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Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) on Grade 3 Pupils' Writing Skills

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness in the writing skills of 40 Grade 3 learners at the International Philippine School in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia during the school year 2025–2026. A single-group pretest–posttest design was used to compare the performance before and after a five-week Communicative Language Teaching based activities intervention. Writing activities included meaningful interaction, storytelling, role-playing, collaborative tasks and individual composition. An adapted analytic rubric assessed the content, organization, and mechanics. Mean, standard deviations, and paired-sample t test were used to summarize and compare the scores. Mean content scores increased from 8.01 to 12.61, organization scores from 7.45 to 12.82, and mechanics scores from 7.42 to 12.32. The corresponding mean gains were 4.60, 5.37, and 4.90 points. The reported paired comparisons were statistically significant in all three components, were extremely low p values ($p < 0.05$). Learners rated the activities as Much Helpful for developing ideas, organizing sentences, and applying writing conventions. The research findings showed that CLT is an effective pedagogical strategy to improve the writing competency of young learners. To incorporate CLT based activities into writing instruction and to conduct additional research with larger sample sizes and longer interventions, teachers are recommended.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching, Writing Skills, Grade 3 Learners, Content, Organization, Mechanics

Introduction

English in education is a crucial everyday life of the learners. This language helps learners to share thoughts, comprehend others texts and reading and participate in school activities and learning. Learning to write in English, however, can be tricky, particularly difficult for young learners. Many struggle to formulate ideas, organize their sentences, put their thoughts into writing and use proper spelling, punctuation and grammar. Thus, this is conducted to examine the improvement of the writing skills of Grade 3 learners before and after the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) activities, as categorized into content, organization, and mechanics.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes purposeful interaction. In writing lessons, discussion, storytelling, role-playing, and collaborative planning can give the learners the opportunities to explore ideas before writing independently. Mujumdar (2019) talked about English communication in different situations. Simply, CLT-based teaching enabled the development of communication skills more than traditional teaching methods which emphasized on grammar. This statement had been said by Triwibowo (2023). Moreover, CLT studies can be used as a foundation for exploring classroom activities that promote interaction.

Further investigation is therefore needed in primary-school contexts. The present study extends the focus to Grade 3 learners in an International Philippine School in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia, examining both assessed writing performance and learners' perceptions of the activities.

At the International Philippine School in Al Khobar (IPSA), the researcher observed that some learners were hesitant to communicate in English through writing. They experienced difficulty expressing ideas, organizing sentences, and applying writing conventions. Limited engagement in writing for enjoyment or self-expression was also observed. These concerns suggested a need for meaningful activities that could encourage participation.

CLT activities can connect writing with interaction and familiar experiences. Through role-playing, peer discussion,

storytelling, collaborative tasks and writing tasks based on everyday situations, the learners can explore ideas before putting them into writing. These activities may support content development and organization when combined with teacher guidance in writing conventions.

The study examined writing performance before and after a five-week CLT intervention during the school year 2025–2026. It focused on content, organization, and mechanics and sought to inform writing instruction appropriate for young learners.

Specifically, the study addressed the following questions:

1. What were the learners' pretest and posttest writing scores in content, organization, and mechanics?
2. Were the differences between pretest and posttest scores statistically significant?
3. How helpful did learners perceive the CLT writing activities to be?

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The study used a single-group pretest–posttest quasi-experimental design. The same learners completed assessments before and after a five-week CLT intervention. No comparison group or random assignment was used. The design examined changes for the course of five (5) weeks only.

Respondents

The respondents were 40 Grade 3 learners from the International Philippine School in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia during the school year 2025–2026. They participated in a five-week CLT intervention conducted during the regular English class. A pretest was administered before the intervention to assess their initial writing performance, while a posttest was administered afterward to examine changes in their writing skills. The assessment focused on content, organization, and mechanics.

Research instruments

The study used three instruments: a writing pretest, a writing posttest, and a CLT Writing Activities Feedback Questionnaire.

The pretest assessed learners' initial writing skills. Short writing tasks were evaluated for content, organization, and mechanics using an adapted analytic rubric based on Jacobs *et al*. (1981) [2]. Content talked about the relevance and development of their ideas put into writing; organization focused on the sequence and connections between sentences; mechanics targeted written conventions like spelling, punctuation and proper capitalization. The scores provided a baseline for comparison with posttest performance.

The **posttest** assessed learners' writing skills after the five-week intervention. Their written responses were evaluated using the same assessment criteria as the pretest. The scores were compared to identify changes in each writing component.

The **CLT Writing Activities Feedback Questionnaire** gathered learners' perceptions of the activities. It examined how helpful they found the activities in developing ideas, organizing their writing, and applying writing conventions. These responses provided additional information about the learners' experiences during the intervention.

Statistical Analysis

Means and standard deviations summarized writing performance. Two-tailed paired-sample t-tests compared pretest and posttest component scores at a significance level of .05. Mean gains were calculated as posttest mean minus pretest mean. Feedback responses were summarized descriptively on a three-point scale: 1.00–1.66, Not Helpful; 1.67–2.33, Helpful; and 2.34–3.00, Much Helpful.

Results and Discussion

The study examined the writing performance of 40 Grade 3 learners before and after a five-week Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) intervention. Writing was assessed in terms of content, organization, and mechanics. Learners also answered a questionnaire about the helpfulness of the activities.

Writing performance before and after the intervention

Table 1 presents the learners' pretest and posttest scores. Mean scores increased in all three writing components.

Table 1: Pretest and Posttest Writing Performance

Component	Pretest mean	Pretest SD	Posttest mean	Posttest SD	Mean gain
Content	8.01	2.09	12.61	1.69	4.60
Organization	7.45	2.33	12.82	1.99	5.37
Mechanics	7.42	2.39	12.32	1.73	4.90

SD = standard deviation. Mean gain = posttest mean minus pretest mean.

Before the intervention, the mean scores for content, organization, and mechanics were within the *Beginning* category according to the scoring guide. The overall mean was 7.63 which results suggested that learners needed support in developing ideas, arranging sentences clearly, and applying writing conventions. However, a group mean does not mean that every learner performed at the same level.

The overall mean increased from 7.63 to 12.58, a gain of 4.95 points. Component scores all increased significantly.

Content increased from 8.01 to 12.61, a gain of 4.60 points. This suggests better assessed performance in developing relevant ideas and including supporting details. Discussions and storytelling may have provided opportunities to explore ideas before individual writing.

Organization increased from 7.45 to 12.82, showing the largest raw mean gain of 5.37 points. Picture sequencing, shared writing, and collaborative planning have supported the arrangement of ideas and connections between sentences. This also showed that because of the activities, the learners learned how to make their sentences structured meaningfully.

Mechanics increased from 7.42 to 12.32. This indicates better performance in the written conventions assessed by the rubric. Guided writing and repeated practice of all the mechanics: use of correct spelling, proper capitalization, punctuation that have supported the learners in applying correct spelling, punctuation, proper capitalization, and right use of grammar.

Statistical comparison of writing scores

The study reported two-tailed paired-sample t-tests at a significance level of ($p < 0.05$). Table 2 presents the reported probability values.

Table 2: Paired-sample Comparisons

Component	Reported p value	Decision at α = 0.05
Content	6.233e—20	Reject the null hypothesis
Organization	1.393e—17	Reject the null hypothesis
Mechanics	2.961e—21	Reject the null hypothesis

All reported p values were below 0.05. The reported probability values require verification against the original paired data.

The reported tests indicated statistically significant differences between pretest and posttest scores in all three components. Together with the higher posttest means, these results showed improvement in the writing performance following the intervention.

Learners' Feedback on the Activities

Tables 3–5 summarize learners' feedback. Under the stated interpretation ranges, means from 2.34 to 3.00 were classified as Much Helpful.

Table 3: Learners' feedback on Content

S. No	Indicators	W-Mean	VD
1	The activities helped me think about better ideas	2.87	MH
2	The activities helped me add more details in my writing	2.61	MH
3	The activities helped me stay on the topic we discussed	2.76	MH
4	The activities helped me think before writing	2.71	MH
5	The activities helped me write better ideas	2.61	MH
	As to Contents	2.71	MH

Means were rounded from the values in the source tables. Interpretation ranges: 1.00–1.66 = Not Helpful; 1.67–2.33 = Helpful; 2.34–3.00 = Much Helpful.

Table 4: Learners' feedback on Organization

S. No	Indicators	W-Mean	VD
1	The activities helped me put my ideas in order so I can write better	2.66	MH
2	It helped me write a beginning, middle, and ending of a story	2.71	MH
3	The activities helped my sentences connect	2.68	MH
4	The activities helped my writing flow well	2.66	MH
5	The activities helped me organize my sentences	2.82	MH
	As to the Organization	2.71	MH

Means were rounded from the values in the source tables. Interpretation ranges: 1.00–1.66 = Not Helpful; 1.67–2.33 = Helpful; 2.34–3.00 = Much Helpful

Table 5: Learners' feedback on Mechanics

S. No	Indicators	W-Mean	VD
1	The activities helped me to be careful with my spelling	2.82	MH
2	The activities helped write the punctuation (., !, ?)	2.79	MH
3	The activities helped me to properly use the capital letters	2.79	MH
4	It helped me write correct sentences as to the correct use of grammar	2.82	MH
5	The activities helped me make fewer mistakes	2.82	MH
	As to Mechanics	2.81	MH

Means were rounded from the values in the source tables. Interpretation ranges: 1.00–1.66 = Not Helpful; 1.67–2.33 = Helpful; 2.34–3.00 = Much Helpful.

For content, the highest-rated statement concerned thinking of better ideas, with a mean of 2.87. Adding details and writing, better ideas both received means of 2.61. All items were classified as Much Helpful which suggest that they had develop better and expand better ideas.

For organization, arranging sentences received the highest mean of 2.82. Writing a beginning, middle, and ending received a mean of 2.71. Connecting sentences received 2.68, while putting ideas in order and improving writing flow each received 2.66. These responses suggest that learners perceived the activities as much helpful for organizing their sentence constructions which provide better results.

Mechanics received the highest feedback component mean of 2.81. Statements concerning spelling, grammar, and making fewer mistakes each received a rounded mean of 2.82. Punctuation and capitalization each received 2.79. These small descriptive differences helped the learners see themselves improved.

The feedback reflects learners' perceptions, rather than an independent measurement of improvement. Still, the favorable responses complement the assessment results by showing that learners generally found the activities helpful.

Instructional implications and limitations

The findings suggest that CLT based activities were useful in guided writing and explicit instruction in writing conventions. The teachers can provide opportunities for learners to discuss ideas, plan collaboratively, and then write independently in which writing skills improve. Additional support can focus on expanding ideas, connecting sentences, and checking written work.

Interpretation is limited by a single-school setting, the absence of a comparison group, and differences between assessment prompts. Clear documentation of scoring, agreement among raters. Future studies should include comparable assessment tasks and comparison for different groups.

Conclusion

The results indicated that all the learners' starting level in the various writing areas was Beginning. Following the introduction of the CLT activities, their performance increased to Approaching Proficiency, with Organization achieving the Proficiency level. A statistical analysis of the score results also revealed a significant difference between the pre-test and posttest scores, thereby leading to the conclusion that the intervention had a statistically significant effect. Moreover, the CLT activities were rated by the learners as "Much Helpful", which shows that the activities did aid their learning and development in their writing skills.

The study's results lead to the conclusion that the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) based activities had a significant positive effect on the writing skills of the Grade 3 learners. The large rise in the learners' scores from the pretest to the posttest shows that CLT successfully helped the learners to generate ideas, organize their thoughts, and use the appropriate writing conventions. Moreover, the findings show that CLT produced an interactive and meaningful learning environment in which the learners took an active part in the tasks and thus gained confidence and a greater sense of competence in writing.

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