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Developing Writing Skills by Andragogy Approach at Tertiary Level ESL Classroom

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Abstract

The majority of students at college level, especially those in non-English speaking countries, are known to have difficulty communicating in English. The main issue is the teacher's incapacity to choose the most effective teaching strategy for their lessons and classroom exercises. Additionally, choosing the right approach to educate college students in developing writing skills seems lacking. On a philosophical standpoint, the categories of teaching approaches are andragogy and pedagogy. For adult learners the andragogy can be applied, while younger learners are taught through pedagogy. College level students are classified as adult students based on their age; thus, the objective of this research is to review how the andragogical approach might be used to teach writing skills. It is a quantitative descriptive study and the data are collected through experimental test. The findings showed that the majority of teachers use pedagogy when teaching English, especially when cultivating college-level grammar skills. According to the researcher, adult learners can benefit from an andragogical approach, particularly when it comes to teaching writing skills.

Keywords: Andragogy, ESL, grammar, competency, adult learners

Introduction

Grammar is the basis of language which has a major impact on the language abilities of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Effective communication requires knowledge of proper grammar and vocabulary as well as its application. As a result, grammar instruction is crucial and has been included in curriculum. Learning English as a second or foreign language on your own is challenging; preparation and strategy are essential. Teachers are crucial in helping students become proficient in the English language. For the most part, teachers are responsible for assisting pupils in becoming more proficient in their language. Consequently, it is essential that educators have the maximum level of English language competency. Before they start teaching, it is essential to make sure that teachers have a solid understanding of English grammar. To do this, the researcher developed a course on English grammar with the goal of utilising andragogy to assess the course's efficacy among undergraduate students. The researcher used an experimental approach to determine how well andragogy fosters grammatical competency.

Andragogy

Adult learning theory, or adult SLA in general, appears to get little attention in adult ELT texts, despite

the fact that several aspects of the ESL curriculum have been criticised. The lack of interdisciplinarity in adult SLA and adult learning studies is noteworthy, considering the relatively low number of adult-specific studies in the fields of ESL and SLA, as well as the remarkably high prevalence of adult ELLs globally. Before exploring their sites of contact, it is essential to understand the history of andragogy and its underlying ideas.

This study specifically looks at the use of andragogy, a set of teaching concepts for adult learners that was first popularised in the US by Malcom Knowles in the 1960s, in connection with adult ESL curricula (Mews, 2020). The six guiding principles of andragogy are the learner's need to know, self-concept, prior experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation to learn (Knowles et al., 2020). Given the many age-specific factors that influence adult learning performance, these adult-focused teaching practices should definitely be considered when developing textbooks for adult ELLs.

Writing skills are very essential in today's society for both everyday situations and career opportunities. English has long been regarded as a second language throughout India, particularly in remote and rural parts of TamiNadu, due to its extensive use in many aspects of daily life, such as government, education, and business.

In general, it's critical to keep in mind that pupils in a classroom are diverse in terms of their aptitudes, viewpoints, motivations, prior knowledge, and learning styles when teaching language. These student differences must be taken into consideration while teaching writing skills since the development of writing abilities requires the development of numerous linguistic components. In order to help students become proficient in using the target language for communication as soon as possible, teaching the fundamentals of writing is a challenging task that calls for active participation in a variety of real-world activities in which students play significant roles under the teacher's supervision.

As a result, there is continuous debate on methods for improving the effectiveness of the learning process. One of the numerous elements that must be taken into account while choosing the finest one to accomplish learning objectives is the age of the students. Young learners and adult learners are the two age-based groups into which students can be separated. This leads to the division of methods into two categories: pedagogy methods and andragogy methods.

College students, given their age, are unquestionably adult learners, and an andragogical approach is appropriate for the educational process.

Malcom Knowles popularised the term 'andragogy' to differentiate adult education from pedagogy or child education, a concept that dates back to early 1800s. Thus, Ekoto and Gaikwad noted that Kapp coined andragogy in Europe, Lindeman introduced it in America, and Knowles popularised it in the West. The core principles of andragogy are students' readiness to learn, their cumulative and growing learning experiences, self-directed learning, and the shift from subject-centred to performance-centred learning. Teaching in adult learning contexts might be more training-oriented, training exercises can be less structured, and the instructor's job changes from imparting knowledge to serving as a mentor and guide, which calls for a wider range of techniques and abilities from the teacher. Conventional lectures and seminars must address particular industry concerns through talks, role plays, case studies, and practical exercises, many of which are experimental in character. Group work and conversations are frequently used effectively. The method shifts the focus from theoretical knowledge to the knowledge's practical application.

Numerous studies on the andragogical approach have been conducted. An investigation into the existence of andragogical abilities in foreign language graduate programs was initiated by Kusic (2017). Sanger&Pahlova described (2016), "The goal of the research study is to determine how graduate students use andragogy. Finally, the use of andragogy to encourage active learning in Russian adult education." Furthermore, an andragogical strategy to developing faculty communication skill in a foreign language for international operations was studied by Volchenkova (2015). The aforementioned literature concentrated on using an andragogical technique that did not relate to English language proficiency in writing, speaking, reading, or listening. Therefore, there is not enough research on the use of an andragogical method to teaching writing skills at the undergraduate level. As a result, this study examines the application of an andragogical approach through descriptive qualitative research.

The select college-level students participated in this study. A qualitative descriptive method involves a deliberate selection of sample and circumstances by the researcher. To offer profound understanding and a comprehensive grasp of the

study, the researcher has chosen the particular materials and approach.

Sample

The study comprised a group of undergraduate pupils, the total number of participants was 80 of which female 49 and male 31.

Methodology

In order to verify the efficacy of andragogy, the researcher employed an experimental approach, which involved selecting a group of students and administering pre- and post-tests. A test conducted on a single group both prior to and following treatment. Twenty modules make up the English grammar course that the researcher created. Every module covers a different aspect of English grammar and includes study guides, homework, and tests. The pre-test was given by the researcher to gauge the participants' starting proficiency in English grammar. Following the pretest, andragogy was used to teach the students the English grammar concepts. Following the conclusion of the course, the post-test was given. The pre-test and the post-test consisted of 25 questions each based on the topics that were dealt with in the modules.

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the pre-test score of control group and experimental group.

There is no significant difference between the post-test score of experimental group and control group.

There is no significant difference between using pedagogy and andragogy in developing grammatical skills.

Analysis and Findings

To determine the difference between the experimental group and control group students' grammatical competencies in pre-test and post-test scores, t-test was applied.

Testing Hypothesis 1

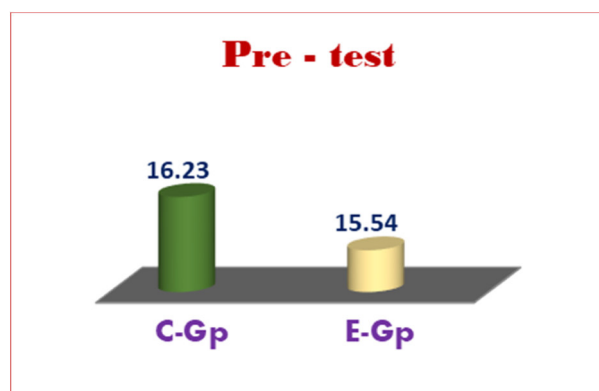
H₀: There exists no specific difference between the pre-test mean values of the control and the experimental group students in writing skills.

H₁: There exists specific difference between the pre-test mean values of the control and the experimental group students in writing skills.

Comparison of the pre-test scores of the Control and Experimental groups students.

Table – 1

Pre – test			Mean	N	SD	
Control Group			16.23	40	1.96	
Experimental Group			15.54	40	1.87	
Paired t – test						
Paired Result	Mean	df	Calculated ‘t’ value	Table ‘t’ value	p value	Decision
	0.69	78	1.61	1.994	0.05	H ₀ : Accepted



From the above data it is inferred that the calculated 't' value is 1.61 ($p < 0.05$), which is lower than the table value of 1.994. Hence the H_0 is accepted. It is calculated that there is no specific difference between the pre-test mean values of the control and experimental group students. The rationale is that both groups of students were taught using the pedagogy and were not given any particular approach prior to the pre-test. As a result, the pre-test mean values for the two groups are similar. The graphic displays a comparison of the mean values for the two groups.

Testing Hypothesis 2

H_0 : There exists no specific difference between the post-test mean values of the control and experimental group students in writing skills.

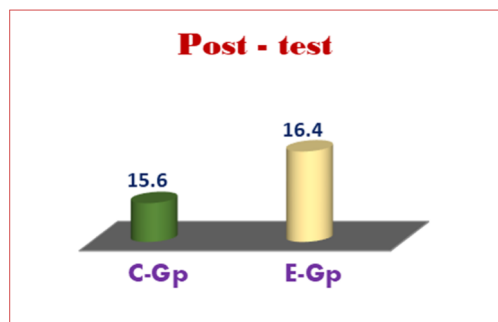
H_1 : There exists specific difference between the post-test mean values of the control and experimental group students in writing skills.

The post -test scores of the Control and Experimental groups students' writing skills in English

Table - 2

Post - test			Mean	N	SD	
Control Group			15.6	40	1.72	
Experimental Group			16.4	40	1.65	
Paired t – test						
Paired Re- sult	Mean	df	Calculated ‘t’ value	Table ‘t’ val- ue	p value	Decision
	0.8	78	2.12	1.994	0.05	H ₀ : Rejected

From the above data it is inferred that the calculated 't' value is 2.12 ($p < 0.05$), which is greater than the table value of 1.994. Hence the H_0 is rejected. It is calculated that there exists specific difference between the post-test mean values of the control and experimental group students. The rationale is that the control group students were taught using the pedagogy approach, whereas the experimental group students were taught using the andragogy approach prior to the post-test. As a result, the two groups' mean values do not correlate similarly in the post-test. The graphic displays a comparison of the mean values for the two groups.



Testing Hypothesis 3

H_0 : There exists no specific difference between the pre and post-test mean values of the control group students in writing skills.

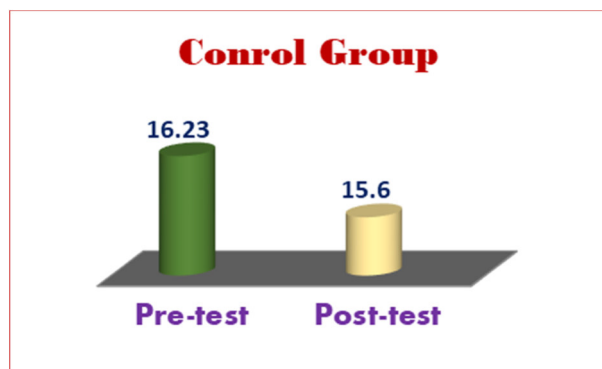
H_1 : There exists specific difference between the pre and post-test mean values of the control group students in writing skills.

Comparison of the pre-and post-test scores of the Control group students

Table - 3

Control Group			Mean	N	SD	
Pre-test			16.23	40	1.96	
Post-test			15.6	40	1.56	
Paired t – test						
Paired Re- sult	Mean	df	Calculated ‘t’ value	Table ‘t’ val- ue	p value	Decision
	0.63	78	1.59	1.994	0.05	H ₀ : Accepted

From the above data it is inferred that the calculated 't' value is 1.59 ($p < 0.05$), which is lower than



the table value of 1.994. Hence the H_0 is accepted. It is calculated that there is no specific difference between the pre and post-test mean values of the control group students. The rationale is that students in the control group were taught using the pedagogical approach and did not get any special treatment prior to the administration of either test. Consequently, the control group students' mean scores on both tests are similar, and the post-test shows no change. The graphic displays a comparison of the mean values from the two tests.

Result and Discussion

The outcomes obtained from the experimental study conducted at ESL classroom among college level students and they are divided on the four basic principles of andragogical approach, which is used by the researcher in teaching and learning. According to analysis, it is identified that there exists specific difference between the post-test mean values of the control and experimental group students in writing skills, it is because of the implication of andragogy in teaching and learning.

Self-directed Learning

According to the researcher's observations and interview among teachers and students, debating is the best teaching strategy for language teaching. According to one response, "The teacher asks us, which one do you prefer for learning about the grammar? Grammar rules or useful exercises? Since functional activities are more important to us, the entire class has decided to employ them. Based on this assertion, the researcher found that students are actively choosing the learning strategies they will employ when developing their writing abilities in the intensive English program. This finding showed that most of the program's classes use self-directed learning to help students improve their writing abilities. According to Merriam and

Caffarella, self-directed learning is a type of education where students are primarily in charge of organising, carrying out, conducting, and assessing their own learning activities. According to Knowles et al., adult learners must take charge of their own education since self-directed learning experiences are more successful in helping them develop an awareness of their self-concept. This is known as the self-concept assumption of andragogy. The teacher's function in an intensive English program class is to facilitate learning; in this capacity, the instructor views students as capable of self-development and self-direction.

Students Learning Experience

The majority of students in this program are improving their writing skills. Students in intensive English programs are not viewed as having no past information, but rather as having prior knowledge. All of the student participants attested to this. A pupil stated, "The teacher asked about our experience before joining this program, such as our experiences in high school, after knowing the background of us, the teacher recommends some material for us, and we decide the material." This result led the researcher to conclude that the demanding English curriculum had used the concept of students' cumulative and growing learning experience. According to Knowles et al., andragogy maintains that adults have more life experience than children or teenagers, which allows them to apply and draw from knowledge more readily. Effective learning will therefore benefit from these experiences.

Students' Readiness to Learn.

The ready idea was used in the experimental study. It is evident from the interview's outcome. "One of the tasks that the teacher assigns us for speaking skills is how to conduct an interview with an expert," the students stated. "I believe this relates to our major, psychology, as psychology requires us to know how to interact with others, especially in English." "The topic in my class is related to my department, as I am majoring in family law, and the lecturer chose the topic about divorce, adoption, and others," the other student continued. According to Taylor, as a person ages, their readiness to learn becomes focused on the goal of developing their social responsibilities. This is predicated on the ready to learn assumption, which holds that adults want knowledge that is immediately relevant to their daily lives and job experiences. Being prepared to study requires that the learner understand the significance of the sub-

ject.

Subject-centred to performance-centred.

The researcher learnt from the interview that the intensive English classes used for performance-centred learning. According to Taylor, a person's perspective on time shifts as they get older from one of postponing the application of knowledge to one of using it right away. Consequently, their approach to learning turns from subject-centred to problem-centred. The student backed it up by saying that "the lecture tasks are always in performance, even if we do them in front of the class or we have to record it and upload it on YouTube." "My task in speaking class is mostly a performance, such as storytelling, drama, or telling the other people how to make something," the other student continued.

Conclusion

The findings and discussion indicate that the andragogical approach is the best method for teaching writing skills to adult learners. because college students can benefit from this method. Applying the andragogical method requires awareness among teachers and students at college level. As said by Jost Reischmann (2024), "The positive aspect of this concept was the new awareness that adults are able to learn even at a higher age- self – evident for most of us today." Understanding the realities and need, future research will focus on enhancing speaking, listening, and reading skills through an andragogical approach. Although the researcher did not use specific tests for students' writing skills towards this strategy, this study looks at students' engagement, feedback, and reflections regarding the andragogical approach in developing writing skills.

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