Elementary English Learners' Perceptions on the Oral Rehearsal in Writing Activity*

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The purpose of this paper is to explore the effectiveness of using oral rehearsal as a pre-writing strategy in EFL classrooms. This study discusses the concept of oral rehearsal and its benefits in EFL classrooms, to develop students' writing skills. Oral rehearsal involves an integrated approach between speaking and writing skills, with students speaking prior to writing. In this research, subjects consisted of 43 students from the 6th-grade classes located in Gangwon province, with 21 students in the experimental group and 22 in the control group. The treatment group employed oral rehearsal as a pre-writing strategy, while the control group utilized brainstorming before writing. The findings revealed that the experimental group scored significantly higher on writing tests compared to the control group, indicating the effectiveness of oral rehearsal. In addition, the experimental group reported higher levels of interest and motivation, with less anxiety toward English writing than the control group after the experiment. In conclusion, the integrated technique of oral rehearsal can be a valuable tool for EFL students to enhance their writing skills. Further research is recommended to explore the pedagogical implications of oral rehearsal in language classrooms.

I. INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal to learn a foreign language is to achieve communicative competence, which is the ability to convey one's opinions effectively. Communication occurs in both written and spoken language realms. Isaacson (1988) argued that "writing is a form of communication that is intended for a receiver to remove in time and space from the sender" (p. 528). However, writing is generally considered more challenging for language learners than talking. Writing is a process of encoding meaning into the text. All language

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learners go through a complex process to transform their ideas into text form. Therefore, even native speakers should learn writing systematically and consciously, as the language area is not acquired as naturally as reading and listening skills. This research calls attention to the critical issue of teaching English writing skills to emergent learners in Korean public schools in need of developing their proficiency in writing in English.

Over the years, most English classes have focused on spoken language-centered lessons in Korean elementary school settings (Jang, 2022; Lee, 2021). As noted by many researchers, teaching that emphasizes speaking skills can effectively foster English language learning among emergent students (e.g., Dockrell et al., 2010; Kieffer, 2012; Park et al., 2001). It is widely accepted that by engaging students in interactive activities, oral-centered language lessons can improve students' affective domain elements such as motivation, confidence, and interest. This is especially relevant when considering the level of English proficiency of elementary students. The primary goal of English language instruction in elementary schools is to provide students with continuous and voluntary opportunities to study English, which is achieved by placing it at the center of instruction.

However, some argue that written language has shed little light on elementary English classrooms, despite its importance in language learning. With the rise of technological development, multiple communication methods have emerged, including both oral and written communication through platforms such as social media or text messaging. Moreover, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, most educational institutions of all levels have adopted distance learning, exposing students to diverse mediums for expressing their opinions successfully, such as written letters, audio recordings, and videos. Thus, English beginners need to achieve communication skills in both written and oral language in the twenty-first century.

Writing skill is very demanding for language learners. Compared to speech, writing tends to be more condensed in terms of vocabulary and connectivity (Myhill, 2009). Therefore, English teachers should develop an effective writing strategy for English classes for beginners. To deal with the cognitive and affective difficulties in composition classes, second language educators heavily emphasize pre-writing techniques, such as generating and organizing ideas and outlining drafts.

This study aims to highlight the effectiveness of oral rehearsal as a pre-writing strategy by calling on an association with production skills. Although talk before writing has been prevalent in early years classrooms, the integrated approach of connecting productive speaking and writing skills has received relatively little attention from researchers. Therefore, this research is supposed to ferret out an integrated approach to the writing process by examining the concept of 'oral rehearsal' and its relationship to English writing in elementary education. The following questions will be explored in this study.

Research Question #1: To what extent does the integrated speaking and writing instruction, through oral rehearsal, improve the writing competence (vocabulary, phrases,

sentences, and free-writing) of 6th-grade students in a quantitative manner?

Research Question #2: Does the integrated speaking and writing instruction through oral rehearsal have an influence on 6th-grade students' affective domain with regards to their English writing ability?

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Exploring the Concept of Oral Rehearsal

Oral rehearsal is now frequent in English classroom worldwide. It is a writing strategy that is distinct from English speaking practice, such as speech patterns or drills. One overarching point of oral rehearsal is to articulate content in a structured format, different from natural speech. During an oral rehearsal activity, students produce organized contents by saying aloud, rather than generating ideas by speaking random words or talking spontaneously. Previous research papers have attempted to define the term of oral rehearsal, but Myhill and Jones (2009) argued that the meaning of the term has not been thoroughly developed in theory. They addressed that no exact explanation or reasoning for the potential advantages of oral rehearsal could be found. In exploring the concept and a theoretical understanding of oral rehearsal, Myhill and Jones offered valuable insights as a reference work for scholars and teachers into oral rehearsal in their works. They added that oral rehearsal can be often employed in the context of language development, particularly in the area of second language learning.

The term 'oral rehearsal' refers to rehearsing a draft orally prior to writing the text. In other words, oral rehearsal is the practice of speaking out loud a draft of what a student intends to write in precisely the way it will be written. Oral rehearsal involves taking spoken ideas and converting them into written sentences through oral expression before they are actually written down (Fisher et al., 2010). According to Aubry (1997), in her study of using oral rehearsal for students with difficulties in retrieval, oral rehearsal refers to students discussing the subject matter verbally before writing. By saying the writing content loudly, students can practice producing written text in oral form. This helps students to transform their spoken ideas into written sentences through verbal expression before they put them into writing. Myhill and Jones (2009) suggested that oral rehearsal is used loosely as a synonym for talk, at its most liberal (p. 265). In this study, oral rehearsal can be defined as a pre-writing strategy, that is, an integrated strategy combining speaking and writing in language classrooms to develop whole productive skills. In this study, oral rehearsal means a pre-writing strategy of writing aloud in formally written structures.

2. Review of Related Research

Baisov (2021) investigated how effective "talk for writing" approach is in enhancing the writing skills for EFL learners. In the study, the author concluded that "Repetitive structure of the lesson in talking for writing provides learners with the opportunity to recognize different textual patterns successfully and more importantly sentence patterns, creating cohesion features and enhanced vocabulary in their own piece of writing" (p. 728). Furthermore, the writer contended that by utilizing the talk for writing method in the development of writing proficiency for EFL learners, it promotes critical and creative thinking, while also reinforcing language structures. Levinsky (2012) conducted a case study about the effect of oral rehearsal on middle school English learners' essay writing. In the case study, the researcher taught the writing skills of expository essays based on systemic functional linguistics theory to the students. The researcher instructed students on how to write essays, following the specific rules of the genre. In order to organize their ideas effectively before writing, the students rehearsed orally to transform compressed information into intricate sentences, which were supposed to meet the requirements of the essay genre. The author claimed that oral rehearsal must be learned with modeling and practice. Heim (2008) studied the efficacy of oral rehearsal before writing for non-native learners in an urban setting, taking into account the necessity for strategic adjustment of using the Writing Workshop for them. In this study, second-grade students participated in two techniques for six weeks: teacher modeling and oral discussion before writing. The results showed that the students' writing performance enhanced in terms of quality and quantity through the two techniques. Moreover, the students' confidence and interest in writing also increased. Based on these results, the author maintained that the two methods should be applied systematically and explicitly in writing classrooms for language learners.

III. METHODS

1. Focal Participants

The participants of this study were selected from two sixth-grade (aged 11-12) classes in Gangwon Province, consisting of a total of 43 students (22 boys and 21 girls) in classes A and B. The experimental group, class A, had 11 boys and 10 girls and employed oral rehearsal as a pre-writing strategy. On the other hand, the control group, class B, which included 11 boys and 11 girls, used textbook-based brainstorming as a pre-writing strategy. Before starting the research, an online Google survey was administered to figure out the participants' background and to identify their perceptions of English learning. The online survey consisted of three sections: (1) How they have studied English (2) Self-assessment of English proficiency, and (3) Reasons for studying English. This survey revealed the English learning experiences of the participants prior to the experiment.

The first section of the survey included six questions about general English learning

methods, with more than half of the participants indicating that they liked studying English. 19 students began to learn English before third grade. Three students out of 43 participants had experienced living abroad. Most participants used shadow education outside formal education, such as private tutoring, or Internet-based online education. More than half of students used additional English education to study English grammar.

In the second section, the participants self-evaluated their English level by answering their listening, reading, speaking, and writing abilities. According to the results, the students showed the highest level of confidence in their listening with the least confidence in writing. Their responses supports the common belief that EFL students often find learning productive skills more challenging than receptive skills. Additionally, in the third section, learners provided reasons for studying English. The answers were as follows: preparing future, traveling, studying abroad, school subjects, and parental pressure.

2. Instruments and Data Analysis

In this study, two groups employed distinct pre-writing techniques. The experimental group utilized oral rehearsal before writing their drafts, wheareas the control group employed a brainstorming method based on English textbook procedure. The data collected from the two groups were quantitatively compared and analyzed. To prove the students' change occurrings in their writing proficiency after the intervention, I gathered data from pre-, mid-, and post-lessons throughout the twelve-week research process.

In order to warrant the utility of oral rehearsals as a pre-writing method, two data collection strategies were used throughout this study: (a) writing tests; (b) surveys related to affective domain. The data earned during this research project were categorized into two groups to deduce the implications regarding oral rehearsal for EFL students in classroom settings.

To evaluate the writing abilities of students, pre- and post-writing tests were administered which included questions regarding vocabulary, phrases, sentences and free composition for a designated topic. The pre-writing test paper consisted of 21 questions with 2-4 questions from each of the 1-7 units based on the contents of the first semester of the sixth grade. The post-writing test paper, on the other hand, had a total of 18 questions, with three questions from each of the units 8-13 learned in the second semester of the sixth grade.

The word level of the test consisted of writing words based on picture descriptions, selecting the correct words from a given list, and translating Korean words into English. At the phrase level, students completed sentences based on a picture, considering the grammar structure. At the sentence level, students were required to rearrange given words, write sentences learned from the picture, and complete the conversation. For the pre-composition test, students were asked to write a self-introduction, in which students

were expected to include information about their school, name, grade, classroom, and favorite things. The post-composition test was writing a daily journal in which participants described their everyday lives.

To assess students' free-composition, a rubric was developed using elements from the ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs et al., 1981) and writing assessment criteria (Kim and Kim, 2017). The scoring rubric included three components: content, organization, and grammar/mechanics. Each was rated on a five-point scale, with scores of 5 indicating excellent performance and 1 indicating weak performance. Scores from each section were added to determine a total writing score, ranging from three to fifteen (one point for each section).

The assessment area included not only the results of the writing task, but also an evaluation of their affective domain. Although the affective domain may not have a direct connection to students' writing improvement, it was meaningful to measure it because enjoying the writing process can serve as a stepping stone for long-term improvement in English writing even after the experiment. In order to understand the degree of change occurrings in English writing in the two classes that participated in the experiment, the same affective domain questionnaire was employed before and after the experiment.

The survey of affective domain of writing learning was adapted for this study by taking inspiration from similar surveys used in the studies of Kim (2008) and Yoo (2019). The questionnaire consisted of four areas: interest, motivation, confidence, and anxiety. The three sections of Interest, motivation, and confidence contained four questions each, with higher scores indicating stronger levels of each of these factors. The area of anxiety comprised three questions, with lower scores, indicating lower levels of anxiety. Respondents were asked to rate themselves on a five-point scale ranging from "seldom or none (1)" to "strongly agree (5)" for each question.

3. Procedures

During a twelve-week experiment, two groups of students learned five units from an English textbook, with each unit consisting of six hours of lesson. In the fourth hour of each unit, both groups participated in a pre-writing activity, and in the fifth hour, they wrote an essay.

The experimental group used oral rehearsal as a pre-writing strategy, in which they worked in pairs and performed three activities: idea generation, speaking their draft, and re-oral rehearsal during the fourth hour of each unit. In the fifth hour, they carried out the re-oral rehearsal, composing a draft, and revised their work.

The control group used individual brainstorming as a pre-writing method, following the procedure suggested in the textbook. During the fourth hour of each unit, they carried out three activities: idea generation, organizing their ideas, and making an outline. In the fifth

hour, they organized, wrote a draft based on the results of brainstorming in the fourth hour. and they revised their writing.

IV. FINDINGS

1. Writing Skills

This study investigated the efficacy of speaking before writing by exploring students' writing achievement in four areas: vocabulary, phrase, sentence, and free-writing. To evaluate the extent of students' improvement in writing proficiency, students completed pre- and post-tests.

In the vocabulary level, the experimental group exhibited a significant difference in their achievement due to the intervention. While both the experimental and control groups recorded a remarkable similarity with a mean of approximately 70, the experimental group showed a significant disparity with a mean of score of 11, as compared to the control groul [p = 0.048] at the post-vocabulary test. Accordingly, participating in oral rehearsal activities had a positive impact on students' lexical competency.

At the phrase level, the control group scored slightly higher in the pre-test compared to the treatment group. However, the experimental group recorded significantly higher scores than the control group after implementing the pre-writing strategy of using oral rehearsal. In the table 1, students who participated in oral rehearsal showed a remarkable improvement, with a mean score of about 23, whereas students who used brainstorming before writing only enhanced slightly, with a mean score of approximately 3. In the post-test of the phrase level, the two groups showed a statistically meaningful difference, with a p-value of less than 0.05. Thus, talk before writing could enable students to improve their writing skills in phrase-level.

At the sentence level, speaking had a positive influence on students' writing ability. The treatment group's post-test score increased significantly from 59.18 to 76.98, whereas the control group's score in the post-test showed lower than their pre-test score. There was a remarkable distinctive between the two groups in the post-test. The oral rehearsal activity required students to speak what they wanted to write in sentences and allowed their peers to revise their writing more formally, which helped enhance students' writing at the sentence-level. In contrast, the control group worked individually which students were limited to edit what they wanted to write.

In the free-writing area, the oral rehearsal activity also had a meaningful impact on students' writing competency, as demonstrated by the two groups' significant probability of less than 0.05 in the post-test.

Table 1. Results of Pre- and Post-Tests for Two Groups in Writing Skills

Writing skills	Test	Group	N	Total	M	SD	t	p
Vocabulary	Pre	Experimental	21	100	70.87	32.67	.058	.954
		Control	22	100	70.32	28.62		
	Post	Experimental	21	100	84.69	26.08	1.700	.048*
		Control	22	100	72.73	19.79		
Phrase	Pre	Experimental	21	100	53.25	37.40	-.192	.849
		Control	22	100	55.37	35.37		
	Post	Experimental	21	100	76.59	34.62	1.69	.049*
		Control	22	100	58.71	34.64		
Sentence	Pre	Experimental	21	100	59.18	36.50	-.39	.695
		Control	22	100	63.64	37.34		
	Post	Experimental	21	100	76.98	30.95	2.33	.012*
		Control	22	100	56.06	27.96		
Free-writing	Pre	Experimental	21	15	8.81	4.13	.074	.942
		Control	22	15	8.73	3.15		
	Post	Experimental	21	15	11.95	2.80	2.01	.026*
		Control	22	15	10.18	2.97		

* $p < .05$

It is evident from the aforementioned outcomes that oral rehearsal is a successful pre-writing method. The results indicated that speaking could extend into writing in the four areas. Furthermore, the statistical analysis revealed that the most helpful area for writing was the sentence-level.

2. Affective Domains

A survey was employed to measure the affective domains before and after each pre-writing method. The survey contained four domains: interest, confidence, motivation, and anxiety. The Likert scale with a score ranging from one (seldom or none) to five (strongly agree) was used to assess the general attitude towards writing. In the three domains of interest, confidence, and motivation, students who answered close to five meant a positive attitude. On the other hand, a higher score in the anxiety indicated more stress. The interest, confidence, and motivation areas had four questions, whereas the anxiety part had three.

Table 2. Results of Pre- and Post-Tests for two Groups in Affective Domains

Domain	Test	Group	N	Total	M	SD	t	p
Interest (20)	Pre	Experimental	21	20	13.81	2.36	1.32	.194
		Control	22	20	12.64	3.36		
	Post	Experimental	21	20	14.62	3.68	2.30	.013*
		Control	22	20	12.05	3.66		
Confidence (20)	Pre	Experimental	21	20	13	2.79	.52	.604
		Control	22	20	12.5	3.43		
	Post	Experimental	21	20	13.62	4.39	1.29	.102
		Control	22	20	12.09	3.31		
Motivation (20)	Pre	Experimental	21	20	13.19	2.87	1.28	.208
		Control	22	20	12	3.21		
	Post	Experimental	21	20	13.81	3.17	2.37	.011*
		Control	22	20	11.36	3.58		
Anxiety (15)	Pre	Experimental	21	15	6.95	3.32	.009	.928
		Control	22	15	6.86	2.75		
	Post	Experimental	21	15	5.95	2.29	-2.33	.012*
		Control	22	15	8.16	3.71		

* $p < .05$

In the domain of interest, there was no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in the pre-test. However, in the post-test, the experimental group showed approximately 2.6 points higher interest, which was statistically significant. After the experiment, the control group's interest slightly decreased while interest in the experimental group increased. The students in the experimental group, using oral practice, appeared to have increased their interest by expanding their vocabulary and sentences through pair work while writing in English. In contrast, it was seemed that the students in the control group, who engaged in individual activities, were less interested in writing frequently.

In the confidence domain, the experimental group increased slightly by an average of 0.62 points in the post-test compared to the pre-test, while the control group showed a decrease of about 0.4 points in the post-test. However, there was no significant disparity between the results of the experimental group and the control group in the post-test. Although some advanced students showed confidence in composing intricate sentences through integrated activities of writing and speaking with oral rehearsal, many students in both groups were reluctant to write and be evaluated. Some students even experienced a decrease in confidence when they did not receive high scores, and others faced difficulties in expressing their ideas in English. As a result, it appears that repetitive English writing caused some pressure among the students.

In the motivation area, the experimental group displayed an increase of around 0.7 points in the post-test compared to the pre-test, whereas the control group showed a decrease of about 0.7 points. The two groups had a notable distinctive in their post-test results, which was statistically significant at a level of p<0.05. The students in the experimental group also reported that engaging in partner-based speaking activity was

beneficial for their writing, and they expressed a willingness to write more frequently.

In particular, the struggling students in the experimental group felt a sense of accomplishment rather than frustration, suggesting a positive impact on their motivation in writing in English. Lower-performing students typically had low expectations and fear of writing, but they experienced progress in their writing skills by practicing writing via oral rehearsal. On the other hand, students in the control group reported that writing became more challenging as they continued, resulting in a decrease in motivation.

In the anxiety section, the experimental group exhibited a reduction of around 1 point in compared to the pre-test, while the control group showed an increase of about 1.3 points in the post-test. The experimental class conducting the partner-based activity could notably alleviate their anxiety related to English writing, whereas the control group working individually appeared to exacerbate it. Overall, a statistically significant difference was observed between the two groups in the post-test.

As a result, the outcomes revealed that oral rehearsal was more effective than brainstorming in creating favorable attitudes toward English writing. Specifically, there was a statistically significant difference between the groups in terms of interest, motivation, and anxiety in the post-test. Talking before writing enhanced interest and motivation while decreasing anxiety, ultimately leading to a positive attitude toward English writing. Overall, the pre-writing activity using oral rehearsal was effective in the affective domain.

V. CONCLUSIONS

As elementary schools tend to emphasize speaking-centered lessons and students often encounter difficulties in English writing, it is necessary to explore an integrated approach that combines speaking and writing skills, rather than treating composition skills as a separate area of instruction. To ensure that students have ongoing opportunities to develop their English writing skills, it is crucial to teach productive skills together with a focus on both the process and outcomes of writing.

This research involves using oral rehearsal to develop the writing skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Korean elementary schools, who often struggle with constructing meaning into written text in their language. Providing certain writing techniques before they start writing can help alleviate such problems. The study aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of oral rehearsal as a pre-writing strategy by investigating its impact on both students' writing ability and affective domain related to writing skills. This study was conducted over a twelve-week period, and analyzed students' writing skills in areas such as vocabulary, phrases, sentences, and free-writing, as well as their affective domain, before and after the experiment. The treatment group utilized oral rehearsal with their peers prior to writing, while the control group conducted individual brainstorming.

This study yielded the following results: Firstly, utilizing oral rehearsal proved to be an

effective technique to develop 6th-grade students' writing skills, including vocabulary, phrases, sentences, and free-writing. After examining the results of pre- and post-writing tests, the experimental group showed higher achievement in all four areas of writing skills. These findings indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups.

Secondly, incorporating oral rehearsal into the writing process had a positive impact on the 6th-grade students' affective domains, specifically in terms of their levels of interest, motivation, and anxiety. A crucial difference was observed in the affective domain surveys between the experimental and control groups, indicating that using oral rehearsal can yield benefits in EFL classrooms and enable students to continue their learning of English writing.

In conclusion, it is evident that students can improve their writing proficiency throughout oral rehearsal activity before they compose. Oral rehearsal activities can boost students' interest and motivation, and lessen anxiety. Furthermore, students developed their writing through collaboration with their classmates, since they could have a positive influence on each other. Pair tasks can help students write more fluently, precisely, and abundantly by sharing their ideas among their peers. By giving speech of what they intend to write, students had advantages from having access to diverse words and practicing self-editing and revising. Throughout the integrated approach, students' writings were resulted in more complete and improved.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

This investigation suggests future research concerning the integrated speaking and writing approach. Although using oral rehearsal is prevalent in educational settings, there is a lack of theoretical understanding of the term. Myhill (2009) states that oral rehearsal has not been fully theorized and the precise meaning of oral rehearsal varies depending on the context. Thus, further research is necessary to clarify and conceptualize the term and to explore its application in various settings.

Secondly, teachers need to take into account various strategies prior to employing oral rehearsal, in order to enhance writing competency of all students. For example, teachers are required to provide students with clear instructions on how to use the method effectively. They can use demonstrations or handouts to the activity more meaningful. They may also decide the form of the activity, such as individual, group, or pairs. Teachers may consider using oral rehearsal to improve writing skills and reduce cognitive load of emergent language learners. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to meet the individual needs of every student, whether they are advanced or struggling with basic language knowledge.

Finally, this research emphasizes the importance of adopting an integrated approach between language skills. It underscores the need for the development of appropriate writing

methodologies that foster students' communicative abilities and maintain a balance among their four language areas. In pursuit of this objective, language practitioners should explore the implementation of a combined technique that links speech into writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.

Oral rehearsal is a teaching method that highlights the integration of speaking and writing skills, where students engage in speaking activities before embarking on writing tasks. By encouraging students to verbally express their ideas prior to translating them into written form, oral rehearsal facilitates a more holistic language learning experience. What's more, to ensure its effectiveness in the classroom, it is essential to devise suitable strategies that alleviate students' difficulties and foster their self-directed learning.

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⟨Korean Abstract⟩

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이 논문의 목적은 초등학교에서 영어가 외국어인 학생들을 대상으로 사전 쓰기 전략으로써 구두 연습 활용의 효과를 탐구하는 것이다. 구체적으로 쓰기와 말하기의 통합 지도를 통하여 구두 연습이 영어 쓰기에 어떠한 영향을 줄 수 있는가를 알아보았다. 이를 위하여 구두 연습이 초등학교 6학년 학생들의 쓰기 능력(단어, 어구, 문장, 자유 글쓰기)과 정의적 영역에 어떤 영향을 미치는지 알아보고자 양적 연구를 활용하였다. 실험은 강원도 소재 초등학교에 재학 중인 43명의 6학년 학생들을 대상으로 하였고, 실험집단은 21명, 통제집단은 22명으로 구성되었다. 실험집단 학생들은 쓰기 전 활동으로 구두 연습을 수행하였으며, 통제집단에서는 교과서 절차에 따른 쓰기 전 활동을 실시하였다. 12주 간의 실험연구 이후 실험 결과는 다음과 같이 나타났다. 구두 연습을 활용한 실험집단 학생들은 영어 단어, 어구, 문장, 자유 글쓰기 능력에서 통제집단에 비하여 통계적으로 유의미한 효과가 있었다. 또한 영어 쓰기에 대한 흥미도, 동기도, 불안감에서도 긍정적인 영향을 주었음을 확인할 수 있었다. 이 연구에서는 영어 표현 기능을 총체적으로 학습하는 방안을 통하여 초등학교 교실에서 영어 쓰기 지도의 효과적인 방안을 모색하고자 하였다. 유의미한 결과를 토대로 초등 교실에서 언어적 기능의 통합적 지도 방안에 대한 추후 연구가 이루어져야 할 것이다.

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