

Teacher's Perspectives about the Impact of Literacy and Numeracy Drive on the Writing Skills of EFL Beginners: A Study of Public Primary Schools Multan

Fajar Aziz¹, Abdul Bari Khan²

¹Cantt Public School College & Multan, Pakistan

²University Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia

Abstract: The study aimed to assess teachers' perspectives on the impact of the Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND) on the writing skills of beginner EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. The significance of this research lies in the initiative of the testing program, which has enhanced the quality of primary school education. The preliminary qualitative evaluations indicate that many districts are making satisfactory success with the Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND) program; however, no quantitative investigation has been conducted to assess the procedure. In the Multan district, the entire population of Public Primary School teachers is responsible for instructing Grade III students in LND courses, including Urdu, English, and Mathematics. For this purpose, simple random sampling techniques were conducted with the participants. Four Tehsils in the Multan district were utilized to select a sample of 250 teachers, practicing LND drive in Grade III. A survey was developed, employing a five-point Likert-type scale, in which including questionnaire's validity was ensured by through consulting experts, who provided valuable suggestions for improvement. Additionally, the questionnaire's reliability was assessed using SPSS software, resulting in a reliability coefficient of 0.83, which exceeded the threshold of 0.7, thus establishing internal consistency. Data were collected from the survey respondents, and descriptive statistics were employed for data analysis. The findings revealed that the LND program has significantly enhanced students' proficiency levels and their performance in literacy and numeracy at the school level. Since the implementation of the LND program, there has been a noticeable improvement in student performance.

Keywords: Teachers ' perspectives, Literacy and Numeracy Drive, Writing skills, EFL beginners

Email: fajarfatimaaziz@gmail.com

1. Introduction:

The foundation of a student's academic journey in the world of education is the learning of

language skills. Writing is one of these abilities that is particularly important since it is a means of communicating and evaluating thoughts, ideas, and knowledge. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is becoming more and more important in today's multicultural society for promoting connectivity and facilitating communication. The development of English writing abilities for EFL beginners in primary public schools frequently overlaps with larger educational efforts designed to improve literacy and numeracy.

A lively city in the center of Pakistan called Multan serves as a microcosm of this complicated educational environment. Primary public schools in the city serve a varied student body with varying degrees of exposure to the English language. By regional, national, and international educational goals, Multan's educational authorities have launched numerous literacy and numeracy campaigns over the years to strengthen the fundamental abilities in these key areas. These programs have impacted the lives of innumerable students, especially English as Foreign Language (EFL) novices, and it is crucial to understand how they have affected the growth of writing abilities.

Education, which serves as the cornerstone for the development of literacy skills, the acquisition of essential skills, and technological advancement, is a fundamental human right. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for education prioritize equitable access to high-quality education as a means to enhance people's quality of life. A quality education, according to the United Nations, ensures guaranteed learning outcomes and establishes connections between knowledge, skills, and behavior, all aligned with national education goals and contributing positively to society Lim et al [1].

Assessment plays a pivotal role in teaching and learning as it enables educators to evaluate students' performance and measure their progress. Initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), Education for All (EFA), and earlier programs have strongly encouraged nations to prioritize high-quality education, making student assessment a necessity SDGs [2].

The accountability system in education is essential for improving classroom instruction and student learning. The World Bank's 2020 education plan emphasized the importance of accountability in enhancing learning outcomes and the quality of education. In this context, testing emerges as a significant tool for assessing what students are learning. The fundamental premise of test-based education is to hold schools and teachers accountable for students' test results, thereby

driving improvements in the quality of instruction and enhancing student learning.

1.1 Background of the Study

Punjab, despite being one of Pakistan's most favored and recognized provinces, still faces educational challenges compared to other provinces. These challenges can be broadly categorized into issues related to access, quality, and equity within the provincial education system. In response to these challenges, educational reforms have been implemented to elevate the standard and quality of education in the province. These reforms aim to bring about systematic sector development, leading to improved learning outcomes, higher educational quality, increased enrollment, and better retention rates Khan [3].

The Punjab government launched the Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND) program to improve the quality of education in response to the dreadful state of education in the province. Several objectives to raise the standard of education have been outlined in the 2017 Education Policy. The primary goals of Policy 2017 National Education Policy [4] are to meet the needs of student learning (literacy, simple calculation, problem-solving, and verbal expression), to attain universally high-quality basic Education by [4] and to ensure and improve the quality of educational programs. The Secretary of School Education Punjab implemented the Quality Drive (QD) Initiative to teach Urdu, English, and Mathematics to students in grades 3 in public schools.

In recent years, the focus of provincial education reforms has shifted away from merely developing infrastructure, increasing enrollment, and ensuring retention. Instead, there is now a strong emphasis on enhancing learning outcomes and the overall quality of education. The emphasis on providing high-quality education to students is seen as crucial for their future success in life. Punjab is earnestly working to improve the low levels of learning among children attending public schools.

To achieve this goal, the Punjab government has introduced various initiatives to enhance students' learning outcomes in public schools. This includes measures such as appointing teachers based on merit across the province of Punjab. The curriculum taught in public schools has been updated with more advanced materials. Additionally, the government supports public school students by providing free textbooks to nearly 13 million students every year.

The foundational literacy and numeracy skills of students are assessed through the Literacy and

Numeracy Drive (LND), a monthly evaluation program for Grade III students enrolled in public schools throughout Punjab. In 2015, the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) and the School Education Department (SED) collaborated to develop a cost-effective tablet and PC-based application for student assessment. This tablet-based application is utilized by the school's monitoring and evaluation officer (MEA) to assess Grade III students' performance in English, Urdu, and Math, aligned with the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) Rietdijk et al [5].

In the context of Pakistan, literacy and numeracy are defined as not just the ability to read and write simple sentences but also the competence to comprehend what is being read and written, enabling individuals to effectively engage in society. The World Literacy Program and initiatives like Education for All (EFA) have sought to measure functional literacy and promote literacy and numeracy. The Indonesian government has implemented the Primary Literacy Program, which utilizes specific teaching methods to impart these essential competencies.

In 2012, UNESCO reported that Pakistan initiated its National Literacy Program (NLP), providing children with the opportunity to receive an education that aligns with specified standards. UNESCO emphasized the importance of implementing monitoring and evaluation processes to assess every aspect of the education system. UNESCO also played a role in developing assessment programs for evaluating literacy and numeracy skills, which provided accurate and valuable information UNESCO [6].

1.2 Framework of LND Program

The Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND) program has been in operation in Punjab since 2015 and was primarily established to assess the quality of education provided by schools. Monitoring and Evaluation Assistants (MEAs) are responsible for evaluating Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), which serve as a blueprint for the curriculum and measure the effectiveness of student instruction. To facilitate effective progress tracking, specialized equipment has been provided to MEAs. This equipment includes assessments in the form of Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs) covering Urdu, English, and mathematics, all accessible through built-in software developed by the Punjab IT Board. The questions were collaboratively created by the team behind the Chief Minister's Roadmap and the Punjab IT Board, with SLOs from the course outline as the foundation. Every month, an average of 49,000 government schools are visited, resulting in 2,400 visits and 14,000 student assessments conducted daily. The results of these assessments are published on a

dedicated website, and a district-wise ranking is established based on these outcomes. Stringent measures are taken against teachers and schools that consistently produce subpar results. Recently, all primary schools in Punjab have made the LND program their top priority, emphasizing its significance in improving the quality of education in the region.

The primary objective of the Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND) program is to enhance students' foundational literacy and numeracy skills, ultimately elevating the quality of primary education. This study's principal aim is to provide a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the LND program, particularly in the context of improving students' reading and writing skills. Before this research, there were no published studies available regarding the efficacy of LND and the perspectives of teachers regarding the program. This study serves as an initial piece of work, laying the groundwork for future research in this area. Its overarching goal is to assess students' academic progress, as reported by their teachers, and to examine other critical aspects, including enhancements in content proficiency (writing skills) and the Quality Improvement Assessment.

This study is conducted because it is dynamic and advanced, which is why it is elaborated to describe the gaps found in this research.

1.3 Contextual

Previously, the relevant research was conducted in the Qualitative method but not in the Quantitative, which is why the researcher conducted the topic in the Quantitative descriptive method. The previous Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND), research Qualitative method can be seen in the research paper entitled Teacher's Perception on the Impact of Literacy and Numeracy Drive of Rawalpindi Muzffar, [7].

1.4 Pedagogical

This research related to the Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND), was previously conducted in Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, and Gujranwala but not in Multan, which is why the teachers of the Public Primary School of Multan are not familiar with this research, because it's a new contribution. That's why the researcher conducted this research to find the perspective of teachers on the impact of Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND) on EFL beginners.

1.5 Theoretical

The researcher applied the theory of Constructivism by Lev Vygotsky, newly applied for the first to use the Quantitative descriptive method to find the perspectives of teachers on the impact of Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND) on the writing skills of EFL beginners, Multan.

1.6 Objectives

Objectives of the study were:

1. To investigate the perspectives of EFL teachers about the academic improvement in Writing Skills in learning English.
2. To investigate the perspectives of EFL teachers about Content Improvement in Writing Skills in learning English.
3. To investigate the perspectives of EFL teachers about the Quality Assessment of Writing Skills in learning English.

1.7 Research Questions

1. What are the perspectives of EFL teachers about the academic improvement in Writing Skills in learning English?
2. What are the perspectives of EFL teachers about Content Improvement in Writing Skills in learning English?
3. What are the perspectives of EFL teachers about the Quality Assessment of Writing Skills in learning English?

2. Research Methods and Techniques

This research adopted a quantitative descriptive survey design for data collection to assess the teacher`s perspective on the impact of LND drive on the writing skills of EFL beginners of Grade. In this study, the accessible population comprised all the teachers teaching basic literacy and numeracy subjects to class 3 in the 4 Tehsils of district Multan. The researcher selected the most appropriate survey type based on respondent availability and utilized closed-ended questionnaires that presented predefined response options, including multiple-choice questions

(e.g., yes/no) or responses on a Likert scale (e.g., Agree, Strongly Disagree).

The components of this sample are the ones that are the focus of the study. To form this sample, a random sampling technique specifically the lottery technique was employed, resulting in the selection of 250 teachers of Public Primary School Multan. To measure the effectiveness of the Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND) program, data were collected from respondents using a scale designed to evaluate the program's success Bilal, [8]. Initially, the scale consisted of 25 items measured on a five-point Likert scale. The scale underwent validation by three education specialists, resulting in some items being refined or removed. Ultimately, three parameters of the LND drive were selected: Academic Improvement (7 items), Content Improvement (Writing Skills - 10 items), and Quality Assessment of students under the LND program (10 items).

The researcher employed the standard deviation method to analyze the impact of Literacy and Numeracy interventions on the writing skills of ESL beginners. This method is commonly used by researchers to analyze data, evaluate the reliability of measurements, compare different groups or samples, identify outliers, and draw statistical inferences. A larger standard deviation indicates greater variability within the data set, while a smaller standard deviation suggests that the data points are closer to the mean, indicating less variability.

The scale was administered to 250 respondents. The rate of return was 90% due to the researcher's contacts with respondents. Data process and analysis usually imply a combined form of data to explain facts, classify patterns, and develop explanations related to the objective of the study. In this study, data were processed systematically after collection from different respondents. Data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics and analyzed data was presented graphically.

3. Results and Discussion

This section comprised of the graph measuring, the teacher's perspective about Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND) on the writing skills of EFL beginners. Different aspects of the gains in student performance were addressed and examined as a result accordingly. These are three variables given according to the results are given below:

3.1 Figure 1: Academic Improvement

The academic improvement statistics related to the perspective of teachers on Literacy and Numeracy drive with their exact mean and deviation are given below;

3.2 Statistics of Academic Improvement

The cluster statistical bar (two variables), graph on the “perspectives of teachers on the Impact of Literacy and numeracy Drive (LND) on Writing Skills” over here;

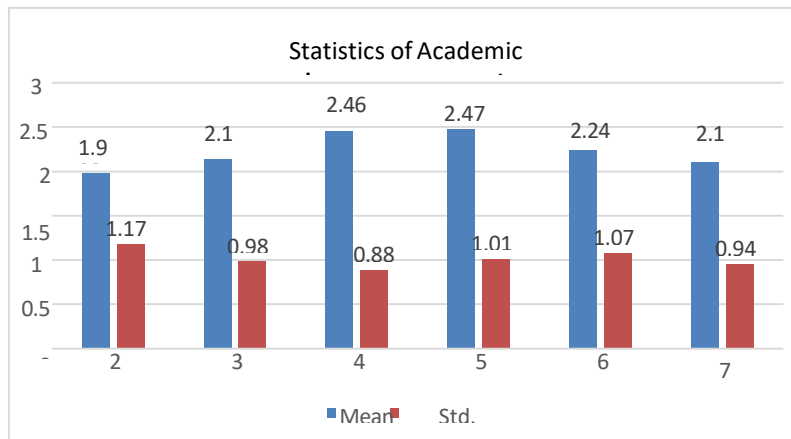


Figure 1 shows the two different variables in this bar graph have been shown, mean score and standard deviation of the statistics of academic improvement, in blue order can be seen that the mean score is presented in this graph, and in red order it can be seen that the standard deviation is presented according to the parameters including LND.

The parameter of Content Improvement is given in the bar graph with derived mean and deviation, in the first parameter it can show that the mean (blue) value is 1.98, and std. Deviation (red) is 1.17703. And same is the defined order in the second one, the two variables (cluster variable) form define exact results. Then after the 10th parameter defined results including, mean score 2.1 and std. Deviation 0.94953.

3.4 Figure 2: Content Improvement

The Content Improvement (Writing Skills) statistics related to the perspective of teachers on

Literacy and Numeracy drive with their exact mean and deviation are given below;

3.5 Statistics of Content Improvement (Writing Skills)

The cluster statistical bar (two variables), graph on the “perspectives of teachers on the Impact of Literacy and Numeracy Drive on Writing Skills”, to recognize the results over Content Improvement (Writing Skills). This section comprised the graphs measuring the performance of the students under the LND program. The Bar Graph is mentioned below to give complete and exact information according to the analysis.

Given Below;

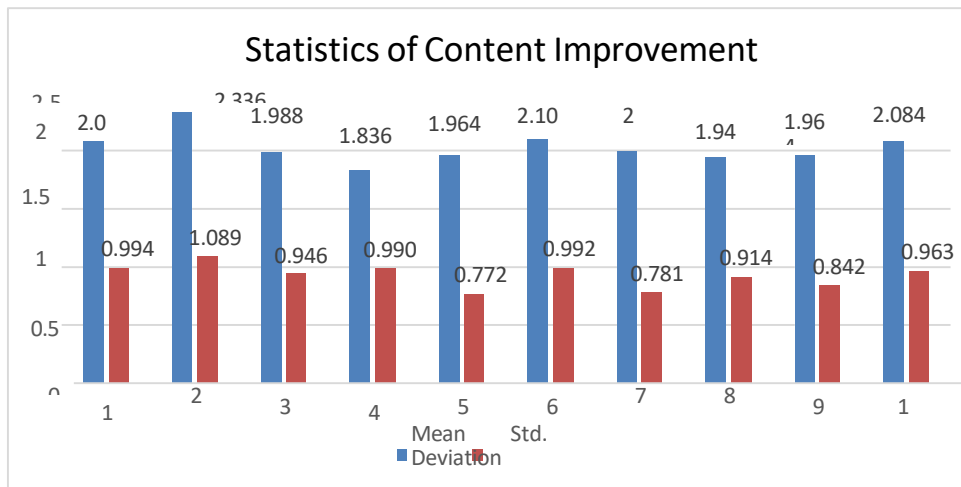


Figure 2 shows the two different variables in this bar graph, the mean and standard deviation of the statistics of Content Improvement (Writing Skills), in blue order, we can see the mean in this graph, and red order we can see the deviation according to the parameters including LND.

The parameter of Content Improvement is given in the bar graph with derived mean and deviation, in the first parameter it can show that the mean (blue) value is 2.08, and std .deviation (red) is 0.99477. Same as the defined order in the second one, the 2 variables (cluster variable) form define exact results. And then after the 10th parameter defined results mean 2.084 and std. Deviation 0.96367.

3.6 Figure 3: Quality Assessment

The Quality Assessment statistics related to the perspective of teachers on Literacy and Numeracy drive with their exact mean and deviation, are examined in the form of two variables including

mean and std deviation.

3.7 Statistics of Quality Improvement

The cluster statistical bar (two variables), the graph on the “perspectives of teachers on the Impact of Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND) on Writing Skills”, to recognize the results of Quality Improvement. This section comprised the graphs measuring the performance of the students under the LND program. The Bar Graph is mentioned below to give complete and exact information according to the analysis.

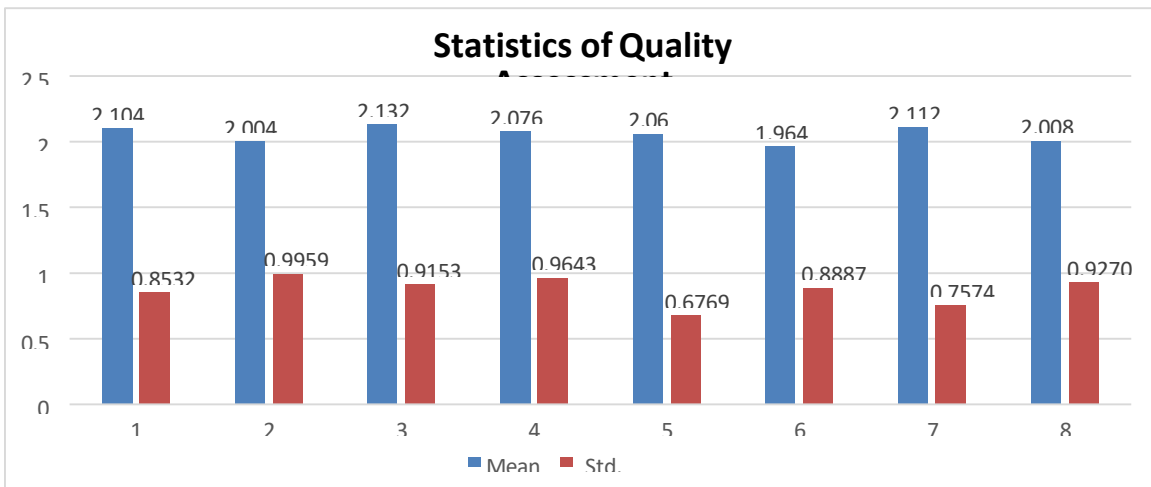


Figure 3 shows the two different variables in this bar graph, the mean and standard deviation of the statistics of Quality Improvement, in the blue order we can see the mean in this graph, and in the red order we can see the deviation according to the parameters including LND.

The parameter of Quality Improvement is given in the bar graph with derived mean and deviation, in the first parameter it can show that the mean (blue) value is 2.104, and the std deviation (red) is 0.85329. Same as the defined order in the second one, the 2 variable (cluster variable) form defines exact results. And then after the 10th parameter defined results including, mean 2.008 and std deviation 0.92702.

4. Conclusion:

Understanding the demands and requirements of school education at the district level is made easier, by including the idea of Literacy and Numeracy drive (LND) to quality education in the

study to examine the LND regulations. The data collected from respondents via questionnaires provided numerous insightful discoveries. It was discovered that the instruction given to primary school students under the LND program aids in the development of information and abilities.

Enhance the standard of the educational system in schools. The study's findings demonstrate that the Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND) program has significantly raised student performance across the three variables that were examined. This program made a positive change in students' attitudes toward literacy and numeracy practices.

It enhanced the academic performance of the students in Urdu, English, and Mathematical areas, and content improvement, and quality improvement helped the students in other class-level subjects. Student`s functional skills were also improved, and they are more likely to practice these skills in their daily routines life. Hence LND practice is amongst the good available practices to make the students proficient in basic skills and a solid step towards quality education at the primary level.

4.1 Recommendations

1. The third-grade student's science literacy shall be monitored and evaluated by the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB).
2. Student learning is more affected by educational interventions that improve classroom instruction than by those that concentrate on structural or accountability issues Zulfianai et al [9].
3. Improving the monitoring system in the education sector is crucial for raising educational quality, using visual images, and more innovation in the LND drive.

References

- [1]. Lim, C. K., Eng., L. S., Mohamed, A. R., & Ismail, S. A. M. M. Relooking at the ESL reading comprehension assessment for Malaysian primary schools. *English Language Teaching*, **11(7)**, (146-157) (2018).
- [2]. United Nations. (2015). *transforming our world: The agenda for Sustainable Development*. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. (Original work published 2012) (2030).
- [3]. Khan, K. (2018). Punjab, Pakistan: Using open school data to improve transparency and accountability ethics and corruption in education. International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).

- [4]. Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan. National Education Policy (2017-2025).
- [5]. Rietdijk, S., Janssen, T., Weijen, V. D., & Bergh, D. V. H. Improving writing in primary schools through a comprehensive writing program. *Journal of Writing Research*, **9(2)**, (173-225) (2017).
- [6]. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. National Literacy Program, Pakistan (2012).
- [7]. Muzaffar, G., & Phil, M. Public school teacher's perception on the impact of literacy and numeracy drive: A case study of Rawalpindi (2019).
- [8]. Bilal. Students' achievement under literacy and numeracy drive program: A case study of Faisalabad district. *Webology*, **18(6)**, (3440-3451) (2018).
- [9]. Zulfiani, Z., Suwarna, I. P., & Miranto, S. Improving students' academic achievement using the ScEd-ALS Android-based. *International Journal of Instruction*, **14(2)**, (735-756) (2021).