Muhammad Samiullah\* Aftab Ahmad\* Muhammad Naseer Ud Din\*

The major and foremost aim of the Abstract research had been to observe an effect of (CLT) communicative language teaching approach on functional writing skills among 9th graders in Pakistani high schools. Relevant literature revealed that functional writing skills can he increased through (CLT)communicative language teaching approach. Quasi Experimental design, that is, pretest posttest nonequivalent control group design was used. Threats to internal/external validity were undertaken properly. The pre-test was the same, and it had been used as the post-test as well. Creative compositions related to functional writing skills were examined carefully and were marked as per scoring rubrics. The (CLT) communicative language teaching approach is recommended for English teaching specifically writingrelated tasks in the subject of English.

#### Key Words:

English Language Teaching (ELT), Communicative Approach/Langu age Teaching (CLT), Functional Writing, Grammar Translation Method (GTM).

## Introduction

Communication is the fundamental human feature used to convey messages to others orally or in written to play role effectively in daily life routine. In the past, before internet people were not so connected and least interested in learning languages other than native language and languages were learnt mainly for literary purposes but after the explosion of information through the internet world has turned into a global village and almost every country has a dependence on other countries for many needs like business and trade and there is an exchange of manpower in many countries (Ahmad, 2011) states that in present scenario neither country can survive alone nor could rely on her own sources of knowledge. Therefore, they need a lingua franca for bridging these gaps. Many countries which were very proud of the use of their first language and were reluctant in adopting

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>†</sup>Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad, Pakistan. <sup>‡</sup>Associate Professor, Institute of Education & Research, Kohat University of Science & Technology, Kohat, Pakistan. Email: <u>naseerkust@yahoo.com</u>



<sup>\*</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Science Education Faculty of Education, Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad, Pakistan.

second language could not help learning second language now. English has acquired an international status in the world arena due to its vast usage and being a language of trade, science and technology. It is an official language and is taught as a compulsory subject also used as a medium of instruction in academic institutes in Pakistan. The main objective of the learning and teaching of the English language is to enable the students to use it for acquiring knowledge and be able to perform their daily life functions easily. In the national curriculum document, it is mentioned that English is a medium of international communication for better opportunities in learning and career. Therefore, it should be taught to the masses without any discrimination of rich and poor in the form of development in economic, professional and personal life.

Secondary level is a fundamental level of education and after that students intend to get admission or enter into any employment. In any case, they are required to have sufficient knowledge and skill of English language to put up with their responsibilities. In almost all the tests whether they are for admission to the next class or to get employed, functional writing skills along with other prerequisites are judged. At present, learning of functional writing skills has got importance for their use in everyday life but the teaching of English is devoid of the development of these skills. Ahmad (2011) says that teaching of English language in Pakistan is nonexistent and the functional aspect of the language is completely unfocused which resulted in the deterioration of English at present and will go further in the future as well. It is unfortunate that the main focus of traditional teaching in public schools is getting through the exams and such pragmatic competence of the English language is not paid much attention. Abdul, 2016 says that mostly GTM is used by the teachers in English language teaching which is considered convenient and time-saving and is easy to meet the requirement of the exams. Another reason for dependency on traditional teaching is the intolerant, negative and even worth punished attitude towards mistakes committed by students during their learning tasks denying the fact that mistakes are the way to learn. Maicusi et al. (2000) say that error making is a very natural phenomenon attached to the human being and is a necessary element of the learning process but it is up to the teacher to use these errors for the improvement to get better results.

To equip students with functional writing skills is the dire need of the time. The main emphasis of the teaching functional writing skills is to teach the language skills contextually by manipulating the everyday life situation. The development of functional writing skills is very critical and prevalent traditional teaching does not provide much support for its development. It is not an easy task to teach the functional writing skills of another language. Ahmad (2011) says "Every bone and fiber of your being is affected in some way as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of your first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting". The aspiration to make the language learning

easy has helped the linguists to bring different ideas and suggestions which resulted in the emergence of new approaches and methods, and communicative language teaching is one of the very effective approaches has been in practice.

## **Functional Writing Skills**

Functionalists see language as the tool that enables a person to perform different functions in daily life routine including asking permission, making requests, apologizing and very common activities like the writing of letters and applications. English as a second language is not only used as medium of instruction in the schools but also used as a part of the formal life functions. People mainly converse in their first language but they usually use second language in their formal life routine. There are different approaches to language study. The teaching of English through functional perspectives is totally out of question because it is still taken as traditional teaching and English is a subject to learn grammar rules and vocabulary which is the total ignorance from the real concept of the language teaching. Writing is an important skill of a language by which one can be used for variety of functions including expression of thoughts, ideas and feelings, to instruct and discuss etc. in black and white. Writing is a productive and slow process skill compared to the other language skills as it involves putting down the matter on the paper in parts instead of whole, therefore learning of this skill requires more effort than the other skills (Hassan & Ahmed, 2015). "Writing is a productive and active process of the mind by which the writer creates meaning" (Williams, 2015). The opposite of academic and creative writing is known as functional writing which includes writing that conveys the message to the specific audience in a direct, clear and specific way. The main objective of functional writing is to put up the real-life tasks or applying for something. Writing has become an effective means of communication whereby functional writing skills are not merely used for the academic knowledge rather it is used as an effective means of communication between people to address their specific needs and objectives as a main device for self-expression, shaping ideas, and convincing others. Functional writing deals with the pragmatic use of the English to complete some goals of the real life, that means that functional writing skills deals with activities of the real life by applying writing to the tasks and situations focusing quality rather than quantity.

## Teaching of Functional Writing Skills in Pakistan

Writing is an important skill of a language by which one can be used for a variety of functions including expression of thoughts, ideas and feelings, to instruct and discuss etc. in black and white. Writing is a productive and slow process skill compared to the other language skills as it involves putting down the matter on the paper in parts instead of whole, therefore learning of this skill requires more effort

than the other skills. In schools writing skill is not properly developed, during teaching hours all the time is served for writing different things which merely improves improvement of handwriting rather than writing skill. It is a continuous process involves thinking and takes time to organize and plan the writing task. It also demands knowledge about mental processes. Teachers should treat it as the most important productive skill required to complete the learner's daily life functions. Students use this skill for most of the time during their academic and professional life and even in their private life in order to complete their tasks as active members of society. It is also a well-known fact that in public schools the main concern of teaching writing skills is the reproduction of crammed or memorized material immediately without any reflection. (Rashid, 2012) pointed out that Pakistani students lacked in analytical, reflective, and critical skills because they memorize the concepts for examination purposes. The main problem lies with the examination system which encourages crammed work. The paper setter usually asks the same typical repeated questions again and again and students prepare only those particular questions from past papers to easily get through the examination without adding to their language skills, teachers also do not bother to teach language skills rather they encourage rote learning because making them get through examination is their prime goal teaching rather than teaching English as language. It is also observed that most of the students who get good marks in secondary classes failed to perform better at the intermediate level because at this level they get more freedom to write from themselves and are unable to do so. Writing skills involves thinking about any topic to recall and analyze the information that requires more time and the conducive environment without any disturbance than the other skills and the students are not encouraged to write from themselves in order to give their personal opinion and ideas. They are also not given much time to write on any topic in the class. The students are not encouraged to write from themselves rather they are made to reproduce the readymade material from key books which does not enhance vocabulary. Writing is the most important skill which helps the learner in developing other skills required for everyday life. It is a way of expressing learning. Teachers face difficulty in teaching writing skills because they have to prepare activities and strategies for engaging the students in learning. In public school traditional methods are mainly used to teach English which made the students to translate every bit of the target language in which learning is done on the basis of rules of conversion of sentences from one language to another, which creates a great problem for the students when they are put to write in a new and different situation and topic. They take much time in writing on any topic because first they think in their own language and then they translate. This also hampers the creation of new ideas.

Students of the public school use their native language at home as well as outside the class and the teachers this as a strong base for not using them in the target language, according to them, the students could not find the opportunity of

conversating in target language with anyone and to take effort of teaching them in target language would be useless endeavor which is not only depriving them of practicing the target language also keeping the shy and discomfort and reluctant in getting hands on the target language. Students' inefficiency in writing skill is also due to the passive attitude of the teachers towards quality teaching. The main judgement criteria for the selection of the teachers for promotion and other benefits is more a quantitative and nothing is qualitative in it as they are not asked how many students are able to use the language practically rather, they are accountable for making the specific percentage of the students pass the examination by hook or by crook. Language learner is expected to be fluent and accurate in learning of any skill which are evaluated later on. Traditionally fluency is tagged with the speaking skill and is ignored while dealing with other skills but although writing skill takes more time in learning and producing yet it should be as fluent as the other skills. (Samiullah, 2015)

The teaching of writing skills is a holistic process which can be learnt by getting command over grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, mechanics and fluency. While teaching writing skills these areas are to be focused collectively to be improved gradually and consistently. The most effective way to teach writing is by using different activities in which students get engaged in different situations and communicate with other students also find the solution to their problems by using their cognitive abilities to make the learning as part of the permanent memory. (Samiullah, 2019)

#### **Communicative Language Teaching**

The teaching of English has gone through a long evolution period and not only influenced the language teaching but also provided guidelines for the other genres of education. There have been many problems while teaching with the traditional method in which the role of a teacher was not more than a drillmaster. When these traditional methodologies did not live up to their promises new theories emerged feeling the need for methodologies that could solve the problem of development of the linguistic skills for meaningful communication. Traditional methods were just focusing on producing the sentences through memorization and students were expected to use them in any situation of real life so they were not meeting the demand of the learner. Wills (2004) says that the system of the language is innate that provides exposure to specific language where children create rules for that language for themselves so learning is a process of discovery by the internal process rather than external influences. (Samiullah, 2015).

The need for an effective approach is felt and has paved way to the emergence of the communicative language approach that concerned with language as a system of social interaction rather than a system of formal rules without their communicative uses. It has considered man as a social being who requires language to use it for communication with others in a social environment. (Samiullah, 2013)

The first phase of traditional language teaching lasts up to the late 1960s, GTM was the most common method used during this period. Based on behavioral psychology and structuralism, education mainly took place by repetition and habit formation during this period (ÇELİK, n.d.). Teachers used to deliver lessons and remained the Centre of all activities in the class, providing very limited space for the student, mostly student remained passive and teacher more active, students did not dare to ask questions from teacher, who held complete control of the classroom activities. Grammar was learnt directly and practiced by repetitive drilling during language teaching. Memorization technique was mainly used to get the mastery language skills for later use. (Pradesh, 2015) posits that the main learning strategy of the learning language rather to talk in the language.

The second phase started during 1970s when educators started questioning the goals of language while observing the students were able to utter the sentence only during the lesson but the majority of them were not able to speak a single sentence outside the classroom. Students were good at language rules but incompetent in communicative ability, hence syllabuses were modified and new techniques and strategies were introduced and CLT was one of the most exciting innovations. (Philip, 2016) mentioned that the adoption of CLT was in response to the dissatisfaction with traditional GTM.

The third phase of the CLT started in the late 1990s. This period has more diverse and versatile features and is not confined to the limited syllabus developed for communicative purposes rather it includes a different set of agreed principles and practices. (Samiullah, 2015)

#### **Communicative Competence**

The foundation of the CLT stands upon communicative competence coined by a sociolinguist Hymes in 1971 as a response to the abstract linguistic ideals of language presented by Chomsky in 1965 as competence and performance. In his distinction of competence and performance, competence is the key component. This type of holistic development was not possible by traditional methodologies therefore the inclination shifted towards a successful approach of CLT which presents holistic development and planning. The beauty of this approach is the modification according to the environment and the culture. The learners improve their communicative competence through practice and experience in an increasingly wide range of communicative contexts and events(Farooq, 2015).

## Statement of the Research Problem

Students at secondary level face many difficulties in expressing their ideas, feelings and opinion on any topic. They cannot write a single new sentence, mainly reproduce the crammed material repeatedly on different topics in different contexts. The presentation of ideas with limited language choices make them disjoint, unclear and ambiguous. The main reason for this problem is the frequent use of rote learning from readymade material available in the market and teaching through GTM to pass exams due to which functional writing skills are not developed, consequently such teaching and learning do not contribute to the students' communication formally and informally in completing very simple tasks like form filling, writing an invitation, application, letters, and email. It is believed that the results of this study will help the students in developing their functional writing skills and will also motivate the teachers for applying communicative language teaching as an alternate methodology in teaching functional writing skills. This research intended to discover an effect of Communicative Teaching Approach on improving functional writing skills of schoolchildren in high school, which are lacking among learners due to marks/grade consciousness, reliance on memorization of readymade notes and ineffective teaching methodology.

### Delimitations

The research was demarcated to 9<sup>th</sup>grade learners. The focus was on the subject of English. The functional writing skills were undertaken in this study.

#### **Objective of the Research**

More precisely this was the objective of the research:

1. To find out an effect of CLT on functional writing.

#### **Research Questions**

The researchers tried to answer the following questions:

- 1. Is CLT helpful in the progress of functional writing?
- 2. Is CLT equally influential on girls' and boys' functional writing skills?
- 3. Is CLT equally effective for functional writing skills in government and private school?

## Significance of the Study

The purpose of the study is to show the importance of communicative language teaching as an effective language teaching method. If the results of the study

proved positive the benefits of this study will be far more important for the students, being main stakeholders, because CLT will provide an opportunity for the students for learning language in a more natural and long-lasting way. It will equip the students with new and fruitful functional writing skills to perform daily life routine functions actively, confidently and independently. The use of the CLT as an alternate method will help solve their greatest difficulty of the tiresome effort of cramming readymade notes and its utility will be more than just passing of examinations. Whereas contemporary language teaching is largely limited to Grammar Translation Method and teachers centered methodologies, CLT is presenting very effective student-centered methodologies focusing on communicative competence may enhance the achievement of the learners in language tasks. CLT as a humanistic and latest approach emphasizes the use of the language in practical and offers learners more opportunities to use the target language (Thamarana, 2014).

The most important phase of the communicative language teaching is its implementation in the classroom, hence it is equally important for the teachers who may be helped in understanding its concept and be motivated to adopt such effective method in classroom to maximize the outcomes of language learning as every teacher wish to see the students more successful learners of the language. The results of this research will also provide valuable data to syllabi specialists and curriculum designers of English in scheming communicative syllabi and books for secondary school students. Additionally, the outcomes of the research will act as a cushion in teaching and learning of the other subjects. It may also provide support to the scholars who want to explore English language teaching at high school.

#### Literature Review

Writing skills involve the mental process so it should be related to the interest of the students for their full attention. Samiullah (2015) states that writing requires the correct use of the language which needs the engagement of the students and it will provoke the development of the language motivating the students to solve their problems by putting their minds into activity. Completion of the writing task involves different stages including exploring the ideas, thought and feeling into written form and then revising to make it correct orderly and grammatically and in the end, it gives a written form that is meaningful and readable to everyone.

Writing is a complex cognitive activity that involves the control of different variables like content, structure, vocabulary, spelling and mechanics that is difficult to learn for students to master all the aspects. Writing as a continuous thinking process involves the generation and organization of ideas and to translate them into readable text which is not an easy task and can cause students to make many mistakes (Samiullah, 2019)

The teaching of writing skills is also a challenge for the teachers because of its complexity, it is developed slowly and consciously and teachers should develop it on the bases of students' need ability and capacity. The simplest result of the written language is the graphic representation of the spoken language (Samiullah, 2015). There are two main approaches used for the teaching of the writing skill known as product approach and process approach but the results of the process approach are better than the product approach which see result of the writing as a product on the other hand process approach develops the language skill gradually. Although the importance of the product approach could not be ignored, the process approach is considered more useful and effective in the development of writing skill, therefore all such methods which based upon process approach are being adopted in the modern era for the teaching of writing skill.

#### **Communicative Language Teaching**

Language cannot be taught in aloof, context is the most important factor in understanding and remembering the meaning of the linguistic terms. (Fiillerin, 2010) also conducted an experimental study to find out the effect of CLT on the teaching of phrasal verbs in comparison with the traditional method. Generally, Phrasal verbs are difficult to teach due to their meaning different from parts, and only translation in the native language is also temporary learning. During the study when these phrasal verbs are taught by using CLT by creating an environment of discussion and guessing the meanings contextually, the students learnt them easily. The performance and learning process of the student showed that CLT is a better approach than the traditional methods.

CLT has been the part of the syllabuses in many developing countries but despite its scope and interest for English Language teaching its progress in Pakistan regarding its implementation is not very appreciating, researchers tried to find the reasons. In one of the studies by Panhwar et al. (2017) concluded that CLT is a very important approach and besides problems in uses in the classroom due to many contextual hurdles its implementation should not be ignored and be adapted to make the learning of language more effective than the traditional method.

Learning can only be made effective by an effective teaching approach, while the traditional methods have been under criticism due to their failure to meet the modern challenges of language teaching, expectations from CLT have been raised high due to its effectiveness. Ahmad and Rao (2013) conducted a study to see the effectiveness of CLT in comparison with GTM and to see the perception of Pakistani Teachers towards CLT, found the results of CLT better than GTM in teaching English in Pakistan also noticed willingness of teachers for its implementation in the classroom due to its positive impact in increasing learners' communicative ability and motivation for learning. CLT has been admired all over the world for its innovative techniques for creating communicative ability and has been in use in many countries of the world. Its adaptation in china is also not accidental, rather gone through different phases of evaluation after countering many problems and reached a satisfactory stage after eliminating incongruencies of traditional methods. Ju (2013) evaluated work of CLT to check its significance role regarding language teaching and found that by adjusting continuously and consistently CLT in combination with test system, environmental, educational and cultural background of the learners and teachers it has played a more significant role in language teaching (Samiullah & Zaigham, 2018)

## **Method and Procedure**

The details are as under:

## Design

The Quasi-experimental design had been used. More accurately, the Pretest-Posttest Non- Equivalent Control Group Design had been used.

## Sample

The total size of the sample had been 206.

#### Instrument

The instrument/tool used for gathering data was a test for functional writing. It had been piloted and pre and post tested before and after intervention.

## **Data Analysis**

The details of data analyses are as follows:

## **Overall Results**

Table 1 shows the overall effect of CLT on functional writing skills.

#### Table 1. Overall Results

Group		Pre- Test Mean	SD (Pre- Test)	Post-Test Mean	SD (Post- Test)	Gain	Effect Size	t- value	Sig (2- tailed)
Control (N=101)	Functional Writing	1.99	3.314	2.07	3.085	0.07 9	0.021	0.212	0.833

Experimental (N=106)	Functional Writing	4.31	3.765	8.15	4.373	3.83 8	0.585	7.359	0.000*
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The members of experimental group are better and they developed in functional writing statistically significant as compared to the control group taught through GTM.

## **Gender Wise Comparison**

It shows the comparison of the gain scores and the effect sizes of control and experimental groups highlighting the gender of the schoolchildren. Control group girls improved insignificantly in functional writing. There was a significant upgrade in the functional writing skills of experimental group female students. Similarly, boys in the control group did statistically insignificant improvement in functional writing scores. It was an ordinary improvement in functional writing. Experimental group boys were upgraded significantly on functional writing skills. Girls performed better than boys in functional writing because of higher effect sizes as displayed in the table ahead.

Group	Gender		Pre- Test Mean	SD (Pre- Test)	Post- Test Mean	SD (Post- Test)	Gain	Effect Size	t- value	Sig (2- tailed)
Control N=21	Girls	Functional Writing	0.25	1.043	1.60	2.502	1.350	0.419	2.064	0.053
Exp. N=12	Girls	Functional Writing	4.67	4.047	8.92	3.215	4.250	0.622	2.639	0.023*
Control N=81	Boys	Functional Writing	2.16	3.423	2.39	3.691	0.232	0.060	0.543	0.589
Exp. N=92	Boys	Functional Writing	4.32	3.747	8.00	4.435	3.685	0.598	6.690	0.000***

#### **Sector-Wise Comparison**

Similarly, and collectively, the gains of private sector students are better than public sector school students.

Table 3.	Sector-wise	Comparison
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Group	Sector		Pre- Test Mean	SD (Pre- Test)	Post- Test Mean	SD (Post- Test)	Gain	Effec t Size	t- value	Sig (2- tailed)
Control (N=54)	Public	Functional Writing	0.93	2.618	1.74	2.664	0.815	0.315	2.417	0.036

Experimental (N=57)	Public	Functional Writing	4.56	3.823	7.42	4.438	3.838	0.502	7.359	0.000"*
Control (N=47)	Privat e	Functional Writing	2.45	3.688	3.21	3.793	0.766	0.169	1.163	0.251
Experimental (N=48)	Privat e	Functional Writing	4.11	3.760	8.94	4.002	4.830	0.662	5.992	0.000***

The private schools' students improved more than the government's school students.

# Finding

The functional writing skills might be better if CLT is used in ELT classroom.

# Conclusion

The functional writing skills might be developed significantly by using Communicative Language Teaching approach both in boys and girls' schools in public as well as in private sector schools.

## Answers to the Research Questions

- 1. Yes. CLT is useful for improving functional writing.
- 2. CLT is better for functional writing of girls.
- 3. CLT is more effective in private schools.

#### Recommendations

- 1. CLT is recommended for teaching play writing.
- 2. CLT is valuable for teaching poetry.
- 3. CLT is advantageous for teaching prose writing.
- 4. CLT is worthwhile to teach essay.

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