

# Developing Productive Skills Through Receptive Skills – A Cognitive Approach

eTale 2022



Communication plays an important role in every field of life. Language is used to communicate and express oneself to get ideas and to connect with persons. There are four basic skills of learning English language such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Cognition refers to the mental activities like thinking, remembering, memory, learning, comprehension, perception, motivation and using language. Cognitive approach means the understanding and learning of information. Cognitive learning is about developing true understanding and is a way of learning that helps the learners to use their brains more effectively. The configuration of thought processes and psychological activities like problem solving and decision making from early childhood to adulthood is called as the cognitive development. This article deals with the ways and means of enhancing the speaking skills by intensive practice, writing through different activities and improving the receptive skills of the learners through cognitive approach.

**Author: S. Sreena & M. Ilankumaran**

Source: Sreena, S. & Ilankumarun, M. (2018). Developing productive skills through receptive skills – A cognitive approach. *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*,

- Language is a tool for communication and the way to interact with people to regulate their social behaviour.
- The transmission and interchange of ideas, facts, feelings or action is known as the process of communication.
- Language serves as the universal medium for conveying the common facts and feelings of everyday life.
- This paper concentrates on importance and barriers of the communication skills.
- The development of productive skills by the receptive skills is widely highlighted.

### **Communication**

- Communication is derived from the Latin word “communicare” or “communico” which means “to share”.
- Communication is an exchange of words and meanings through ideas, facts, feelings and actions.
- Communication is a two-way process of sending and receiving messages.
- Communication is done through words, actions, signs, objects or a combination of all these in a communication environment, such as classroom.
- A teacher makes use of activities that are specially designed to incorporate several language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- Through daily activities, teachers provide learners with opportunities to develop each skill.

### **Significance of English language and language skills**

- English is a unique language, and it is the only language that links the whole world together.
- Language skills are divided to productive skills and receptive skills.
- Productive skills are speaking and writing, and they may also be called as active skills.
- Learners who possess efficient productive skills are able to

produce something. • Receptive skills are listening and reading, and they are used to extend knowledge and skills.



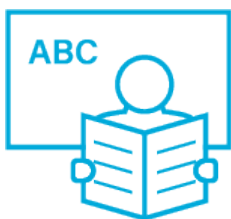
## **Cognitive approach to learning**

- A cognitive approach to learning has been used to explain the mental activities and they are influenced both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and the outcome is the learning of a person.
- Thinking is considered the most important cognitive skills of a learner. It is a mental process of considering or reasoning about something, and it helps to read, write and communicate effectively and very quickly.
- Critical thinking makes a person able to form opinions by looking at the facts behind an argument and also helps easily sort relevant information from the irrelevant. • Proper thinking exercises, such as argumentation with someone, help to improve the critical thinking of a person.
- Learning is an important cognitive skills.
- Learning to learn teaches a person how to develop and intimacy of learning and that will help a person to acquire new skills and quickly expand the knowledge of many subjects.
- Memory is one of the most important cognitive functions in a person's activities, and it can be divided to verbal and visual memory according to the way the information is acquired to the memory, as well as to sensory memory, short term memory and long term memory according to how long the information has to be remembered.
- Remembering of learned things helps a lot to develop the communication skills of a learner.
- Cognitive perception is the way in which a person deals with information from the environment using senses.

- Perception is the process of absorbing things, organizing it in the brain and making sense of it.
- Reading is one of the most common examples of visual perception.
- Attention is also a cognitive process, and it avoids distractions in the environment in order to focus on what is important.
- Attention and perception are the cognitive processes of an expert in learning in the productive skills of communication.
- Motivation promotes an interest in the studies and directs behaviour towards particular goal.

### **Problem solving and decision making**

- Problem solving is a cognitive process of human brain that investigates an immediate result for a given problem or finds a way to reach the ultimate goal.
- There are various steps to solve a problem while learning something.
- First, the learner needs to identify the problem; second, the learner must understand the nature of the problem; third, the learner needs to take different perspectives to understand the problem; fourth, the learner has to organize the available information and allocate resources; fifth, the learner needs to document the progress regularly; finally, the learner evaluates the result to find out if it is the best possible solution to the problem.
- The selection of a belief or a course of action among several different possibilities is considered as the decision making process.



### **Implications**

- To improve the listening skills, students need attention and concentration. For these the teacher can give them task after conducting the class. An answer key may be given to them and ask them to correct their own answers and to record their own answers and then their own scores.
- If the learners develop their listening and reading skills through certain practice, they are sure to get a confidence to speak in any situation.

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# Building Students' Evaluative And Productive Expertise in the Writing Classroom

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If students are to move from being recipients of feedback to intelligent self-monitoring, they need to take responsibility for their learning. Instructional programmes should provide students with authentic opportunities to monitor and improve the quality of work during production. Three elementary teachers were observed during the teaching of a genre based writing unit. Observation revealed qualitative differences in the opportunities created for students to gain understanding of expectations, engage in evaluative and productive

activities, and make decisions about their writing. These three cases show that developing students' evaluative knowledge and productive skills in writing involves adoption of Assessment for Learning (AfL) as a unitary notion and a radical transformation of the traditional taken-for-granted roles and responsibilities of teachers and students.

**Author: Eleanor M. Hawe & Helen R. Dixon**

Source: Hawe, E.M. & Dixon, H.R. (2014). Building students' evaluative and productive expertise in the writing classroom. *Assessing Writing*, 19, 66-79.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2013.11.004>

- AFL is part of everyday practice by teachers, students and peers that seeks, interprets and responds to information from dialogue, demonstration and observation in ways that enhance learning. The aim is for students to become autonomous, self-regulating learners.
- It is no longer sufficient or fitting for teachers to be the primary or sole source of feedback. This runs the danger of developing and maintaining dependence on others for information about progress and achievement. Instead, teachers and students should collaborate to construct achievement and effect improvement.
- Development of students' evaluative and productive expertise is contingent on three conditions: students need to understand the goals of learning and what constitutes quality work, compare current performance to what is expected, and have a repertoire of strategies to modify performance as necessary.

### **Developing students' evaluative and productive expertise in writing**

- The most effective way for learners to grasp the nature of a complex activity such as writing is through direct experience creating, evaluating, and revising work.

- Students are deliberately inducted into the art of making substantive and comprehensive appraisals of their own and peers' work during production to make improvements and promote further learning.
- Central is the development of shared understandings between teachers and students and among students about the goals of writing and what constitutes quality when writing a particular kind of text.
- Teachers are encouraged to share or create learning goals with students in the form of learning intentions and use success criteria, rubrics, models or exemplars to communicate what counts as achieving these goals.
- Quality in writing is reflected in and determined through all-things-considered holistic judgements where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.
- Constructing text requires the writer to revisit and revise at a whole-text level and address the more mechanical aspects of their work.
- The first process involves scoping the work to get a feel for its overall quality; the second pays attention to particular attributes or properties of the work.
- As they engage in evaluative activities, students learn to make holistic, multi-criterion judgements, justifying these concerning salient properties that may (or may not) be included in the manifest criteria.
- Quality feedback provides information about progress and learning in relation to goals and expectations; encourages dialogue between the teacher and student and between students about the substantive aspects of learning; helps students develop a repertoire of alternative moves or strategies; promotes positive motivational beliefs; and enhances self-esteem.
- Teachers must establish an environment where students can freely exchange views about texts and mutually construct meaning thoughtfully and reflectively.
- Common types of writing lessons such as conferences and writing circles allow student-writers to interact with

and craft meaning for readers and receive audience feedback.

- Peer feedback is a socially situated dialogic process where students work together, in pairs or small groups, to construct achievement and encourage improvement.
- Engaging in peer feedback can lead to and is the precursor of “intelligent self-monitoring,” a state whereby students generate information, during learning, about the quality of their performance.



## **The study**

This meta-analysis draws on but dramatically extends the two previous meta-analyses of single-subject strategy instruction research in writing. The primary research question of this revThis research was conducted in two sequential phases, with participants in phase two selected purposively from all who participated in phase one. The aim of phase one was to investigate teachers’ beliefs and knowledge about feedback and to investigate their perceptions of practice. Phase two focused on the roles of the teacher and learners in the feedback process and the nature of opportunities provided for students to develop evaluative and productive knowledge and expertise.

## **Method**

Studies were included if they involved grades 1–12 students and provided data to calculate the effect size. Overall, 119 documents were found, from which 88 were suitable. Studies were cIn phase one, 20 teachers participated in a semi-structured interview which tapped into teachers’ conceptions about the nature and role of feedback in the enhancement of



learning; beliefs about their role and that of learners in the feedback process; and the strategies and practices teachers utilised and ascribed importance to within the feedback process. In phase two, the case studied was teachers' use of feedback during writing, bounded in time and space. The three teachers who participated in the second phase were Kate, Marama and Audrey (pseudonyms).

### **The case of Audrey**

- Audrey teaches the fifth grade.
- She used three types of productive activity – planning for writing, developing a plan into a first draft and producing a “finished” version ready for public viewing.
- She hoped students would develop understanding and skill in the structure and organisation of ideas and spend significant time refining and re-crafting their writing.
- Her focus was on a single, product-oriented goal, “I am learning to write a narrative for a young child.”
- The learning intention and success criteria had the potential to restrict opportunities for students to develop the required evaluative knowledge and expertise necessary to make judgements about their productive attempts.
- However, despite the required elements in the narrative, Audrey invariably judged students' work as needing further attention to reach the required standard, which only she knew.
- Failure to share these tacitly held expectations with students resulted in misalignment between the evaluative judgements made by students and those made by Audrey.
- Feedback was often framed as a directive to be carried out.
- There was little evidence of student voice or dialogue between Audrey and individual students.

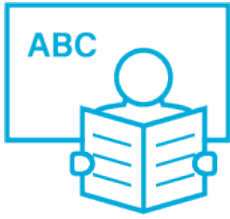
### **The case of Kate**

- Kate teaches the seventh grade.
- Her students had the task of producing a single frame cartoon followed by a short comic strip.
- The class brainstormed features of cartoons and comics and how authors got their message across to readers.
- Kate recorded the ideas on the class whiteboard, and in addition, she distributed a more formal assessment rubric.
- Through this rubric and the ideas on the whiteboard, the students were exposed to the complexities when making evaluative judgements and effective decisions about their work.
- Constructed using a series of descriptors, the rubric specified achievement at four levels of attainment: skilled, competent, developing strength and having difficulty.
- Kate provided students with both formal and informal opportunities to see and discuss others' work at various stages of production.
- At the end of the unit, students were asked to make multi-criterion judgements about their works and the works of others through the completion of a formal evaluation.
- At the start of the lesson, possible differences between one level of attainment and another were brought to students' attention, as was the need to work holistically.
- The class was brought together to discuss notions of quality contained within the criteria that were easily identifiable, those that were more difficult to ascertain, and those apparent in the cartoons but not overtly captured in the rubric.
- Students were asked in pairs to make a formal appraisal of peers' work and compare these judgements against the self-assessments. Students were observed debating and discussing decisions made about the quality of work produced, providing justifications for their

conclusions.

## **The case of Marama**

- Marama teaches the eighth grade.
- She aims to help students negotiate the writing process and improve their writing.
- Throughout teaching the poetic writing unit, she drew attention to the poetic form and processes involved in producing a poem.
- At the start of the unit, the goal was “to effectively prepare for poetry writing,” whereas when a majority of the class had completed drafts of their poems, two new goals were introduced – “to edit and rework” and “to critique my own writing.”
- Students were asked to work in small groups and make judgements about a poem written by a student of similar age from another class, regarding the “use of similes, alliteration; rhyme; repetition; metaphor,” and then they shared their judgements with the class. Following this activity, students similarly critiqued their own work-in-progress, highlighting evidence of the five devices and making annotations about their use.
- Rather than directing students to make changes to their work, Marama posed questions and drew attention to salient features of their work.
- She aimed to build an atmosphere where the kids value what others have to contribute and where constructive criticism and its benefits were brought to students’ attention.
- Students were encouraged to reveal to their peers what they were finding difficult, what sort of trouble they were experiencing with the intent of getting help to overcome the identified difficulties.



## Conclusions

- AFL is comprised of a set of inter-dependent strategies that teachers employ during the regular flow of teaching and learning with the dual objectives of supporting and furthering student learning, and developing autonomous, self-regulating learners.
- These strategies entail the promotion of students' understanding about the goal(s) of learning and what constitutes expected performance, generation of feedback by students and their teachers about the relationship between current and desired performance, student engagement in peer feedback and self-monitoring, and the taking of an action by students to effect improvement.
- Students are no longer the objects of their teacher's behaviour; instead, they are animators of their own effective teaching and learning processes.
- Teachers must have the volition and ability to share their tacitly held guild knowledge with students, so they come to embrace a concept of quality generally comparable to the teacher.
- One of the most effective ways for students to become insiders in writing and develop identities as autonomous writers are through involvement in the creation, evaluation and revision of texts during production.
- Critical to developing students' evaluative and productive expertise is an understanding of learning goals and what constitutes quality in a piece of writing. How learning goals/intentions, success criteria, and rubrics are framed influence students' understanding of writing and the writing process and direct their behaviour.

- Teachers need to share their tacit knowledge about quality writing at all stages of the writing process so students can become attuned to the latent-to-manifest translation process. The limitations are using a fixed set of criteria.
- Students develop their evaluative and productive knowledge and expertise as they participate in accurate appraisals of their own work and the work of their peers. Understanding what constitutes quality in texts is acquired through first-hand experience in evaluating such results.
- Both Kate and Marama viewed students as insiders and as autonomous writers. Their students participated in teaching and learning processes and decision-making by adopting pedagogical practices that furthered their learning and that of their peers.
- Students are cast as partners in the learning process instead of passive automatons who respond to their teacher's directives.
- Formal and informal opportunities for peer assessment, peer response and self-monitoring must be deliberately embedded into writing lessons.

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**Effective  
Handwriting  
Multi-modal,**

**Beginning  
Instruction:  
Consistent**

# Format for Two Years, and Linked to Spelling and Composition

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In Study 1, the treatment group (33 first graders) received Slingerland multi-modal (auditory, visual, tactile, motor through the hand, and motor through the mouth) manuscript handwriting instruction embedded in systematic spelling, reading, and composing lessons. In comparison, the control group (16 first graders) received manuscript handwriting instruction not systematically related to other literacy activities. The treatment group improved significantly more than the control group on dictated spelling and recognition of word-specific spellings among phonological foils. In Study 2, new groups received either the second year of the manuscript (N = 29) or introduction to cursive instruction in second grade (N = 24) embedded in the Slingerland literacy programme. Those who received the second year of manuscript handwriting improved more on sustained writing than those who had only one year of manuscript instruction.

**Author: Beverly Wolf, Robert D. Abbott & Virginia W. Berninger**

Source: Wolf, B., Abbott, R.D., & Berninger, V.W. (2017). Effective beginning handwriting instruction: Multi-modal consistent format for two years and linked to spelling and composing. *Read Writ.*, 30(2), doi: 10.1007/s11145-016-9674-4.

- Many teaching practices have evolved over the years simply based on teacher creativity, insight, and experience, which often have not had the benefit of research approaches for evaluating their effectiveness.
- One example is the widely used practice of multi-sensory teaching.
- Despite the wide use of the Slingerland methods, controlled research has not yet been used to evaluate its effectiveness, which is one goal of this study.
- A second goal is to call attention to the multi-modal methods employed in Slingerland methods.
- Children are encouraged to a) attend to visual cues by looking at letters, auditory cues by listening to the letter names or their sounds, and kinaesthetic cues by touching and tracing letterforms with their index finger; and b) engaging their motor output systems by hand in holding the writing tool with a proper pencil grip and by mouth naming letters they write and saying the sounds that go with the letters.
- We recommend embedding handwriting instruction in a systematic instructional programme that teaches handwriting for transfer to word reading, word spelling, sentence construction and text composing and comprehension.

## **This study**

This study focused on typically developing writers in general education classrooms.

- Study 1 evaluated whether first graders who were taught handwriting systematically using Slingerland methods to transfer handwriting skills to spelling and composing improve more in multiple writing skills than those taught without Slingerland methods.
- Study 2 evaluated whether second graders who received the same Slingerland training as the treatment group in Study 1 would improve more than those taught a new

handwriting format in second grade, i.e., cursive (joined letters) handwriting.

### **Slingerland instruction (Slingerland, 2008)**

- Slingerland instruction integrates teaching handwriting with oral and written language instruction through daily modelling and practice of skills across levels and modes of language.
- Each lesson at the first grade level begins with learning to write – teaching, practising and reviewing letters.
- In the auditory activities, the students listen to the teacher's oral instruction and pronunciation of letter names, letter sounds, and spoken words. Instruction begins with a brief review of phonic elements used in the lesson (integrating letters and sounds). Students encode (spell) words (combining sounds with letters), add affixes (morphology), and write phrases, sentences, and paragraphs (syntax and text).
- In the visual activities, students practice decoding written words. The teacher guides students through successive steps that help them develop phrase concept “chunking,” comprehension skills, and fluency for written letters, words, sentences and text.



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### **Methods**

Study 1 Participants were 33 first graders from one school (treatment group) and 16 first graders from two other schools (control group). For both groups pretesting occurred in the second month of the school year and post-testing in the ninth



month. The measures used in pre-test and post-test included alphabet writing copying a paragraph, word choice, composition prompt narrative writing, and dictated spelling. The treatment group received Slingerland instruction with manuscript (unjoined letters) handwriting embedded in structured language activities. After initially receiving 30 minutes of daily manuscript handwriting instruction, the treatment group received 45 to 60 minutes of daily phonics, spelling, and written language instruction in addition to instruction in reading groups. The control group received non-Slingerland handwriting instruction. In the control group, spelling and reading instruction were not integrated with writing.

Study 2 Second graders in two different schools received one of two contrasting treatments: a second year of manuscript handwriting instruction ( $n = 29$ ) or a first year of cursive handwriting instruction ( $n = 24$ ). The same measures of handwriting, spelling, and composing used in Study 1 were given a pre-test and post-test in Study 2.

## **Results**

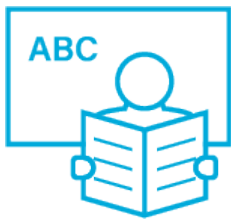
### **Study 1**

- Both groups improved in alphabet over time.
- Because there were group differences in the alphabet in Time 1, it was used as a covariate in other analyses.
- There was a significant group by time interaction (treatment effect) on both spelling measures. Those in the treatment group either improved more than the control group (word choice spelling) or improved while the control group decreased (dictated spelling).

### **Study 2**

- There was a treatment effect (significant time by group interaction) on the copy task when the alphabet writing task was used as a covariate.

- When the alphabet was used as a covariate, the second year of continuing manuscript handwriting improved sustained handwriting over time needed for completing written assignments.
- There was a significant time effect for all spelling and composing measures, meaning that all improved across the year.



## Conclusions

- The hypothesis that first graders who received Slingerland structured language instruction would show more gains than the controls in handwriting skills was partially supported.
- Two spelling measures – word choice and dictated spelling – showed treatment effects.
- Overall, the results show the benefits of continuing handwriting instruction with the same format beyond grade 1 into grade 2.
- However, all second graders showed improvement from beginning to end of second grade (significant main effect for time) on sustaining handwriting and multiple spelling measures.
- The primary effects for groups showed significant individual differences in learners and are likely to affect individual students' response to instruction in real-world classrooms.
- The research findings provided evidence for the Slingerland method for teaching handwriting linked to spelling and composing.
- A method of providing handwriting instruction embedded

in other literacy activities, which previously was thought to be needed only for students with specific learning difficulties, has been shown to benefit typically developing writers in the general education classroom.

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# Literacy and Child Development in a Contemporary African Society

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The author proposes that the literacy practices of a community reflect the cognitive affordances of the script onto particular speech varieties in a sociocultural system. Most research on children's literacy in Zambia has focused on individual literacy as a set of measurable competencies that can be assessed independently of context, construing language variety or instructional input as extraneous variables. A more integrated focus on literacy as a socially distributed practice in the context of a multilingual African society highlights cooperative learning and flexible communication across language boundaries.

**Author: Robert Serpell**

Source: Serpell, R. (2020). Literacy and child development in contemporary African society. *Child Development Perspectives*.

- Children's opportunities to acquire competence in reading, writing, and understanding texts are distributed unevenly across socioeconomic sectors, posing a challenge to applied research- and evidence-based policy.
- A sociocultural theoretical framework is proposed for understanding the relationship between literacy and child development in the historical context of sub-Saharan Africa and the region's relations with the rest of the world.
- Literacy is construed as a socially distributed cultural practice within which communication is mediated by the cognitive affordances of particular languages, scripts and technologies.
- Children are introduced to the practice through the participatory appropriation of a system of meanings in institutional settings that reflect the community's history.



### **Theoretical and historical framework**

- The cognitive work of written communication is socially distributed among participants and scaffolded by technology.
- In learning to read and write, children discover the possibilities for communication afforded by script.
- By allocating graphic symbols to represent elementary speech sounds, an alphabet can map the words of any

natural language onto a small set of letters.

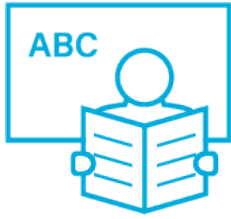
- In Zambia, children learn to decode in two ways: Bantu languages, which have a transparent orthography, and English, with much more opaque orthography.
- Societies in which bi- or plurilingualism is prevalent tend to assign different social functions and status to different speech varieties; speakers combine different types flexibly in a single utterance with code-switching or translanguaging.
- Becoming literate expands a child's communicative competence and provides opportunities for participating in cultural practices.
- Enrolling children in institutionalised basic schooling is designed to prepare them to enter those adult communities of literate practice through the participatory appropriation of a system of meanings that informs the world of literate practices.
- In most African nations, formal schooling was first imposed by Christian missionaries from Western societies as a method for "civilising" Africans and later consolidated by colonial administrations.
- Zambia's current public education curriculum is deeply infused with Western cultural hegemony, specifying as principal learning objectives a set of competencies deemed conducive to success in a modern, industrialised economy.
- English is the language of power in Zambian society.
- The various indigenous Bantu languages are preferred for informal everyday discourse and religious worship.
- Nowadays, initial literacy instruction is offered in one of seven indigenous Bantu languages designated by zone.
- English is introduced gradually, first as a subject in grades 2 to 4, then as the principal medium of instruction.



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## ResultEmpirical research in Zambia

- A study in the 1990s compared learning outcomes of fifth-graders from ciNyanja-speaking families on either side of the border between Zambia and Malawi. The Zambian children had received initial literacy instruction in English, whereas the children in Malawi received the first four years of instruction in ciNyanja. The Malawians scored much higher on a test of reading comprehension in ciNyanja, and no difference was found in a test of English.
- Studies generally support the growing consensus among policymakers that using indigenous languages is an essential adaptation of the Western model of institutionalised public basic schooling (IPBS) for effective mass schooling in Africa.
- The pedagogical rationale for providing initial literacy instruction in a familiar language is to build on a child's existing communicative competence.
- Older children may play a more critical role than parents in supporting young children's language and literacy development. Many mothers have less advanced formal education than their children.
- In addition, a more cooperative approach to learning in schools may be adopted. For example, one method uses a classroom seating arrangement in which small groups of learners face one another in learning pods, and the teacher orchestrates within-group interactions.



## **Policy implications**

- If primary school teachers are to serve effectively as “bicultural mediators,” they may need training in the use of a “meta-language” to articulate the interrelated concepts of sound, letter, syllable, and word, drawing learners’ attention to how the rules that govern spelling and decoding differ between the language of power and their familiar indigenous languages.
- In a plurilingual society, instructional practices for early literacy may benefit from adopting a more flexible approach to nurturing plurilingual communicative competence, including hybrid forms, from ensuring pupil involvement in classroom practice, and hence a learner-driven and centred pedagogy.

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# **A Meta-Analysis of Single-Subject Design Writing Intervention Research**

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In this meta-analysis of single-subject design writing intervention studies, 88 studies in which it was possible to calculate an effect size were located. Nine writing treatments were identified as effective. These were strategy instruction for planning/drafting, teaching grammar and usage, goal setting for productivity, strategy instruction for editing, writing with a word processor, reinforcing specific writing outcomes, prewriting activities, teaching sentence construction skills, and strategy instruction for paragraph writing.

**Author: Leslie Ann Rogers & Steve Graham**

Source: Rogers, L.A. & Graham, S. (2008). A meta-analysis of single-subject design writing intervention research. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100(4), 879-906. DOI: 10.1037/0022-0663.100.4.879

- Many children do not learn to write well enough to meet classroom writing demands.
- Concerns about writing are not limited to elementary and secondary schools; college instructors estimate that 50% of high school graduates are unprepared for college-level writing demands.
- At school, weaker writers are less likely than their more skilled peers to use writing to support and extend learning in content classrooms.
- Their chances of attending college are reduced, as writing is used to evaluate many applicants' qualifications.
- At work, writing has become a gateway for employment and promotion.



- Why do so many students not write well enough to meet grade-level demands?
- One possible reason is that schools do not do an adequate job of teaching this complex skill.
- The National Commission on Writing (2003) offered the following recommendations: double time students spend writing, assess their writing progress, use technology to advance the learning and teaching of writing, and better prepare teachers to teach writing.
- The impact of these recommendations is likely to be reduced if teachers do not use effective instructional practices.

### **Need for a meta-analysis of writing interventions tested via single-subject design studies**

- A practical approach for identifying effective writing practices is to conduct systematic reviews of writing intervention research.
- With meta-analysis, an effect size is computed for each empirical study investigating a specific treatment. It then is averaged across studies to provide a summary statistic on the intervention's effectiveness.
- However, only two meta-analyses have computed effects sizes for treatments tested via single-subject designs, and they only examined a single treatment: teaching strategies for planning/revising.
- Thus, the primary purpose of this study was to conduct a more extensive meta-analysis of single-subject design writing interventions to identify effective writing practices for students in grades 1–12.

### **What is a single-subject design study?**

- In single-subject design studies, each participant serves as their own control, with performance before and during or after intervention repeatedly measured to establish performance patterns before treatment and

compare performance patterns across experimental phases (e.g., baseline versus treatment).

- One manipulation for establishing experimental control involves the introduction and withdrawal of treatment.
- A second manipulation involves the staggered introduction of the treatment. For example, treatment is implemented with one student to determine whether it influences their performance predictably. Then the treatment is executed with another student to determine whether the pattern is replicated. This systematic delay in introducing the treatment continues until all students receive instruction.
- Experimental control is established only if performance on the dependent measures is stable during each testing phase. There is no trend in the pattern of baseline performance in the direction predicted by the intervention.
- In addition, experimental control is not established until at least three demonstrations show that the manipulation had the predicted impact.
- Single-subject design examines the effectiveness of treatment at the individual level.
- External validity is established by systematically replicating effects across multiple participants, locations, and researchers.

### **Why a meta-analysis of single-subject design studies is important**

- First, the meta-analyses of true- and quasi-experimental investigations of writing interventions have identified only 12 interventions that improve the writing of elementary and secondary students.
- A meta-analysis of single-subject design writing interventions has the potential to broaden current evidence-based recommendations.
- Second, a meta-analysis of single-subject design studies

also has the potential to strengthen, undermine, or nuance the trust that can be placed in one or more of the 12 writing treatments identified as effective earlier.

- Third, most of the true- and quasi-experimental writing intervention research has been conducted with students representing the full range of writing ability in a typical classroom. In contrast, single-subject design studies often involve students' experiencing difficulty.



## **The study**

This meta-analysis draws on but dramatically extends the two previous meta-analyses of single-subject strategy instruction research in writing. The primary research question of this review was, which writing practices tested via single-subject design procedures are effective with students in grades 1–12?

## **Method**

Studies were included if they involved grades 1–12 students and provided data to calculate the effect size. Overall, 119 documents were found, from which 88 were suitable. Studies were categorised based on treatments used, and summary statistics were calculated only to those categories that included at least four studies. The ten treatment categories were: strategy instruction (planning/drafting), teaching grammar/usage, goal setting for productivity, strategy instruction (editing), word processing, reinforcement, prewriting activities, sentence construction, strategy instruction (paragraph construction), and self-monitoring.



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## Results

### Strategy instruction: planning/drafting

- Twenty-five studies examined the effectiveness of teaching strategies for planning/drafting specific types of text.
- Typically, students use specific features of the target genre to help them generate and organise possible writing ideas.
- Of these 25 studies, 21 had elements as a common outcome measure.
- Teaching students a planning/drafting strategy greatly impacted the number of essential genre elements in their writing, maintained over time. It also had a moderate impact on enhancing the generalisation of elements from an instructed genre to an uninstructed one.
- Teaching students a planning/drafting strategy greatly impacted productivity and quality during or immediately following instruction. In addition, students generally maintained productivity gains.
- Strategy instruction effectively enhanced the number of elements, written output, and quality of students' writing; the effects for elements and productivity were maintained over time.

### Teaching grammar/usage

- Four studies evaluated the effectiveness of teaching grammar/usage.
- Teaching grammar/usage included peer directly teaching capitalisation skills to classmates to teachers instructing on adverbial phrases and possessives to correct capitalisation, subject/verb agreements,

conjunctions, incomplete sentences, and run-on sentences.

- Outcome measures on these studies focused on the correct use of grammar.
- Directly teaching grammar/usage had a moderate effect on improving grammar skills.

### **Goal setting for productivity**

- Seven studies examined the impact of setting goals.
- Goal setting ranged from teachers encouraging students to exceed their previous writing performance and receiving immediate feedback on their success to teachers setting a goal for how much students would write. Students placed a star on a public chart if the goal was met.
- Productivity was the standard outcome measure for these studies.
- Goal setting for productivity had a large to moderate effect on increasing writing productivity.

### **Strategy instruction: editing**

- Five studies examined the effectiveness of strategy instruction for editing.
- Errors corrected was the typical outcome of these studies.
- Teaching an editing strategy had a large to moderate effect on correcting errors in writing.

### **Word processing**

- Five studies evaluated the effectiveness of word processing.
- Four of the five studies used productivity as the outcome measure.
- Word processing had a moderate effect on increasing students' productivity.

## **Reinforcement**

- Seven studies examined the effectiveness of using reinforcement to enhance writing performance.
- Four of the studies included productivity as a standard outcome measure.
- Reinforcement had a significant effect on students' writing productivity. However, the overall quality of the studies was not strong.

## **Prewriting activities**

- Four studies examined the effectiveness of prewriting activities.
- Prewriting activities included using a computer prewriting outline to generate and organise information, using a graphic organiser to create ideas before persuasive writing, and learning to use a story web to generate ideas prior to writing
- Three studies included writing quality as a standard outcome measure.
- Prewriting had a negligible effect on improving writing quality.

## **Sentence construction**

- Five studies examined the effectiveness of teaching sentence construction skills.
- The studies used complete sentences as a standard outcome measure.
- Sentence construction was an effective practice in increasing the percentage of complete sentences produced by students. However, the quality of the studies was poor.

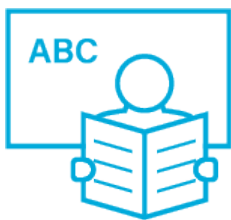
## **Strategy instruction: paragraph construction**

- Five studies examined the effectiveness of teaching students strategies for constructing paragraphs.

- Writing elements was used as an outcome measure on four of the studies, and it involved determining whether the basic parts of a paragraph were evident and correctly used.
- Teaching strategies for writing paragraphs had a significant and positive impact on the schematic structure (i.e., elements) of students' paragraphs. However, the studies were of poor quality.

## Self-monitoring

- Eight studies examined the effects of self-monitoring.
- Productivity was used as an outcome measure in seven studies.
- Self-monitoring had only a small effect or no effect. However, the quality of the studies was not good.



## Conclusions

- Writing is a critical skill in an advanced technological society.
- Ensuring that students become skilled writers involves teachers' use of effective writing practices.
- Recommendations:
  - Teach students strategies for planning/drafting both narrative and expository text. This is effective with struggling writers in grades 2–8 and typical writers in grades 4–8.
  - Teach grammar skills to struggling writers directly.
  - Set clear and specific goals to increase students'

writing productivity.

- Teach students strategies for editing their compositions.
  - Make it possible for students to use word processing as a primary tool for writing.
  - Reinforce students for their writing productivity.
  - Engage students in prewriting activities for gathering and organising ideas in advance of writing.
  - Teach students how to form complex sentences.
  - Teach students strategies for writing different types of paragraphs.
- When implementing the recommendations, it is helpful to continually monitor the treatment's effects to see whether it is effective under new conditions.

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# Task-Focused Behaviour and Literacy Development: A Reciprocal Relationship

eTale 2022



The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of task-focused behaviour on reading fluency, spelling and



comprehension and to examine the role of the different literacy skills in subsequent task-focused behaviour. Finnish-speaking children (N = 207) were followed from preschool until fourth grade and were tested for reading fluency, spelling and reading comprehension, and teachers rated the children's task-focused behaviour. Task-focused behaviour was a significant predictor of later reading comprehension and spelling skills. All three literacy skills predicted subsequent task-focused behaviour.

**Author: Riikka Hirvonen, George K. Georgiou, Marja-Kristiina Lerkkanen, Kaisa Aunola & Jari-Erik Nurmi**

Source: Hirvonen, R., Georgiou, G.K., Lerkkanen, M.-K., Aunola, K. & Nurmi, J.-E. (2010). Task-focused behaviour and literacy development: A reciprocal relationship. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 33(3), 302-319. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9817.2009.01415.x

- It is reasonable to assume that other factors besides cognitive ones may impact children's literacy development.
- Children's positive self-concept and efficacy beliefs are grounded upon positive experiences in previous learning situations.
- Efficacy beliefs and self-confidence promote expectations of success in new learning situations, which further lead to more effort and task-focused behaviour.
- The extent to which children's task-focused behaviour may impact their literacy learning might vary according to how challenging the particular task is.
- It may be assumed that motivational factors, such as task-focused behaviour, are more likely to affect the process of learning to read in opaque languages.
- The difficulty of literacy learning tasks may also vary within a particular language.
- For example, in a longitudinal study with Greek primary

school children, it was found that task-focused behaviour predicted children's subsequent spelling and reading comprehension, but not their reading fluency in later grades (Georgiou et al., 2010)

- The present study aimed to extend Georgiou et al.'s findings in a sample of Finnish-speaking children followed through from preschool to Grade 4.



## **The study**

The present study highlights the benefits of engaging ELLs in multiliteracies pedagogy, based

This study aimed to determine the cross-lagged relationships between children's task-focused behaviour and their literacy skills. The research questions were:

1. Does task-focused behaviour predict reading fluency, spelling and comprehension after controlling for the preceding literacy level?
2. Do reading fluency, comprehension, and spelling predict task-focused behaviour after controlling for earlier task-focused behaviour?

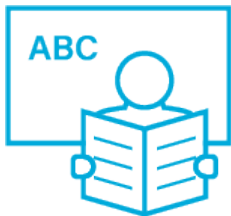
## **Methods**

A total of 207 children (111 boys and 96 girls) were examined during their preschool and first, second and fourth school years. Children's prereading skills were tested, and the teacher rated their task-focused behaviour during preschool. In the first, second and fourth grades, the children were tested in reading fluency, reading comprehension and spelling; their task-focused behaviour was rated by the teacher.



## Results

- After controlling for the effects of gender, phonological awareness and letter knowledge, task-focused behaviour accounted for 1–2% of unique variance in reading fluency, 3–5% of unique variance in spelling and 2–5% of unique variance in overall comprehension.
- After controlling for the effects of gender and previous task-focused behaviour, 3–10% of unique variance in task-focused behaviour was accounted for by phonological awareness and letter knowledge, 2–4% by reading fluency, 1–5% by spelling and 1–5% by comprehension.



## Conclusions

- The results showed that task-focused behaviour measured one year earlier contributed to the prediction of reading comprehension and spelling skills over and above their previous levels. However, it did not add to children's reading fluency prediction.
- Children's task-focused behaviour predicted their spelling skills almost as strongly as it predicted their reading comprehension.
- On the other hand, reading fluency, comprehension, and spelling measured a year before accounted for almost an equal amount of the variance in children's task-focused

behaviour after controlling for earlier levels of task-focused behaviour.

- Being good at something strengthens one's self-efficacy beliefs and expectations of future success and motivates one to try and learn, thus increasing task-focused behaviour. On the other hand, having difficulties affects one's self-efficacy beliefs negatively and makes one give up and avoid challenges.
  - Attention, therefore, must be directed to how children interpret their success in learning situations because negative learning experiences are likely to lead to low efficacy beliefs and expectations of failure, leading further to low levels of effort and task-avoidance behaviour.
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# Potentials of the Multiliteracies Pedagogy for Teaching English Language Learners (ELLs): A Review of the Literature

eTale 2022



This article presents the results of a review of published literature on the use of the multiliteracies pedagogy to teach English Language Learners (ELLs). Five emerging themes related to the potential benefits of the multiliteracies approach are identified and discussed in this article: (i) student agency and ownership of learning; (ii) language and literacy development; (iii) affirmation of students' languages, cultures, and identities; (iv) student engagement and collaboration; and (v) critical literacy.

**Author: Shakina Rajendram**

Source: Rajendram, S. (2015). Potentials of the multiliteracies pedagogy for teaching English language learners (ELLs): A review of the literature. *Critical Intersections in Education: An OISE/UT Students' Journal*, 3, 1-18.

- Multiliteracies pedagogy is based on the need for students to develop a broad repertoire of literacy practices that are not confined to traditional views of literacy and traditional approaches of literacy instruction.
- Introduced in 1996, multiliteracies pedagogy is grounded in two main ideas: (i) the expanding variety of text forms related to the expansion of mass media, multimedia, and the Internet, and (ii) the increasing importance of linguistic and cultural diversity.
- Multiliteracies pedagogy aims to create learning environments in which the blackboard, textbook, exercise book, and test are augmented, and at times replaced, by digital technologies.
- It supports a multimodal approach where learners move between linguistic, visual, auditory, gestural and spatial modes of meaning-making and learning.

**The study Four components of multiliteracies pedagogy**

- Situated practice is about providing meaningful experiences for students to participate in their own learning by building on their lived experiences.
- Overt instruction occurs when the teacher provides active intervention and scaffolding to help students gain conscious understanding and control of their learning.
- Critical framing helps students to analyse what they are learning from a critical perspective in relation to the historical, social, cultural, political, ideological, and value-centred relations of particular systems of knowledge and social practice.
- Transformed practice occurs when students apply what they have learned in new contexts by transforming existing meanings to design new meanings.



### **The study**

The present study highlights the benefits of engaging ELLs in multiliteracies pedagogy, based on a review of studies that have been conducted among ELL participants or immigrant students in various countries and at various educational levels.

### **The data**

This literature review included 12 studies based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) studies using the multiliteracies framework or other aspects of the multiliteracies pedagogy such as multimodality; (2) studies with ELL participants; and (3) studies conducted within the last ten years.



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## Findings

- Five themes emerged from the reviewed literature: (i) student agency and ownership of learning; (ii) language and literacy development; (iii) affirmation of students' languages, cultures, and identities; (iv) student engagement and collaboration; and (v) critical literacy.
- **Student agency and ownership of learning**
  - Multiliteracies pedagogy acknowledges the role of student agency in the meaning-making process and views learners as active designers of meaning.
  - Multiliteracies pedagogy highlights the transformative effects of an approach to literacy based on student-led, generative, joint activities supported by strategic assistance.
  - For example, students can become active generators of their own knowledge and active designers of meaning by critically reading and writing texts through an embodied drama pedagogy.
- **Language and literacy development**
  - Multiliteracies pedagogy stresses the need for language and literacy education to take into account multimodal forms of expression and learning.
  - For example, drama pedagogy is a very strategic and valuable means of language and literacy learning for ELLs because it affords them the opportunity to explore the specifics of reading, writing, listening, and speaking while expanding this connection to multiple modes of meaning-making through drama.
  - For students who have trouble in reading, drama

offers an entry point to language and literacy-learning unavailable in traditional classrooms.

- One of the strengths of the multiliteracies pedagogy is that it allows students to integrate language learning with content-based learning.
- The synaesthetic or mode-shifting approach combines different modes to represent meaning in drawing, photographs of clay figures, or captions. Developing students' synaesthetic abilities allows them to engage effectively in disciplinary content and tasks across the curriculum.
- Both conventional print-based and computer-based multimodal composing activities help students expand their literacy repertoire and means of expression.
- **Affirmation of students' languages, cultures and identities**
  - By foregrounding topics that can be related to students' own experiences, multiliteracies pedagogy promotes learning that recognises their own knowledge, values their linguistic and cultural resources, and affirms their identities.
  - For example, ELLs can research their family history and depict it as a graphic story. The creation and publication of the stories allow the students to share them with their friends, families, and members of their school and local community.
  - Multiliteracies pedagogy, which prioritises students' linguistic and cultural diversity, is powerful for multilingual students as it allows them to reflect on and recreate their multicultural and multilingual lives, thereby validating and affirming their identities.
- **Student engagement and collaboration**
  - Multiliteracies pedagogy envisages teachers as facilitators in classrooms that are rich with

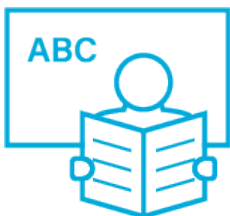


student-mediated collaborative learning activities.

- Emotional engagement, collaboration, and negotiation are parts of multiliteracies pedagogy.
- Each student is able to offer their own expertise to the group, and contributing their knowledge and skills to the group enterprise helps empower and engage students who might otherwise be marginalised in educational processes.

- **Critical literacy**

- Multiliteracies pedagogy accounts for the development of critical literacy in learners through its critical framing and transformed practice components.
- The process of designing multimodal texts in multiliteracies pedagogy should allow students to critically analyse and interpret the social and cultural context and the political, ideological, and value-centred purposes of texts.
- For example, teachers could ask the students 'why' questions to help them become aware of their decisions.
- Students can learn how to reject single interpretations of texts and to deconstruct texts based on their experiences and perspectives.



## Conclusions

- Today's students must possess multiple literacy skills that can enable them to utilise the potential of the

diverse modes of communication offered by new technologies.

- The potential of multiliteracies pedagogy to equip students with these skills is enormous because of the opportunities it provides for multimodal forms of expression through the technology-based interdisciplinary explorations of texts.
  - Multiliteracies pedagogy can be especially powerful for ELLs as it enables students to exercise agency and take ownership of their learning, it supports students' language development by providing them with authentic, communicative purposes for learning and practicing language, it helps students to reflect on and recreate their multilingual and multicultural identities, and it increases student engagement and promotes collaborative learning.
  - There is still the need for assessments to be developed in response to the multimodality of contemporary literacy.
  - Apart from the lack of appropriate assessment of multiliteracy practices, there are also other challenges to instantiating a pedagogy of multiliteracies in the ELL classroom. For example, typically, introductory second/foreign language courses that claim to use multimodal strategies do not incorporate the critical framing component of the multiliteracies pedagogy in a systematic manner.
  - Additional professional development activities for ELL teachers should provide varied opportunities for them to engage with multiliteracy concepts and pedagogical strategies.
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# Reading Achievements of Pupils with Pre-School Background and Those without at One Primary School in Lusaka District of Zambia

eTale 2022



**Authors: Morgan Mumba and Sitwe B. Mkandawire**

Source: Mumba, M. and Mkandawire, S. B. (2020). "Reading Achievements of Pupils with Pre-School Background and Those without at One Primary School in Lusaka District of Zambia." *Malcolm Moffat Multidisciplinary Journal of Research and Education*, 1(1): 53–80.

In Zambia, some pupils participate in early childhood education, whereas others do not. This comparative study sought to highlight the importance of early childhood education when it came to learning literacy skills in primary education. In general, early childhood education and pre-school have been seen to give children some important social and academic skills. In Zambia, pre-school is not compulsory, and therefore the purpose of the study was to examine if there were any differences in performance between pupils who attended pre-school education in comparison to those who did not as far as the technical reading of letters, syllables, and

simple words was concerned. Other possible factors affecting reading achievement in Zambia were also discussed. The researchers hoped to produce information based on empirical evidence that could be useful for those who decide the country's educational policies. At the moment, only a small fraction of Zambian children attended pre-school.



## **The study**

- The objective of the study was to compare technical reading skills of pupils with and without a pre-school background and establish teachers' views about factors affecting pupils' reading achievements. The research questions were the following:
  - What were the reading achievements of pupils with a pre-school background and those without in Grade 2?
  - What were the views of teachers regarding factors that affected pupils' reading achievement from different backgrounds in Grade 2?
- A mixed method research design was applied; both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect and analyse data.
- Forty pupils of one primary school who were in Grade 2 were administered a technical reading test of print letters and words; half of them had a pre-school background, and the other half did not.
- The reading test was adopted from the National Literacy Framework through the Primary Literacy Programme assessment tools and modified to focus on technical reading only.
- Pupils' knowledge of vowels and consonant sounds in the

regional official language, Nyanja, and their ability to read words consisting of one or more syllables were assessed.

- The pupils' parents (thirty-six in total) were interviewed to find out about the pupils' language background.
- Quantitative data were obtained from a class test for pupils while qualitative data were obtained through interviews with twelve early grade in-service teachers and one head teacher.

Quantitative data from the test were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), whereas the findings from the interviews were analysed thematically by grouping related data together into themes



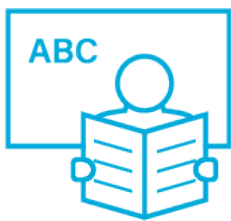
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## Findings

- Pupils without a pre-school background performed slightly better in technical reading than those who had attended pre-school; the difference was very small, even negligible. The study showed that pre-school education in Zambia has little impact on the technical reading of vowels, consonants, and simple words. Therefore, it did not influence pupils' ability to read technical letters, syllables, and words.
- The findings from the teacher interviews contradicted the test results. Teachers stated that pre-school education was a factor that determined pupils' reading achievement in Grade 2 since it was believed to establish a good foundation for future success in

school. They also stated that pupils from pre-school performed better in class, but the test results on reading proved the contrary.

- Other factors affecting reading achievement according to teachers were: parental educational background and socioeconomical status; home environment and parents' involvement in their children's education; pupils' own interest and commitment to learn; and the language of instruction.
- Teachers thought that a huge class size hindered reading achievements since it was impossible to pay attention to each pupil in class.



## Implications

- Teachers considered pre-school education as an important factor in reading achievement, but the reading test results of this study did not support this view.
- These findings raise questions about the quality of pre-school education in Zambia. The study further noted that, although it covered a narrow sample size and assessed only a part of learning (reading letters and simple words), the pre-school education curriculum should be rechecked and revised to address essential segments of childhood education.
- Parents should be informed about the importance and impact of their involvement in their children's education.
- Class sizes should be smaller in early childhood classes.

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# Familiar Language Based Instruction versus Unfamiliar Language for the Teaching of Reading and Writing Literacy Skills: A Focus on Zambian Languages and English at Two Primary Schools in Lusaka

eTale 2022



**Author: Sitwe B. Mkandawire**

Source: Mkandawire, S. B. (2017). "Familiar Language Based Instruction versus Unfamiliar Language for the Teaching of Reading and Writing Literacy Skills: A Focus on Zambian Languages and English at Two Primary Schools in Lusaka." *Zambian Journal of Language Studies*, 1(1), 53–82.

This study aimed to find out if pupils in Grade 1 who were learning literacy skills in a local language in government schools were participating more actively than those learning in English in private schools, and vice versa. Despite the pace of pupil participation level in early grade classes, the

major problem in the Zambian education system has been low literacy levels and high dropouts. One factor for this might be the language of instruction that some pupils did not know so well. However, since 2013, pupils from Grades 1 to 4 started learning in one of the seven regional official Zambian languages in government public schools, while most private schools still use English from early grade classes.



## **The study**

- This study aimed to find out if pupils in Grade 1 learning literacy skills in a local language would manage to learn better than those whose language of instruction was English at one government school and one private school.
- The research questions were the following:
  - What was the nature of the classes in the two schools?
  - To what extent did the medium of instruction at the two schools facilitate learning?
  - What was the level of class participation on the part of the pupils in class in the two schools?
  - What was the attitude of the pupils, parents, and teachers towards the use of the chosen medium of instruction in schools?
- Data was collected from sixty-seven participants from two primary schools. Forty-two participants were pupils, ten were parents, and fifteen were teachers (three of whom were in the position of head teacher).
- In another school, the language of instruction was mainly a local language, Cinyanja, while in another school, which was private, pupils were learning in



English.

- Three methods were used to collect data: face-to-face interviews, focus group discussions, and lesson observation. The data collected was analysed using thematic analysis.

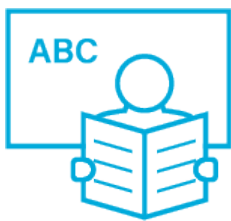


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## Findings

- In the private school, the teacher systemically used English as the medium of instruction.
- In the government school, the teachers used many languages in teaching, even if the official language of teaching was Cinyanja. For example, one teacher occasionally switched to Bemba or English to facilitate the pupils' understanding.
- In both schools, the environment was multilingual, and many languages were used during the day, for example during the breaks.
- Both languages (English and Cinyanja) used for instruction had an important role in literacy education, but depending on the pupils' background, the language used in literacy education either facilitated or hindered learning since both languages were unfamiliar for some pupils, though most pupils used Nyanja.
- Pupils were more active during lessons taught in Cinyanja as they were able to better answer teachers' questions than those learning in English, among whom two to three pupils were seen providing correct responses to the teacher's questions. During the class taught in English, some pupils used other languages to talk to their peers.
- Some parents preferred that their children learn in

English so that they would have some advantages in the future, e.g. greater ease in finding a job and communicating with international people. They were critical towards the policy that favours the use of local languages in education from Grades 1 to 4. Respondents argued that Grade 7 examinations were held in English and urged the government to rethink the policy, citing that it may not be enough for pupils to learn in English for two years before their examinations.



## Implications

- Primary school teachers should be allowed to use multiple languages in classrooms to facilitate learning so that pupils can learn literacy skills faster.
- The limited capacity to participate in discussions in English can be seen also at the national level, where very few Zambians take part in discussions concerning social and political issues.
- Using an unfamiliar language such as English might be harmful to a child's productive and mental processes as they do not participate actively in classes. By contrast, using a familiar language empowers the child to think, act, and process information faster.
- Children learn to value their cultural heritage when local languages can be used in education. The use of local languages also helps a sense of belonging and identity develop.

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# Comparing Language Ideologies in Multilingual Classrooms across Norway and Zambia

eTale 2022



The article compared language ideologies among two groups of teachers: pre-service teachers in Norway and in-service teachers in Zambia. The study showed that, although teachers shared common challenges in handling multilingual classes present in both educational systems, their language ideologies were different, which affected the way they sought to overcome those challenges. Norwegian teachers preferred mostly monoglossic language ideologies, whereas Zambian teachers conveyed heteroglossic ideologies. These ideologies relate to local conditions, which are very different in Zambia and Norway.

**Authors: Jonas Y. Iversen and Sitwe B. Mkandawire**

Source: Iversen, J. Y. and Mkandawire S. B. (2020). "Comparing Language Ideologies In Multilingual Classrooms across Norway and Zambia." *Multilingual Margins*, 7(3), 33–48.

The study was motivated by the fact that both countries are facing challenges related to the multilingualism in early grade classrooms, even if the historical, political, and

linguistic background of these two countries is very different. In Norway, the number of immigrants is reported to be increasing over the past decades, and there is a change towards a multilingual society. Zambia, on the other hand, has a long history of multilingualism, with seven official regional languages and many more unofficial languages. Soon after independence, Zambia adopted a monolingual education system as part of nation-building project where English (a colonial language) was used as a national language and the medium of instruction from Grade 1 to university; this was the policy from 1966 to 1999.

- Comparing language ideologies of different countries opens a possibility to learn from each other as well as to learn about one's own culture.
- With the term *language ecology*, researchers are referring to the thinking about multilingualism that takes different dimensions of the relationships between languages into account. To be able to compare two countries, their language ecologies must first be defined.
- The dominant language ideology affects language policies in education as well as teachers' actions when facing multilingualism. The way languages are managed in a society is never neutral nor apolitical. Language ideologies define the value of languages.
- Educational programmes founded on monoglossic language ideology legitimate monolingual linguistic practises, whereas educational programmes founded on heteroglossic language ideology support dynamic multilingual linguistic practises in the community (García, 2009).



## The Study

- The aim was to find out how teachers from Norway and Zambia considered the role of multilingualism in their education systems and what kind of language ideologies we could find behind the teachers' views.
- The data was collected in focus group interviews. Norwegian teachers were pre-service teachers, and Zambian teachers were in-service. In Norway, seven focus group interviews were conducted with twenty-four pre-service teachers in total from two teacher education institutions. From Zambia, there were thirty-six in-service primary school teachers who participated in the study.
- Participant utterances were analysed with the qualitative content analysis method. The content was divided into three main categories: the teachers' comments on multilingualism as a challenge; comments on solutions to these challenges; and comments on language policies in education.
- Participant utterances were connected to either monoglossic or heteroglossic language ideologies. Then these language ideologies were considered in light of the language ecology of the given country.



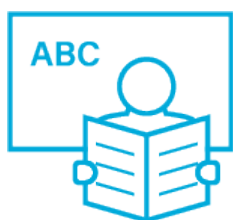
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## Findings

- Teachers of both countries expressed similar descriptions of challenges with multilingualism in education. Both groups mentioned pupils' limited proficiency in the language of instruction as a challenge and underlined the need for a common medium of

communication in the classroom.

- In Zambia, teachers lacked suitable learning material and support from the government. In Norway, some teachers mentioned that the support for teaching and learning resources was already available for the students.
- However, the Norwegian teachers' way of thinking when it came to solutions for addressing problems with multilingualism was different due to a different kind of language ideology. The approach of most Zambian teachers was practical, and their actions aimed to help learners from different language backgrounds to learn, even if the approach used was outside the provision of policy. Norwegian teachers insisted on following policy, and all pupils from other language backgrounds were expected to learn Norwegian, as this was the language used in class.
- The teachers of the two countries positioned themselves differently towards language policies in their countries. Zambian in-service teachers criticised the government for not providing enough tools to be able to teach multilingual students correctly. Norwegian pre-service teachers mainly aligned themselves with the current policies of their country.



## The Implications

- The study shows that there are some similarities in the language ideologies of the two countries as both groups describe the same kind of challenges in multilingual classroom and idealise a classroom where everyone is

able to communicate with others.

- In Norway, a clear line between the Norwegian 'us' and the multilingual 'other' was noticed. Student must have sufficient proficiency before being able to participate in Norwegian classes; they needed to be assimilated into the Norwegian language.
- Zambian in-service teachers seemed to accept a higher extent of multilingualism in their classrooms, and they were ready to use other languages present in class other than the official language of instruction in a flexible manner.
- It seems that Zambian in-service teachers were following a heteroglossic language ideology, which does not fit the government's monoglossic language ideology, where one regional official language was expected to be used in class.
- Zambian in-service teachers' willingness to use other languages as support or as a resource can be linked to the language ecology of the country. In Zambia, people are used to interacting with different languages in everyday life.
- The paper urged Norwegian pre-service teachers to learn from Zambian in-service teachers' pragmatic ideology and openness towards multilingualism in the classrooms, a landmark concept that suggests the global north should tap knowledge from the global south.