated and more confident to achieve their targets in education. Abbasian, Darabad & Javid, (2016) explained the use of strategies and language learning to offer a possible relationship between strategy use and the attitude of learners to second language learning success. Levi, (2020) according to his research metacognition strategies is satisfied learners. All the researches show a positive and effective attitude of learners toward metacognitive strategies.

Research Methodology

The study of methods employed for data collection to resolve the research problem is known as research methodology (Ahmad, Maitlo & Rao, 2022). Boaz, (2018) stated if the methodology is clear, results will be clear he further says that the research design talks about different variables and methods of data collection. Therefore, it is important to be familiar with different designs of research and its use. In this quasi-experimental research, the quantitative design was used. This research was conducted in a private college in Lahore with the permission of the

head of the institute and for ethical consideration the college name was not mentioned. This experiment was of two months of treatment and the period of the program was spread over fifty working days after excluding the official and Sunday holidays.

The research was conducted on sixty ESL students of a private college in Lahore. There was a coeducation system in this college, gender is always considered an important factor for the teaching and learning process in every research work, so the researchers selected research participants equally from both genders. Their level of understanding was almost the same. For the experiment, the students were assigned to two groups and each had thirty students. One group was treated as an experimental group and the other as a control group. Metacognitive strategies were used to teach creative writing to the experimental group while the traditional method of teaching was used on the control group.

For the purpose of data collection, researchers made pre-test and post-test questionnaires. Ahmad, Iqbal, & Rao, (2023) for their research work used pretest and posttest questionnaires, the same technique was used by the researchers in the present research work. A writing test was conducted by the researchers as a pretest and posttest for the purpose of data collection. The findings of the test were analyzed by independent sample t-test. The researchers distributed questionnaires among the 60 ESL students of the 11th class to gather data, analyzed in numerical form and presented them in tables.

Results and Discussion

This part of the present study contains the demographic information of the research participants which comprises gender, locality and grade of the participants. The pretest and posttest results are presented and discussed in this part of the research article.

Demographic Information of the Participants

The demographic information of the participants includes the gender and locality of the research participants.

Table 1

Gender and Location and Grade of The Participants

Valid	Participants	frequency	Percentage	Total
Gender	Male	30	50%	Total 60 students
	Female	30	50%	
Locality	Urban	60	100%	
Grade	11 th	60	100%	

Table 01 shows that there were a total of sixty students, all students belonging to urban areas of Lahore city, and all the participants of the study were studying 11th grade. At this level, most of the students are capable of learning through metacognitive strategies.

Pre-Test results

An independent sample t-test was conducted to analyze the impact of metacognitive approaches on creative writing. T-test was employed to compare the mean of two independent populations. Here in this study, researchers examined the impact of metacognitive approaches on creative writing by two groups. One group was treated as an experimental group and independent variable metacognitive strategies were applied to teach dependent variable creative writing. The pretest was taken from both groups and the results were analyzed by independent sample t-test. The table is given below to represent the statistical data of the pretest:

Table 2

Statistical data of the Pre-Test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	30	19.1333	.97320	.17768
Pretest Group	30	18.8667	2.56949	.46912
Control Group	30	18.8667	2.56949	.46912

The calculation tells us about the no significant difference in the mean score of the experimental and control group. The mean score of the experimental groups was (19.1333) and the control group score was (18.8667). Hence the standard deviation of the experimental group was (St. Deviation

.97320) and the control group was (std. deviation2.56949). The term mean is used for the average calculation of the scores and standard deviation is used for the difference in scores from the means, while standard error means term is used to check the accuracy of the result.

Table 3

Independent Samples T-Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Pretest Score	Equal variances assumed	23.793	.000	.532	58	.597	.26667	.50164	-.73748	1.27082
	Equal variances not assumed			.532	37.153	.598	.26667	.50164	-.74962	1.28295

We find no noteworthy variance in T test in both groups' scores in pretest results as experiment groups (M=19.1333 SD=.97320) and controlled groups (M=18.8667 SD=2.65949).t (58) =.532, p = .597. So, the findings of the pretest suggest that the scores of both groups are almost the same before treatment.

Post-test Results

To find out the effects of metacognitive strategies on creative writing at the college level pretest and posttest were given and collected data were analyzed with the help of SPSS.

Table 4

Group Statistics

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
posttest	Experimental Group	30	31.3667	1.88430	.34402
	Control Group	30	21.0000	2.13348	.38952

The above table shows the group statistics results of the experiment and control groups. On the basis of the results of the posttest which have been presented in Table 3, it can be concluded that there was a significant

difference in the scores of the experimental group (M=31.3667, SD=1.88430) and the control group (M=21.0000, SD=2.13348) on the post-test.

Table 5

Group Statistics for Difference Between two Groups

Independent Samples Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	St. Error difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Posttest Score	Equal variances assumed	.262	.611	-19.948	58	.000	-10.36667	.51969	-11.40694	-9.32640
	Equal variances not assumed			-19.948	57.128	.000	-10.36667	.51969	-11.40728	-9.32606

The comparison was made by using a t-test to know the effects and no effects of metacognitive approaches on creative writing. Researchers find noteworthy variance in the scores of experiment groups (M=31.3667 SD=1.88430) and controlled groups (M=21.000 SD=2.133). $t(58) = 19.948, p = .000$. So, findings suggest that effects of metacognitive strategies have an immense impact on creative writing.

Discussions

As the results of the pretest displayed no noteworthy variance among the mean scores of the groups but after applying the metacognitive strategies a significant difference can be observed in the posttest results. The independent t-test showed a vivid difference between the participants of the control and experimental group. The findings of the present research disclosed the optimistic effects of metacognitive strategy on creative writing, similarly Stubbs (2007) in his research study indicated the positive effects of metacognitive strategies on learners. In this way, the researchers of both studies worked on developing the confidence of learners through metacognitive strategies. The results of the present research study also revealed that metacognitive strategies are more effective than the traditional method, similarly, Rahimi and Katal (2012) indicated

that metacognitive strategies are more effective rather than the traditional method because in writing one's own thinking was important and their study also support the present study by giving the positive effects of metacognitive strategies. Diaz, Ramos & Ortiz, (2017) in their research used metacognitive strategies at the college level and their results were quite similar to the present study and similarly the research was conducted at college level. Cer (2019) in his research work mainly focused on writing skills through the metacognitive strategy, self-regulation and cognitive knowledge the results of the present study are quite similar to this research work. In the research work of Wagaba, et.al (2016) the same research methodology was used pretest and posttest were conducted to identify the importance of metacognitive strategies as a piece of declarative and procedural knowledge.

The summary of the whole discussion is that these strategies intensify the learning style and improve the hidden abilities of ESL students, by employing these strategies students can share their ideas with confidence and can utilize their minds in a better way for a better purpose. The metacognitive strategies learning method is not a time taking and expensive method. So, for instructors, it is important only to have knowledge about the strategies and their

usage. These strategies are beneficial for ESL students and teachers side by side.

Conclusion

The present study mainly focused on the impact of metacognitive strategies on creative writing among ESL students of the private sector at the college level. Research findings revealed the optimistic effects of metacognitive strategy on creative writing. While comparing the results of the experimental and control groups in pretest and posttest one can observe the main differences. The use of creative writing strategies can make students more efficient in writing rather than those students who are practising through traditional methods of teaching. The researchers have conducted all the necessary procedures bearing in mind the mental state and ability of college-level ESL students. Metacognitive strategies help to teach creative writing in ESL classrooms to save time and develop confidence, and enhance the critical thinking of learners. Through metacognitive strategies not only teachers but also students can get benefits in education. For teachers, it is an easy way to teach the students and for students, it's an effective way of learning and practicing. The nutshell of the whole study is that metacognitive strategies should be applied in ESL classrooms to polish the inner abilities of the students and it has positive effects to teach and learn creative writing in an ESL classroom. Students have a positive attitude towards metacognitive strategies. They are eager to apply these strategies in writing to overcome mistakes in writing and save time

in final exams.

Commendations

- First of all, English teachers should have knowledge about the teaching strategies that which strategy is applied to writing and it is beneficial for learners.
- Another recommendation is that ESL instructors must have knowledge of creative writing and in which way it is taught to the learners through metacognitive strategies.
- Workshops should be arranged by the institutes to develop an understanding of the teaching strategies. Although researchers applied this strategy at the college level it can be applied at other levels as well.
- In institutes focus should be given to creative writing and do not consider as an informal way of writing.
- Proper guidance about the application of metacognitive strategies in ESL classrooms is given to teachers and students too, for better results in learning.
- Course activities related to metacognitive should be added to the syllabus because it is a demand of the new era, students want to study in a reformed method.
- Most learners don't like the old method of instruction. As in the present study, one can see the difference in the pretest and posttest results of students.

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