



REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56636

Title: SCOPING THE IMPACT OF THE FUNCTIONAL-NOTIONAL APPROACH AND THE READING METHOD ON EFL LEARNERS' WRITING PROFICIENCY: A QUASI EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOL-BASED STUDY.

Recommendation:

- Accept as it is
- Accept after minor revision.....
- Accept after major revision
- Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		...		
Techn. Quality	...			
Clarity		...		
Significance	...			

Reviewer's ID: JPR-180

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The research paper titled “Scoping the Impact of the Functional-Notional Approach and the Reading Method on EFL Learners’ Writing Proficiency: A Quasi-Experimental School-Based Study” investigates the effectiveness of integrating the Functional-Notional Approach (FNA) with the Reading Method (RM) in improving English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners’ writing proficiency in a secondary school context in Benin. The study emerges from the persistent problem that many EFL learners struggle with writing skills due to the continued reliance on traditional teaching methods such as the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). The author highlights that conventional instruction prioritizes memorization of grammatical rules rather than meaningful language use, which leads to poor performance in written expression. Consequently, the study aims to examine whether communicative and reading-based pedagogies can significantly enhance learners’ writing competence. The introduction effectively establishes the research problem by contextualizing the weaknesses of the existing English language teaching system in Beninese secondary education. It notes that national examination reports repeatedly identify writing as the weakest skill among learners, indicating a mismatch between teaching practices and communicative language needs. The study therefore proposes an instructional model that combines the Functional-Notional Approach, which organizes language teaching around communicative functions, with the Reading Method, which provides structured input through reading texts. By combining these two pedagogical approaches, the research attempts to create a more holistic framework that connects reading input with writing production. The author also clearly outlines three research questions that guide the investigation: identifying obstacles to writing instruction, measuring the impact of the integrated approaches on writing proficiency, and examining teacher and learner perceptions of these methods.

The literature review is comprehensive and grounded in well-established theoretical frameworks. It draws upon Communicative Competence Theory, which emphasizes the importance of using language appropriately in social contexts rather than merely mastering grammatical structures. The review also incorporates Krashen’s Input Hypothesis, which suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input slightly beyond their current proficiency level. Additionally, the reading-writing connection model is discussed, highlighting the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing in language development. The author effectively integrates classical and contemporary research to support the theoretical rationale of the study. For instance, scholars such as Graham and Hebert are cited to demonstrate that reading activities significantly enhance writing performance by improving vocabulary, coherence, and textual organization. This theoretical integration strengthens the study by positioning it within broader language-learning research. Methodologically, the study employs a quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test control group design, which allows the researcher to compare the effects of the intervention with traditional instruction. Sixty Grade 9 students were divided into two groups: an experimental group that received

International Journal of Advanced Research

Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research LLP

www.journalijar.com

REVIEWER'S REPORT

FNA- and RM-integrated instruction and a control group that continued with conventional Grammar-Translation teaching. The intervention lasted eight weeks, during which the experimental group engaged in structured reading activities, functional language analysis, guided writing tasks, and peer review sessions. Multiple instruments were used to collect data, including writing tests, questionnaires for teachers and students, classroom observations, and pilot surveys. This mixed-methods approach enhances the reliability of the study by combining quantitative performance data with qualitative insights regarding classroom experiences.

In addition to measuring writing outcomes, the study also explores the challenges faced by teachers and learners in the EFL classroom. Questionnaire responses reveal several structural barriers affecting language instruction, including large class sizes, limited teaching resources, and insufficient instructional time. Teachers also reported a lack of training in communicative teaching methods, which restricts the practical implementation of approaches like the Functional-Notional Approach. Learners, on the other hand, identified difficulties such as limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, low motivation, and inadequate feedback from teachers. These findings illustrate that writing difficulties stem not only from linguistic weaknesses but also from institutional and psychological factors that influence learning. The discussion section interprets these results within the broader context of communicative language teaching. The author argues that the integrated FNA-and-RM approach effectively addresses common weaknesses in EFL writing instruction by combining meaningful input with communicative practice. The study also highlights the discrepancy between teachers' theoretical support for communicative pedagogy and their actual classroom practices. Although teachers recognize the value of learner-centered instruction, they often rely on traditional teaching methods due to systemic constraints such as examination-oriented curricula and overcrowded classrooms. This observation reflects a broader challenge in many developing educational systems where pedagogical reforms are introduced but not fully implemented. Despite its valuable contributions, the study acknowledges several limitations. The relatively small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings, and the short duration of the intervention may not fully capture long-term improvements in writing proficiency. Additionally, the research was conducted in a single school, which means that contextual factors specific to that institution may have influenced the results. Future studies are therefore recommended to replicate the research with larger samples, longer intervention periods, and multiple schools to provide stronger empirical evidence.

In conclusion, the study provides convincing evidence that integrating the Functional-Notional Approach with the Reading Method can significantly improve EFL learners' writing proficiency. By emphasizing communicative language use and reading-based input, the proposed instructional framework addresses key deficiencies associated with traditional grammar-translation instruction. The research therefore contributes valuable insights to the field of language pedagogy, particularly in resource-constrained educational contexts where learners have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Its findings also have important implications for curriculum development, teacher training programs, and classroom teaching practices aimed at enhancing writing competence among EFL learners.