



Research Article

Impact of Reading Newspaper on the Development of Second Language Learners' writing Skills

Fathima Suzani Mohamed Salih, Mohamed Jabeer Fathima Sujani, MR. Rishad Muhammed

1. Department of English, Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education, Sri Lanka; fsuzani4@gmail.com
2. Department of English, Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education, Sri Lanka; sujanifathima@gmail.com
3. Department of Arabic Language, Linguistics and Translation, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka; rishadhakeemi96@gmail.com

Copyright © 2024 by Authors, Published by **Elementaria**: Journal of Educational Research. This is an open access article under the CC BY License <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Received : December 06, 2024

Revised : December 30, 2024

Accepted : December 30, 2024

Available online : December 31, 2024

How to Cite: Fathima Suzani Mohamed Salih, Mohamed Jabeer Fathima Sujani, & MR. Rishad Muhammed. (2024). Impact of Reading Newspaper on the Development of Second Language Learners' writing Skills. *Elementaria: Journal of Educational Research*, 2(2), 136–158. <https://doi.org/10.61166/elm.v2i2.71>

Impact of Reading Newspaper on the Development of Second Language Learners' writing Skills

Abstract. This research investigates challenges in English writing skills among Grade 9 online learning students in the Kalmunai Zonal Education area of Sri Lanka. The objectives of the study are; to examine how reading newspaper helps in learners in enhancing vocabulary, to identify the

effectiveness of reading newspaper on the development of grammar competency, to assess the usefulness of newspaper reading on the development of accuracy in writing, to analyze the effectiveness of newspaper reading on the development of reading comprehension. Employing questionnaires for quantitative data collection, the study reveals a substantial consensus (98%) favoring the positive influence of newspapers on writing skills. Participants predominantly express strong agreement in relation to enhanced English writing skills, improved vocabulary, and better articulation of ideas through newspaper reading. Minimal disagreement responses underscore a consensus in recognizing the positive impact on language proficiency. Qualitative insights from focus group interviews complement quantitative data, offering depth to statistical trends. Participants articulate nuanced experiences, highlighting newspapers' positive effects on writing skills, creativity, critical thinking, and reading comprehension. These narratives enrich understanding of how and why newspaper reading contributes to language skill enhancement, particularly in writing. The synthesis of quantitative and qualitative findings provides a comprehensive perspective, affirming multifaceted benefits of regular newspaper engagement. Beyond quantifying prevalent positive attitudes, the research delves into participants' perceptions, motivations, and varied experiences. The study's quantitative data is derived from questionnaires, while qualitative insights are gathered through focus group interviews, establishing a methodologically robust foundation for exploring the intricate relationship between newspaper reading habits and language skills among second language learners. The research reveals that newspapers emerge as valuable educational tools, fostering language development across dimensions and serving as tools to enhance writing skills among Grade 9 online students.

Keywords: Reading Newspaper, Online Learning, Writing Skills, Reading Comprehension, Grammar Competency

Abstrak. Penelitian ini mengkaji tantangan keterampilan menulis bahasa Inggris di kalangan siswa Kelas 9 yang mengikuti pembelajaran daring di wilayah Pendidikan Zonal Kalmunai, Sri Lanka. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah: untuk memeriksa bagaimana membaca koran membantu siswa meningkatkan kosa kata, mengidentifikasi efektivitas membaca koran dalam pengembangan kompetensi tata bahasa, menilai manfaat membaca koran dalam meningkatkan akurasi menulis, serta menganalisis efektivitas membaca koran dalam pengembangan pemahaman bacaan. Dengan menggunakan kuesioner untuk pengumpulan data kuantitatif, penelitian ini mengungkapkan kesepakatan substansial (98%) yang mendukung pengaruh positif koran terhadap keterampilan menulis. Sebagian besar peserta menyatakan persetujuan kuat terkait peningkatan keterampilan menulis bahasa Inggris, peningkatan kosa kata, dan artikulasi ide yang lebih baik melalui membaca koran. Respon yang menunjukkan ketidaksepakatan minimal memperkuat pengakuan atas dampak positif terhadap kemahiran berbahasa. Wawasan kualitatif dari wawancara kelompok diskusi melengkapi data kuantitatif, memberikan kedalaman pada tren statistik. Peserta mengartikulasikan pengalaman yang mendalam, menyoroti efek positif koran terhadap keterampilan menulis, kreativitas, pemikiran kritis, dan pemahaman bacaan. Narasi ini memperkaya pemahaman tentang bagaimana dan mengapa membaca koran berkontribusi pada peningkatan keterampilan bahasa, khususnya menulis. Sintesis temuan kuantitatif dan kualitatif memberikan perspektif yang komprehensif, menegaskan manfaat multifaset dari keterlibatan rutin dengan koran. Selain mengukur sikap positif yang dominan, penelitian ini mendalami persepsi, motivasi, dan pengalaman beragam peserta. Data kuantitatif penelitian diperoleh dari kuesioner, sementara wawasan kualitatif dikumpulkan melalui wawancara

kelompok diskusi, membangun dasar metodologis yang kuat untuk mengeksplorasi hubungan kompleks antara kebiasaan membaca koran dan keterampilan bahasa di kalangan pembelajar bahasa kedua. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa koran muncul sebagai alat pendidikan yang berharga, mendorong pengembangan bahasa secara menyeluruh dan berfungsi sebagai sarana untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis di kalangan siswa daring Kelas 9.

Kata Kunci: Membaca Koran, Pembelajaran Daring, Keterampilan Menulis, Pemahaman Bacaan, Kompetensi Tata Bahasa

INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in English serves as the gateway to the technological and business currencies in the global arena. Second language acquisition is a complex and multifaceted process that encompasses various language skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Among these skills, writing stands as a fundamental aspect crucial for effective communication and academic success. For second language learners, the mastery of writing in a non-native language presents a significant challenge, often requiring diverse strategies and resources for improvement.

Newspapers may help pupils learn new words, and there are a range of topics that appeal to teenagers and children. Furthermore, including newspaper articles into everyday lessons has a significant impact on both teaching and learning (Sultana & Singh, 2022). The role of reading in language learning has been widely recognized as a pivotal factor in enhancing language proficiency. Reading serves as a gateway to vocabulary expansion, grammatical structures, and writing conventions. In this context, newspapers represent a valuable resource due to their comprehensive content, diverse writing styles, and real-world applicability.

They offer a broad spectrum of linguistic elements, from formal language used in news articles to informal language found in editorials, opinion pieces, and feature stories. Lack of reading of newspapers with reading strategies is seen as one of the reasons for failure in the performance in the professional writing in academic courses (Torgesen, 2000). Understanding the potential benefits of incorporating newspapers into language learning programs is essential.

Newspapers provide an authentic platform that exposes learners to various linguistic structures, cultural nuances, and current affairs. By analyzing news articles, editorials, and opinion pieces, learners are not only immersed in diverse writing styles but are also engaged in critical thinking, argumentation, and opinion formation, all of which are crucial components of proficient writing.

This research is intended to explore the impact of newspaper reading on the development of second language learners' writing skills, particularly the Grade 09 online students in Kalmunai Zonal Education area in Sri Lanka. This research aims to bridge the gap by investigating the extent to which regular newspaper reading

influences the development of writing skills among the students. Through a systematic examination of this relationship. This study seeks to provide insights that could contribute to the design of more effective language learning strategies and curriculum development.

General and Specific Objective

The general objective of this study is to investigate the impact of reading newspapers on the development of writing skills among Grade 09 online students in the Kalmunai Zonal Education area in Sri Lanka. The specific objectives include examining how reading newspapers helps learners enhance vocabulary, identifying the effectiveness of newspaper reading in developing grammar competency, assessing the usefulness of newspaper reading in improving writing accuracy, and analyzing the role of newspaper reading in fostering reading comprehension.

Research Questions

- I. What is the impact of reading newspapers on the development of vocabulary?
- II. Does reading newspapers assist learners in enhancing grammar competency?
- III. What is the relationship between reading newspapers and accuracy in writing?
- IV. How does reading newspapers help students in the development of reading comprehension?

Research Problem

Within the realm of language learning, an overarching concern revolves around the observable deficiencies in fundamental language skills among learners. This is particularly evident in areas such as reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary, and grammar. The focus of this concern is on Grade 9 online students within the Kalmunai Zonal Education area in Sri Lanka, where challenges in learning the English language are notably pronounced. Among these challenges, a specific emphasis is placed on the apparent weaknesses in their writing skills.

One prominent observation is that students frequently encounter difficulties in grasping reading comprehension strategies. This struggle significantly impacts their ability to comprehend and interpret various texts effectively. The consequence extends to their writing capabilities, as limitations in comprehending the meaning and nuances of written material impede their capacity to express themselves coherently in writing. This issue poses a substantial obstacle to the development of the students' language proficiency.

Moreover, there is a recurring pattern of deficiencies in vocabulary acquisition among these students. The limitations in their vocabulary pose challenges when attempting to articulate thoughts and ideas. Effective expression requires a rich and varied vocabulary, and the inadequacy in this aspect inhibits students from conveying their thoughts accurately and with nuance.

In addition to vocabulary challenges, students also grapple with the intricacies of grammar rules and structures. The lack of a solid foundation in grammar further compounds the hurdles in effective communication. Proper

grammar is fundamental to conveying ideas with precision, and its absence hinders the development of the students' overall language skills.

Drawing on research over the last decade, it becomes evident that the relationship between newspaper reading and professional writing performance has been a subject of exploration. Studies conducted by Oleg (1999) and Azizolah (2014) suggest a positive correlation between engagement with newspaper reading and enhanced performance in professional writing. This correlation underscores the potential benefits of incorporating newspaper reading into language learning contexts.

The identified weaknesses in reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary, and grammar among Grade 9 online students are critical impediments to their overall language proficiency. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses targeted interventions in reading strategies, writing skills development, vocabulary enhancement, and grammar instruction. Furthermore, the findings from research on newspaper reading highlight a potential avenue for intervention, suggesting that incorporating newspapers into the curriculum may contribute positively to the students' language learning journey.

The observed weaknesses in language skills among Grade 9 online students in the Kalmunai Zonal Education area of Sri Lanka present significant challenges to their language development. The intricate interplay between reading comprehension, writing skills, vocabulary, and grammar underscores the need for a comprehensive and targeted approach to address these deficiencies. The potential positive correlation between newspaper reading and professional writing performance offers a promising avenue for intervention and warrants further exploration in the context of language education.

María (2011) examines the relationship between the newspaper reading of students and their professional language skills with what is taking place in people by means of 19 news items with images beforehand testing and verbal performance beforehand giving the news items and afterward giving the news stuffs by approaching the pictorial illustration of minor settlers in a model of a native newspaper and the study finds that familiarizing pictorial grammar in an English language courses with the usage of newspapers, with multimodal writings in the teaching-learning procedure from writings of newspapers and enquiring students to assess this kind of writings, links the activities completed in the classroom to mature their language skills with what is taking place in people as per the day today vocabularies in the newspapers as per the method.

Despite the acknowledged significance of reading in language acquisition and the vital role it plays in enhancing various language skills, including writing proficiency, there remains a notable gap in specific exploration into the influence of newspaper reading on the advancement of writing abilities among Grade 9 online students in the Kalmunai Zonal Education area of Sri Lanka. While existing research

has underscored the importance of reading materials in language development, the direct correlation between consistent newspaper reading habits and the improvement of writing skills among the Grade 9 online students in the Kalmunai Zonal Education area of Sri Lanka learning a second language remains inadequately examined.

Addressing this research gap is essential for a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between reading habits and writing proficiency, especially in the context of second language acquisition. The unique challenges faced by Grade 9 online students, as highlighted in their struggles with reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and grammar, necessitate a targeted investigation into how newspaper reading can serve as a strategic intervention.

Moreover, the cultural and linguistic context of Sri Lanka adds another layer of complexity to the exploration. Understanding how the socio-cultural aspects influence language learning and the potential role of newspapers in this process is crucial for designing effective language education strategies. Investigating the impact of local and global news content on writing skills can provide valuable insights into the relevance and effectiveness of incorporating newspapers into the curriculum.

Theoretical and Analytical Framework

Hypothesis 1:

H0: There is no relationship between regular newspaper reading and improvements in writing skills among second language learners.

H1: Regular newspaper reading is positively related to enhanced writing proficiency in second language learners.

Hypothesis 2:

H0: There is no significant correlation between the frequency of newspaper reading and vocabulary improvement in second language learners.

H1: Increased frequency of newspaper reading is associated with expanded vocabulary among second language learners.

Hypothesis 3:

H0: There is no influence of consistent newspaper reading habits on the grammatical competence of second language learners.

H1: Regular exposure to newspapers contributes to improved grammatical skills in second language learners.

Hypothesis 4:

H0: Second language learners' preferences and attitudes toward newspaper reading do not impact their writing abilities.

H1: Positive perceptions and preferences for newspaper reading are associated with better writing skills in second language learners.

Literature Review

Mastering a language is an intricate journey, and continuous research in this field is paramount. The world's evolution into a global village, driven by heightened connectivity, underscores the crucial need for a common language, fostering global understanding (Canagarajah, 2007). Consequently, English has attained the status of a global or international language, spoken and understood across nearly every corner of the globe, emphasizing its pervasive influence in facilitating cross-cultural communication and collaboration (Phillipson, 2017).

The global landscape, as delineated by Yano (2017), is categorized into three distinct groups based on the position of English within each nation. The initial group encompasses countries where English serves as the native language. In the second category, English functions as a second language, prominently employed in education and various sectors, despite not being the native language. The third classification includes nations where English is not actively utilized, and it holds the status of a foreign language. Among these, Sri Lanka stands out as a notable example, extensively utilizing English as a second language, showcasing the widespread influence and adaptability of the English language in diverse global contexts.

THE ESSENCE OF READING

Reading is a fundamental habit of traditional education that persists in developing countries, first in families and then in kindergartens. Before the 1970s, the behavioral approach defined reading as "voicing the written symbols," focusing on the observed aspect of reading. Reading is emphasized as a metacognitive process that is governed by today's definitions of the term (Ocak & Karsh, 2022).

The inclination for reading refers to the consistent, regular, and essential act of reading throughout one's life, driven by personal necessity and enjoyment (Yilmaz, 1993). Reading is characterized as a procedure of seeing printed and composed words through intellect structures, interpreting and grasping them, in an informative way with printed and composed images, collection, clarification, and response process comprising of some perceptual and subjective exercises (Yagcioglu & Deger, 2002).

Reading is a set of skills that entails comprehending and illustrating meaning from the written word, according to (Linse & Nunan, 2005). Reading is a challenging activity that requires both perception and thought. Reading forms the foundation for every other crucial language-learning skill. When students flourish at reading, they enhance their language learning abilities. Reading is a vital practice that must be cultivated at a young age (Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003).

Reading is a challenging activity that requires both perception and thought. Reading forms the foundation for every other crucial language-learning skill. When students flourish at reading, they enhance their language learning abilities. Reading is a vital practice that must be cultivated at a young age (Bernhardt & Kamil, 2003).

"Reading habit is best formed at a young impressionable age in school, but once formed it can last one's lifetime" (Green, 2001). Gardner wrote in 2005, that reading habits could boost learners' productivity and creativity. As an outcome, reading habits could act as a framework for students to be more creative.

According to (Saartik, 2012), the process of writing must be considered in the wider context of reading activity. As stated by (Krashen, 2016), learning to write happens from reading as opposed to writing. According to (Linuwih & Winadhi, 2020), habits of reading are the most influencing factor in writing since people acquire new ideas, facts, information, knowledge, and experience throughout reading activities. Reading promotes learners to be more creative, build new ideas, and learn new things about numerous fields.

Oriogu (2017) elaborates on the research conclusions, indicating that reading behaviors have a significant effect on academic achievement. Many prior studies revealed a strong connection between habits of reading and writing proficiency. Many studies have indicated that in order to learn how to write, children must first read; by reading, they can enhance their vocabulary and gain confidence in their writing skills.

Setyaningsih (2012) discovered that reading habits exhibited a significant impact on writing performance, particularly vocabulary mastery, reading comprehension, and writing product. Many of the studies that have been performed in the past support the belief that a student's reading habit has an impact on their writing skills. Considering the Sri Lankan atmosphere, even though reading is taught in both public and private schools, teachers often claim that students are unable to write good sentences, are not innovative, and cannot generate new ideas. To address this issue, students should be encouraged to establish a habit of reading. This will help the pupils to become great writers in the future. This study, therefore, identifies how the student's reading habits affect their writing skills (Krashen, 2004 & 2011).

Reading is a crucial habit for getting knowledge. Reading develops creativity and helps readers develop their creative lateral thinking skills, so an effective reader who enjoys reading may confidently stand in front of an audience. Everyone has different habits, tastes, and options; therefore their reading preferences vary depending on their areas of interest, attention, aptitude, and circumstance. Reading preferences and abilities differ between men and women, as do reading curiosity, interests, and habits. Reading preferences are also influenced by age and gender, as different age groups have varying levels of interest, curiosity, or predisposition. Girls enjoy reading more than guys on average. According to (Clark & Foster, 2005).

According to the idea, girls have a significantly higher aptitude for reading than boys. Girls like reading for pleasure and to escape from the daily grind more than boys. Males are more likely to read with a utilitarian goal in mind, such as the prospect of a good job in the future (Mirza et al, 2021). As a result, it is generally accepted that kids' reading habits and performance are influenced by both gender

and nurture. Effective communication, on the other hand, improves a person's social and psychological well-being in all aspects of life. As a result, a child's environment and interactions with others have a significant impact on their mental development (Celik, 2020).

NEWSPAPER READING AS A SOURCE OF WRITING

Reading of daily Newspaper is valuable forever support to create reading behavior, procuring information, refreshing current news and familiarity with social interaction. They have an imperative part in students' life and education. Reading of daily paper familiarized the readers' storage facility of learning on consistently premise (Majumder & Hasan 2013).

Reading a newspaper is one of the most prevalent habits established by literate individuals around the world. Reading the newspaper is one of the most beneficial practices. It helps us get more familiar with world politics. We learn about recent occurrences from a reliable source. Newspapers can be viewed as a repository of knowledge, and they have always played an important role in informing and educating readers about their surroundings. It provides information about numerous facets of daily life, such as politics, social structure, religion, science, sports, entertainment, jobs, and many other topics. This exercise will help you improve your overall knowledge as well as your language proficiency and vocabulary (Ocak & Karsh, 2022).

Lack of reading of newspapers with reading strategies is seen as one of the reasons for failure in the performance in the professional writing in academic courses (Torgesen, 2000). During the last decade, numerous studies, such as those conducted by Oleg (1999) and Azizolah (2014), have delved into the connection between newspaper reading and performance in professional writing. Collectively, these investigations draw a compelling conclusion: a positive correlation exists between engagement with newspapers and enhanced proficiency in professional writing. The evidence suggests that incorporating newspaper reading into language learning fosters a beneficial impact on students' abilities to excel in written communication within professional contexts.

Newspaper-based activities can encourage students to engage in active learning and produce relevant texts. Newspapers provide reliable analysis of incidents and events. Tafani (2009), found that newspaper activities improve language skills at all levels, from elementary to advanced. Students are encouraged to improve their writing skills to showcase their articles in the journalism class. Newspapers serve as a valuable language learning tool with numerous educational advantages, fostering intelligence and a preference for education among dedicated readers (Kumar, Singh, & Siddiqui, 2011). Engaging with newspapers enhances knowledge, awareness, and reading habits, contributing to the development of strong study habits in specific fields.

Mehta (2010) found that newspaper-based activities effectively share information and enrich students' knowledge. Chowdhury & Halder (2016), clarified that newspapers are low cost. This informal learning source focuses on student-centered learning and improves writing for logic, purpose, and meaning. Newspapers play a role in disseminating inspiring ideas and fostering future comprehension. Engaging with newspapers can aid in expanding vocabulary and enhancing reading skills. According to Asokan & Dhanavandan (2013), professionals have efficiently utilized newspapers as a means to enhance their overall knowledge. Numerous studies suggest that children's newspaper reading habits are significantly influenced by their parents' reading behaviors. According to Stone & Wetherington (1979), parental newspaper reading behaviors play a crucial role in shaping and instilling leadership habits in their children, underscoring the substantial impact of parental modeling on the development of children's reading practices.

Using newspapers in the classroom enhances students' learning capacity and encourages them to engage with existing language resources. Kuncharapu (2018), considered newspapers can be a valuable resource in English language classes for improving language instruction. Newspapers provide EFL students with language and knowledge exposure, leading to improved English proficiency (Al-Rashdi & Al Azri, 2014), (Bucura & Posa, 2011).

Maria (2011) explores the correlation between students' newspaper reading habits and their professional language skills using 19 news items. The study introduces pictorial grammar through native newspaper models, integrating multimodal writings in English language courses. By connecting classroom activities to everyday vocabulary in newspapers, students' language skills are enhanced, as revealed in the study's findings. Newspapers aid students in establishing connections across diverse fields, subjects, topics, issues, and events, allowing them to pose pertinent questions. They should stimulate students with examples, behaviors, and practical issues of individuals, offering verbatim transcripts. Additionally, it empowers students to analyze primary lectures, press releases, statements, and reports independently, facilitating them in drawing their own conclusions (Denish, 2009).

Several research studies (Byun, 2014; Abd El-Gawad, 2013; Kortner, 2000) have explored students' opinions of utilizing newspapers to improve language abilities. These studies demonstrated that students experience good attitudes on newspapers' effectiveness in boosting EFL reading and writing skills. Newspaper-based activities provided students with relevant study resources, leading to increased motivation. Diana (2005) rigorously assesses the influence of authentic news in professional business simulations on English language class performance. Utilizing an appraisal system, the study gauges text authenticity, task authenticity, pedagogical authenticity, and learner authenticity. The results highlight a positive correlation between exposure to authentic business news and a notable

improvement in student performance within English language classes. This emphasizes the significance of incorporating real-world, industry-specific content for a more effective and meaningful learning experience. Teachers express worry regarding students' lack of interest in acquiring new vocabulary and are working on introducing methods and resources to motivate them. Classroom use of textbooks is prevalent as they address distinct language requirements and support the gradual enhancement of language skills (Wang et al., 2011).

"One of the most essential tools available to both educators and students is newspapers" (Valva, 2009). Newspapers, according to Valva, may be used as a motivating medium to inspire and excite students to engage in reading and organised activities. Most newspapers are currently available for free online; all you need is an internet connection to read them. With the development of mobile and internet technologies, e-paper is becoming growing in popularity among users who prefer it over hardcopy. E-paper is cheaper and versatile, rises to read the news without being restricted by time or space (Sharma et al, 2019).

Traditional printed media, including newspapers, emerge as crucial resources for teaching and learning, benefitting both educators and students. These materials assist teachers in conducting activities that integrate content reflecting contemporary lifestyles and expectations. Shen (2006) identified information and entertainment as the primary motivations for young individuals to engage in reading, with periodicals and newspapers emerging as their preferred choices, as indicated by the survey results.

As highlighted by Ahmmed (2016), the newspaper serves not only as a source of current information on local and global topics but also operates as a dynamic textbook. Through this, students can not only enhance their knowledge but also fortify their English language skills in the process. Learning language in context is vital," as evidenced by research, and newspapers prove to be a valuable resource for achieving this goal (Shoari & Aidinlou, 2015). Reading English newspapers not only allows students to enrich their vocabulary but also helps them develop the skill of quickly extracting the main points from a section (Ahmmed, 2016). In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the utilization of newspapers as additional resource materials in the teaching and learning of English (Pandey, 2019). Utilizing newspapers can significantly contribute to improving English language skills (Wolswinkel, 2008).

According to Afzal and Harun's research in 2013, English courses become more engaging when teachers and students delve into discussions about the daily news published in newspapers. Reading news articles, as suggested by the researchers, facilitates students' understanding of how writers convey their opinions and manipulate word knowledge. This active engagement with real-world language usage enhances the overall language learning experience.

Oleg (1999) meticulously investigates the impact of a reading-based integrated skills approach on the academic success of second-year university students in Russia. The method, encompassing pre-stage, reading stage, and post-stage testing, proves to be exceptionally effective even within the constraints of limited class time. This approach not only fosters improved English reading proficiency but also showcases its effectiveness in enhancing practical listening, speaking, and writing skills. The positive outcomes underscore its relevance and productivity in real-world educational settings.

David (2000) conducts empirical research to delve into students' newspaper and online reading habits and their influence on knowledge acquisition. The study unveils a correlation between the two variables, citing disparities in understanding experiences. Interestingly, online news readers exhibit a tendency to remember business and other topics from the Times newspaper, while being less likely to recall national and political news. This nuanced insight underscores the intricate relationship between reading habits and memory retention across different news domains.

Safana (2015) investigates the link between newspaper loud reading and spoken skills among Higher National Diploma in English – Part-Time students at Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education – Sammanthurai. The study offers conclusive evidence of a direct relationship, indicating that consistent use of newspapers for loud reading in classes significantly enhances students' spoken and effective communication skills over the semester.

METHOD

Research Context

In language acquisition, a significant issue revolves around observed deficiencies in essential language skills, particularly in writing among students. Numerous studies conclude that incorporating newspaper reading significantly improves learners' writing skills. Before delving into the necessity of this research, it is crucial to conduct a contextual analysis that synthesizes the available research.

Pandey (2019) notes a noticeable rise in using newspapers as supplementary resources for English language instruction. Ahmmed (2016) emphasizes their role as dynamic textbooks, enhancing knowledge and English skills beyond current affairs. Shoari and Aidinlou (2015) further validate newspapers as valuable resources for achieving language learning goals. Similarly, the potential positive correlation between newspaper reading and professional writing performance, as suggested by Oleg (1999), Azizolah (2014), Afzal, and Harun (2013), provides a promising avenue for intervention.

The current trend underscores a growing recognition of the potential benefits that newspapers can offer in the language learning process. However, despite these positive indications, the existing research landscape falls short in specific exploration into the influence of consistent newspaper reading on the advancement of writing

abilities among Grade 9 online students in the Kalmunai Zonal Education area of Sri Lanka.

This research gap is crucial to be addressed for a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between reading habits and writing proficiency, especially in the context of second language acquisition. This issue is particularly pronounced among Grade 9 online students in the Kalmunai Zonal Education area in Sri Lanka. A specific focus is directed towards the apparent weaknesses in their writing skills.

The identified weaknesses in reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary, and grammar among Grade 9 online students present significant obstacles to their overall language proficiency. Addressing these challenges necessitates a multifaceted approach that encompasses targeted interventions in reading strategies, writing skills development, vocabulary enhancement, and grammar instruction.

One of the two previous studies in the geographical area is Safana's (2015), examining the correlation between newspaper loud reading and spoken skills among Higher National Diploma in English students at Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education – Sammanthurai. While conducted in the close region, it differs contextually by focusing on spoken skills. The other study by Nowzath (2022) examines the connection between Daily Newspaper reading and writing skills among Higher National Diploma in English students at the Advanced Technological Institute of Sammanthurai. Although conducted in a nearby region, the emphasis is on students in higher education.

In conclusion, in the realm of online learning, where students lack significant one-on-one writing support and operate without constant monitoring, the situation is compounded by the fact that these students are in the early stages of their secondary education. Consequently, there is a pressing need for them to actively assess and improve their writing abilities in this digital learning environment. The identified deficiencies in language skills among Grade 9 online students, coupled with the potential benefits of newspaper reading and additional insights from Afzal and Harun (2013), Safana (2015) and Nowzath (2022) underscore the need for a comprehensive investigation.

This research aims to explore the impact of consistent newspaper reading on the development of writing abilities, considering the unique educational context of the Kalmunai Zonal Education area in Sri Lanka. The integration of various perspectives provides a robust foundation for understanding the multifaceted role of newspapers in language learning and the potential implications for writing proficiency enhancement.

Participants

Data was systematically collected from a carefully chosen sample of 25 Grade 9 online students engaged in English as a second language within the Kalmunai

Zonal Education area in Sri Lanka. This sample size was thoughtfully determined to strike a balance between the depth of analysis and the practicality of data collection within the designated three month timeframe after a pre-test of the selected students.

Instruments of Data Collection

Following the pre-test of the selected students, the deliberate selection of 25 students has yielded a representative and meaningful dataset, facilitating focused and in-depth analysis of their language learning experiences. To initiate data collection, a questionnaire comprising 20 questions was distributed among Grade 9 online students in the Kalmunai Zonal Education area of Sri Lanka. In addition, a focus group interview was conducted with 10 students from the same group of 25 online students, where the author directly interacted to collect data in a detailed manner using a prepared set of interview questions.

Complementing this quantitative approach, a qualitative dimension was introduced through a focus group interview involving 10 students. This interactive session, where the author directly engaged with the participants, was structured around a set of meticulously prepared interview questions. This qualitative component aims to enrich the theoretical framework by providing detailed insights into the students' language learning experiences within the online environment. In the end, a post-test is carried out to verify the accuracy of the research.

Procedures of Study

This study investigates the relationship between newspaper reading habits and their writing skills among second language learners. The following procedures outline the systematic approach employed to gather, analyze, and interpret data, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the impact of regular newspaper reading on writing skills, vocabulary, and grammatical competence. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods, this research seeks to contribute valuable insights to the understanding of language learning experiences in an online context.

In Chapter 1, the problem is distinctly defined, delving into the impact of newspaper reading habits on the writing skills of second language learners and Chapter 1 also clearly explain the hypothesis. Chapter 2 proceeds to literature review, elucidating the theoretical underpinnings that form the backdrop of the research, aiming to establish a comprehensive background and identify gaps in the current body of research.

Research Design

The Research Design explore the impact of newspaper reading habits on the language skills of second language learners among 25 online students. The study adopts a concurrent mixed-methods approach to investigate the influence of newspaper reading habits on the writing skills of 25 Grade 9 online students in the Kalmunai Zonal Education area, Sri Lanka. The quantitative phase involves administering a pre-test questionnaire with 20 questions, covering aspects such as

newspaper reading habits, writing skills, vocabulary, grammar, and attitudes. Data collected from the questionnaire is analyzed using statistical methods such as correlation and regression. The qualitative phase consists of a focus group interview conducted with a subgroup of 10 students selected from the initial participant pool. This interview, employing a set of prepared questions, aims to delve into participants' perceptions and attitudes toward newspaper reading. Thematic analysis will be applied to identify patterns and themes in the qualitative data. The study integrates both quantitative and qualitative findings for a comprehensive understanding and concludes with a post-test questionnaire to measure changes in language skills over time. The research findings are compiled into a detailed report summarizing the methodology, results, and conclusions.

Data Analysis

The quantitative phase involves a detailed examination of responses obtained from 25 Grade 9 online students through a questionnaire consisting of 20 questions. The numerical patterns derived from mean and standard deviation calculations offer a quantitative lens through which the research scrutinizes the participants' perceptions of the relationship between newspaper reading and writing skills.

Complementing this, the qualitative phase provides a nuanced exploration of the students' lived experiences, with themes emerging from a focused group interview involving 10 participants. The qualitative insights, expressed through individual narratives, bring depth and context to the numerical findings. Through this data-driven exploration and participant narratives, the research sheds light on the dynamic relationship between newspaper reading and the cultivation of effective written communication skills in the context of second language acquisition.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative Findings

The study employed a robust methodological approach with SPSS method, featuring a carefully selected sample of 25 Grade 9 online students in the Kalmunai Zonal Education area in Sri Lanka. A comprehensive questionnaire, consisting of 20 questions, was administered to gauge 25 participants' attitudes towards the impact of newspaper reading on writing skills. Appendix 1 of this research includes the full questionnaire that was circulated among the students together with responses.

The questionnaire responses were collected on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 denotes "Strongly Agree", 2 denotes "Agree", 3 denotes "Slightly Agree", 4 denotes "Disagree" and 5 represents "Strongly Disagree." This scale was utilized to assess participants' perceptions regarding the impact of newspaper reading on different aspects of their language skills. As delving into the summary of responses, it is essential to note that the higher the mean value, the higher the agreement, reflecting a positive response towards the influence of newspaper reading on writing skills.

In contrast, the remaining responses, including "Slightly Agree" with 5 responses, "Disagree" with 2 responses, and "Strongly Disagree" with 0 response, constitute a comparatively minimal proportion. These divergent opinions are overshadowed by the overwhelmingly positive sentiments expressed by the majority. The following summary provides an overview of participants' sentiments across various questions: Appendix 1 of this research includes the full questionnaire that was circulated among the students together with responses.

Table 1. Distribution of Responses on the Impact of Newspaper Reading

Response Category	Scale	Number of Responses
Strongly Agree	1	421
Agree	2	72
Slightly Agree	3	5
Disagree	4	2
Strongly Disagree	5	0

In addition to the main questionnaire for data collection a post-test questionnaire was circulated at the end of the research among the same students to ensure the validity of the quantitative data with five questions. Appendix 3 of this research includes the full questionnaire that was circulated among the students together with responses. Post-test questionnaire responses add conformity to the quantitative findings and lean toward a positive trend.

Mean and/or Average of Questionnaire Responses

The calculated mean for the "Strongly Agree" responses, based on the provided data, is approximately 0.842 out of 1. This implies that, out of the total 500 responses, a substantial 84% align with the sentiment of "Strongly Agree," indicating a predominant consensus among participants in favor of the positive impact of newspaper reading. Furthermore, an additional 14% of respondents express agreement with the given statement, contributing to the overall favorable stance. This overwhelming affirmation from the majority of participants underscores a robust inclination toward the idea that reading newspapers enhances various aspects of language skills.

In contrast, the remaining responses, including "Slightly Agree" with 5 responses, "Disagree" with 2 responses, and "Strongly Disagree" with 0 responses, constitute a comparatively minimal proportion. These divergent opinions are overshadowed by the overwhelmingly positive sentiments expressed by the majority. These findings collectively suggest a strong and consistent agreement among participants regarding the beneficial influence of newspaper reading on language skills, particularly its positive impact on enhancing writing abilities.

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW RESPONSES

In the exploration of the impact of newspaper reading on language skills, the research turns its attention to the rich insights garnered from a focus group interview involving ten students. Through a series of probing questions, the author delves into

the participants' perspectives on their newspaper reading habits and the perceived influence on their English writing skills. The responses offer a nuanced understanding of how regular engagement with newspapers shapes various facets of language proficiency, from articulating ideas and incorporating diverse writing styles to enhancing critical thinking and comprehension skills.

This qualitative exploration serves as a complementary lens to the quantitative analysis, providing depth and context to the overall investigation. Summarized findings derived directly from the voices of the participants are captured on different aspects of newspaper reading. Appendix 2 of this research includes the focus group interview questions that were circulated among the students.

Reading Frequency: Participants consistently reported engaging with newspapers twice a week, showcasing a deliberate and committed effort to harness the potential of print media for enhancing their English writing skills. The frequency of their interaction with newspapers underscores a strategic approach to language development, highlighting a sustained commitment to incorporating diverse reading materials into their routine. This intentional engagement indicates a recognition among participants of the valuable role that newspapers play in contributing to their language enhancement journey. Beyond a sporadic engagement, the regularity of their newspaper reading habits suggests a conscious effort to harness the continual linguistic benefits offered by this particular medium, further emphasizing the depth of their commitment to language proficiency.

Articulation Improvement: There was a unanimous belief among participants that reading news articles has notably enhanced their ability to articulate ideas in writing. This improvement was attributed to exposure to diverse writing styles found in newspapers, reflecting a positive correlation between exposure to varied content and enhanced articulation skills.

Creativity Influence: Participants, in acknowledging the positive influence of newspapers on their creativity in writing, unveiled a transformative impact on their approach to various writing forms. The expressed newfound confidence extends beyond a mere enhancement of skills; it marks a significant shift in participants' capabilities to navigate diverse genres of writing. The versatility demonstrated in tackling informal letters, notes, advertisements, and essays reflects a holistic development in their creative expression. This broadened scope of writing forms attests to the profound impact of newspapers not only on specific skills but also on the overall creative acumen of participants. The recognition of enhanced confidence becomes a key narrative, emphasizing the role of newspapers as catalysts for empowering individuals to explore and excel in an array of writing styles, thereby contributing to a comprehensive and enriched creative writing repertoire.

Complex Ideas Expression: The influence of newspapers extended to the expression of complex ideas, with participants reporting increased confidence

fostered by the diverse writing styles encountered in newspaper articles. This finding suggests that exposure to varied content plays a role in participants' confidence levels in handling intricate writing challenges.

Incorporating News into Assignments: Participants commonly incorporated information from news articles into their written assignments. This practice was seen as a direct application of the global perspective provided by newspapers on current events, reflecting the integration of external knowledge into academic endeavors.

Critical Thinking Enhancement: The emergence of reading newspapers as a catalyst for enhancing critical thinking skills in written communication underscores a dynamic interplay between diverse content and participants' cognitive development. The expansive exposure to articles spanning political, sports, entertainment, and current affairs provides a rich tapestry for participants to engage with multifaceted perspectives. The participants, in their acknowledgment of the enriching nature of this exposure, shed light on a transformative journey in critical thinking. The range of subjects covered in newspapers not only diversifies the intellectual terrain but also prompts individuals to navigate through complex narratives and viewpoints. This multifaceted engagement serves as a springboard for honing critical thinking abilities, as participants learn to decipher, analyze, and synthesize information from a variety of sources. In essence, the role of newspapers as facilitators of critical thinking extends beyond the individual articles; it becomes an immersive experience that nurtures participants' ability to approach written communication with analytical depth and a nuanced understanding of diverse perspectives.

Reading Comprehension Improvement: The qualitative exploration uncovered improvements in overall reading comprehension skills since incorporating newspaper reading into participants' routines. Reading strategies learned from newspapers were credited with contributing to enhanced comprehension.

Influence on Argumentation Skills: Exposure to diverse opinions and perspectives in newspapers was reported to positively influence participants' argumentation skills in writing. Different viewpoints presented in articles were seen as contributing to the development of robust argumentative abilities.

Awareness of Writing Tones and Registers: Reading newspapers increased participants' awareness of different writing tones and registers. Exposure to various authors and their distinct styles played a role in this heightened awareness, showcasing the impact of diverse content on participants' writing competencies.

Influence on Topic Choice: While not universally agreed upon, some participants believed that newspapers influenced their choice of topics and themes in their own writing assignments. This finding suggests a nuanced relationship between newspaper content and participants' creative and thematic choices.

Conciseness and Clarity: The habit of reading newspapers positively impacted participants' ability to write concise and clear sentences, contributing to improved communication. This aligns with the perception that exposure to well-structured news content translates to clarity in participants' writing.

Impact on Essay and Article Construction: Reading newspapers daily was perceived as beneficial for constructing well-organized essays or articles. The practice was associated with vocabulary development and learning new ways of writing, emphasizing the multifaceted benefits derived from consistent newspaper reading.

Writing Speed and Efficiency: Participants noted an increase in writing speed and efficiency since incorporating newspaper reading into their routines. Exposure to various writing styles in one consolidated source contributed to improved writing patterns and efficiency.

CONCLUSION

The research comprehensively explored the impact of newspaper reading on the writing skills of Grade 09 online students in the Kalmunai Zonal Education area of Sri Lanka. By synthesizing quantitative insights and qualitative narratives, the study unraveled the intricate relationship between newspaper reading habits and language skill development. Quantitative findings revealed a strong consensus, with 84% of participants "strongly agreeing" and 14% "agreeing" on the beneficial effects of newspaper reading, highlighting improvements in vocabulary, grammar, and writing articulation. Responses to post-test questionnaires further validated these findings, indicating frequent newspaper engagement and enhanced writing confidence, supported by positive feedback from teachers and improved exam results. Qualitative insights enriched this analysis, as participants emphasized newspapers' role in fostering creativity, critical thinking, and reading comprehension, thereby affirming their multifaceted impact on writing skills.

The study faced limitations, including the homogeneous sample size, reliance on self-reported data prone to social desirability bias, and a cross-sectional design that limited causal inferences. Future research is recommended to address these gaps by incorporating diverse media formats, longitudinal studies, and culturally varied samples to explore broader implications. Investigating the effects of multimedia sources alongside traditional newspapers and focusing on specific writing genres across different contexts would provide deeper insights into how evolving media consumption practices influence language skill development. These efforts would aid in adapting educational strategies to modern trends and fostering sustained improvements in writing proficiency.

REFERENCES

Abd El-Gawad, A. M. (2013). The effect of using newspaper-based instruction on developing some reading comprehension skills among FL secondary school students. Published MA thesis, faculty of education, Benha University.

- Afzal, N., & Harun, M. (2013). On opinion and persuasive writing: Teaching English through editorials. *The Modern Language Journal*, 4(2), 57-65. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all.v.4n.2p.57>
- Ahmed, R. (2016). Effectiveness of reading English newspapers for improving vocabulary and reading skills of students at Dhaka University. *The Millennium University Journal*, 1(1), 68-76. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327891038>
- Al-Rashdi, H. M., & Alzri, H. R. (2014). The Effect of using authentic materials in teaching. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, 3(10), 249-252.
- Asokan, L., & Dhanavandan, S. (2013). Reading habits of newspapers among engineering professionals: An analytical study. *International Journal of Library and Information Studies*, 3(4), 36-41.
- Azizolah, D. (2014). Explore the relationship between strategy use and ESP reading test performance of two university majors (Humanities vs. Science). *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4, 121-128.
- Bernhardt, E., & Kamil, M. (2003). *Teaching Reading (Educational Practices Series Number 12)*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Academy of Education.
- Byun, B. (2014). English newspaper mediated writing for Korean high school students: A course design. Published MA thesis, Oregon University.
- Canagarajah, A. S. (2007). The ecology of global English. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 1(2), 89-100.
- Celik, B. (2020). A Study on the factors affecting reading and reading habits of preschool children. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 10(1), 101-114.
- Chowdhury, S., & Halder, S. (2016). Educational dissemination through newspaper daily. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(7).
- Clark, C., & Foster, A. (2005). *Children's and Young People's Reading Habits and Preferences: The Who, What, Why, Where and When*. National Literacy Trust.
- David, T., & Scott L. A. (2000). Differences in knowledge acquisition among readers of the paper and online versions of a national newspaper. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly-America*, pp.458-479.
- Diana, P. (2005). The authenticity of business simulations in ESP: implications for materials design. *Global Business Languages*.
- Furrakh Abbas, Muhammad Faisal Farid, Asif Iqbal & Sabahat Parveen. Impact of using Newspapers Reading in improving English reading proficiency: A Study of Pakistan
- Tilak, G. & Bhaumik, A. (2021). Inculcating the habit of reading newspapers among college students and understanding its influence on the content they prefer: *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry (TOJQI)*.
- Johnson, A. (2008). *Teaching Reading and Writing: Research-based strategies for teachers, tutors, parents, and paraprofessionals*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and

- Littlefield.
- Kortner, A. (2000). Newspapers as a teaching resource for adult learners. The Eric Database.
- Kumar, D., Singh, R., & Siddiqui, J. A. (2011). Newspaper Reading Habits of University Students: A Case Study of Chaudhary Charan Singh University, India. *Library Philosophy and Practice* (e-journal), Paper 470. Available at <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/470>.
- Kuncharapu, R. (2018). Reading newspaper as a pedagogical technique for second language learners. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Review*, 7(3), 293.
- Linse, C. T., and Nunan, D. (2005). *Practical English Language Teaching: Young Learners*. McGraw-Hill ESL/ELT, New York.
- Linuwih, C., & Winadhi, F. (2020). Impact of reading habit on language development: a case study on Kenyan university students.
- Maria, M. L. (2011). Teaching visual grammar and social issues in an English language course: an example using multimodal texts on immigrant minors from a Spanish newspaper. University of South Africa (UNISA).
- Majumder, D., & Hasan, M. M. (2013). Newspaper reading habits of private university students: A case study on World University of Bangladesh. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*, 12(1), 87-91.
- Mehta, N. K. (2010). English newspapers: Exploring innovative methodological paradigm A study into classroom dynamics. *Romanian Journal of Education*, 1(1), 55-60.
- Mirza, Q., Ansari, S., Khatoon, S., Pathan, H., Raheem, M. A., & Mushaq, F. (2021). Gender impact on engineering students' reading habits and performance: a study of Pakistani University Students. *The Asian ESP Journal*, 17(3.2), 128-144.
- Mohideen Bawa Nowzath. (2022). Effectiveness of the reading of Newspaper with bottlepolythene-circle reading strategies on the performance in professional writing. *ATIKAS*.
- Muhammad Ali & Sakeena Mehak (2022). The newspaper reading habits of university students: a case study of the University of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. *Journal of Higher Education and Development Studies*.
- Ocak, G., & Karlı, E. (2022). Relationship between critical reading skills and creative reading perceptions of fifth-grade students. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 10(3), 91-100.
- Oleg, T. (1999). Reading-based integrated skills instruction: A bridge to success when teaching ESP in limited class conditions limited. *TESL Reporter*, pp.32, 9-15.
- Oriogu Chuks Daniel (2017). Effect of Reading Habits on the Academic Performance of Students: A Case Study of the Students of Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State.
- Pandey, S. K. (2019). The trend of reading newspaper among the youth in the 21st

- century (A study based on youth and daily Hindi newspapers of Varanasi).
International Journal of
Advance and Innovative Research, 1-13. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1598/rrq.39.2.2>
- Phillipson, R. (2017). Myths and realities of 'global' English. *Language Policy*, 16(3), 313-331.
- Saartik, S. (2012). The Impact of the Reading Habit on the Writing Skills of Primary Students. *Studies in Linguistics and Literature. International Journal of English Linguistics*.
- Safana, J. (2015). Speaking skill with loud reading to the tertiary-level students in higher education. *Leading Reading*, 9(1), 22-32.
- Sharma, C., & Saini, R. (2019). Newspaper reading habit among the students of university college Kurukshetra: A case study. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1-12.
- Shen, L. (2006). Computer technology and students' reading habits. *Chia-nan Annual Bulletin*, Vol. 32, pp 559-572.
- Shoari, E., & Aidinlou, N. A. (2015). Zone of proximal development: The effect of verbal scaffolding on improving Iranian young EFL learners' vocabulary learning. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 2(8), 208-217. Retrieved from www.jallr.com
- Sultana, S., & Sarjit Singh, M. K. (2022). The Usefulness of Reading English Newspaper on Vocabulary Knowledge at Primary Level Students of Bangladesh. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies*.
- Tafari, V. (2009). Teaching English through mass media. *Acta Didactica Napocensia*, 2(1), 84-86.
- Torgesen, J. K. (2000). Individual differences in response to early interventions in reading: The lingering problem of treatment resisters. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 15(1), 55-64.
- Valva, L. (2009). Benefits of using newspapers, magazines, and books in the classroom. *LCPJPublishing*, 2(2), 1217. Retrieved from <https://www.lcpj.pro/skedaret/1354544987Article%2011.pdf>
- Wang, W., Lin, C., & Lee, C. (2011). Thinking of the textbook in the ESL/EFL.
- Wolswinkel, H. (2008). Newspaper reading: The explaining factors of newspaper reading behavior of young adults (Master's thesis, University of Twente, Enschede, Netherlands). Retrieved from https://essay.utwente.nl/59108/1/scriptie_H_Wolswinkel.
- Yagcioglu, S., & Deger, A. C. (2002). A workshop study on the acquisition of metacognitive reading skills. *Proceedings Presented in the Second Turkish and Turkish Language and Literature Symposium*.
- Yano, Y. (2017). Communication in English as a lingua franca: The Kachruvian model of three circles reconsidered. In *World Englishes* (pp. 136-153). Routledge.

Yılmaz, B. (1993). The role of public libraries in reading habits. Ankara: Ministry of Culture. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 174, 3983–3990.