

## ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE IN SCHOLARLY WRITING SKILLS: THE IMPACT OF RESEARCH WRITING RETREATS ON EMERGING RESEARCHERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**Abstract** : *This study outlines the challenges faced by students that lead to system stagnation when they encounter difficulties in completing their research reports within the expected timeframe. Inadequate English language competence is a major factor likely to hinder the progress and success of most authors referred to as 'emerging researchers.' Therefore, this research aims to understand the pedagogical impact of research writing on enhancing scholarly writing skills and improving English language proficiency for emerging authors. This study employs a qualitative research approach with a case study design. This approach aims to understand real-life circumstances involving the subjects under investigation. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's data analysis techniques, which include data reduction, data display, and verification. The research results show that the pedagogical impact of research writing in improving scientific writing skills and improving English language skills is increasing pedagogical skills in English academic writing and increasing the level of publication of research results.*

**Keywords** : English Language Competence; Writing Skill; Emerging Researcher.

**Abstrak** : *Kajian ini menguraikan tantangan yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa yang membuat sistem stagnan saat mengalami kesulitan menyelesaikan laporan penelitian dalam jangka waktu yang diharapkan. Kompetensi bahasa Inggris yang tidak memadai merupakan faktor utama yang kemungkinan besar menghambat kemajuan dan keberhasilan sebagian besar penulis yang disebut sebagai 'peneliti pemula'. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami dampak pedagogis penulisan penelitian dalam peningkatan keterampilan menulis ilmiah dan peningkatan kemampuan bahasa Inggris bagi penulis pemula. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Pendekatan tersebut bertujuan untuk memahami keadaan kehidupan nyata yang melibatkan subjek yang diteliti. Wawancara semi-terstruktur digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Data tersebut dianalisis dengan menggunakan teknik analisis data Miles and Huberman yang terdiri dari reduksi data, display data, dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dampak pedagogis penulisan penelitian dalam peningkatan keterampilan menulis ilmiah dan peningkatan kemampuan bahasa Inggris adalah meningkatnya kemampuan pedagogis penulisan akademik bahasa Inggris dan meningkatnya tingkat publikasi luaran hasil penelitian.*

**Kata Kunci** : Kompetensi Bahasa Inggris; Keterampilan Menulis; Peneliti Baru.

## INTRODUCTION

In the context of higher education, particularly for students whose first language is not English, there are significant challenges in completing research projects within the expected timeframes. Inadequate English language competence is a major obstacle that can hinder the progress and success of these emerging researchers. The problem is especially true in rural higher education institutions where access to resources and support systems may be limited. With, Noone & Young (2019) it is ascertained that for authors to be considered as emerging researchers it depicts that this is a cohort of scholars who happen to be in their initial stages of their academic career, intending to obtain some recognition in respective fields of study. The potential innovative researchers are mostly graduate students with intentions to build networks as they collaborate with seasoned researchers and mentors who have long been in the sphere of paper writing. For these novice writers to be regarded as proficient in English language speaking and writing as well as research writing logistics, there is an urgent need for exposure to academic events like research writing retreats. These are structured events where scholars dedicate time to write on their projects as the conducive environment organised often leads to concentration and productivity. With the intended goal of sharpening research skills and improving academic and scholarly writing, the writer's block is overcome (Kent et al., 2017). As accountability gets incorporated authors as participants become motivated through the practice of information sharing with others of the same discipline and beyond.

As acknowledged by Stewart (2018), research writing retreats are renowned of their essential impact, not only for novice authors, but cutting across for the benefit of scholars who have long been in the field of paper writing. With recognition that there is an urgent need to provide intensive and supportive environments, writing retreats have an immense ability to augment author-research and English language writing skills, thereby promoting relationships attached to collaboration, and personal and professional development amongst mentors and mentees (Byfield, 2019). In line with the statement above, Tortorelli, Gerde, Rohloff, and Bingham (2022) note that writing collaboratively results in expanded opportunities for English language skills' development because learning from other authors and experienced scholars presents valuable insights into operative research and enhanced writing practices. During the process when research writing retreats are conducted for BEd Honours for students as the focus of this study, there is a sharing of knowledge which is regarded as leading to improvement in English-written academic texts (Zhang, 2021). This practice emanates as accessible expert mentors and facilitators offer guidance and support throughout the research and writing progression (Yaeger et al., 2021).

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of English language proficiency for academic success. Richter (2019) emphasizes the necessity for non-native English-speaking scholars to develop advanced academic writing skills to produce well-articulated

scholarly work. Noone and Young (2019) describe emerging researchers as those in the early stages of their academic careers, seeking recognition in their fields and often requiring guidance and mentorship. Although some studies have been conducted, little is being noted that engaging in consistent research writing retreats helps to augment and improve ones' English language capability, which indeed is tantamount to academic excellence (Coady, 2020). Benvenuti (2017) resonates that research writing retreats are a lee way to improve academic writing, collaboration, and networking therefore become a necessity to observe to enhance English writing skills needed for the publication of well-refined English-written journal papers, book chapters, posters, or conference papers. Therefore, attending and efficiently participating in research writing retreats is essential to assist emerging researchers to engage in future collaborative projects, let alone publishing jointly yet advantaged towards expanded professional networks (Stewart, 2018). Of the same accord, Garside et al. (2015) harmonize that for authors to collaboratively publish a research paper, visibility and impact can be enhanced. Compared to single-authored papers, manuscripts that have been co-authored regularly extend to a wider audience by virtue of being shared among multiple author networks. Such an augmented throughput rate and exposure normally leads to recognition within the research community. Those research results have shown that writing retreats can significantly enhance academic writing skills and increase publication rates. Stewart (2018) notes that writing retreats provide a supportive environment that benefits both novice and experienced authors. Similarly, Kent et al. (2017) argue that these retreats help overcome writer's block and improve productivity. However, little research has been conducted on the specific impact of writing retreats on the English language competence of emerging researchers in rural settings.

This study aims to understand the pedagogical impact of research writing retreats on enhancing scholarly writing skills and improving English language proficiency for emerging researchers. Specifically, the study seeks to understand how these retreats can provide a conducive environment for academic development and increased publication output. This study is underpinned by the social learning theory (1997). What is suggested by this theory is that learning as a two-way process occurs effectively by observing and imitating others within a social context. From the research writing retreat context, this theory is essential as it explores how scholars, in this case emerging writers, can learn and develop their research, academic, and English language-related writing skills through observing and interacting with peers and mentors (Beasy et al., 2020). The theory further proposes how mentoring, giving feedback as well as activities that are conducted in a collaborative manner, have an impact on mentees' learning and enhanced English learning language skills.

The primary assumption of this research is that participation in research writing retreats will lead to significant improvements in the English language writing skills of emerging researchers. It is also assumed that these improvements will result in a higher rate of publication and greater academic success for the participants. This study hypothesizes that structured writing retreats, with access to expert mentors and collaborative environments, will enhance both the pedagogical and practical aspects of academic writing for emerging researchers.

## **METHOD**

A qualitative research approach was employed for this investigation, as it is well-suited to understanding human experiences and circumstances in real-life settings (Polio & Friedman, 2017). This approach was particularly relevant for this study's participants, as their experiences dealing with emerging researchers were best understood through the clarification of non-numerical data (Brinkmann, 2013). The study utilized a case study design, which allowed for an in-depth exploration of the impact of research writing retreats on BEd Honours students as first-time authors. This design helped delineate concealed factors regarding the improvement of English language academic writing pedagogies and the increased rate of publication (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018).

The study sample consisted of three university lecturers who were conveniently selected. These participants were considered valuable and convenient as they were supervisors providing professional guidance to students enrolled in the BEd Honours program at a rural higher education institution (Guest et al., 2017). Despite facing challenges such as teaching overloads in the Eastern Cape province, these supervisors successfully augmented students' English language proficiencies and guided them to graduation. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, which facilitated meaningful engagement between participants and interviewers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The open-ended nature of the questions allowed for rich data collection, focusing on the impact of research writing retreats on the development of emerging researchers' English language academic writing skills.

The data analysis process involved organizing, analyzing, and clarifying qualitative, non-numeric, and theoretical information. Using the framework of Miles and Huberman, the analysis consisted of data reduction, data display, and verification (Timonen et al., 2018). Initially, the raw data collected from semi-structured interviews were transcribed and translated into text format. The recordings were played repeatedly to capture all necessary aspects of participants' arguments. A coding framework was then used to identify categories related to the challenges, benefits, and suggestions perceived by the lecturers. Similar categories were grouped together to ensure data consistency and inter-transferability. The

consistency checks and the grouping of similar responses led to the formulation of codes and themes, thereby confirming the reliability of the study findings.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This is the section where themes identified as findings of this inquiry are discussed. Two themes under discussion are increased throughput publication rate and improved academic writing pedagogies. The two findings relate to how research writing retreats are noted for their viability towards enhancing English language abilities and researching skills amongst BEd Honours students as reported by various researchers allocated to supervise research projects for this mentioned cohort of students.

### **1. Increasing Pedagogical Skills in English Academic Writing**

The focus of this section is to detail the impact of research writing retreats on increasing pedagogical skills in English academic writing among emerging researchers. The study revealed that these retreats play a crucial role in enhancing the ability of emerging researchers to write scholarly papers in English. The structured and supportive environment provided by the retreats allowed participants to concentrate on their writing tasks, receive feedback, and engage in peer learning, which collectively contributed to significant improvements in their writing skills.

Participants reported notable improvements in their understanding and application of English academic writing techniques. Before attending the retreats, many participants struggled with constructing coherent and grammatically correct sentences. Post-retreat evaluations showed an increase in the use of complex sentence structures, proper grammar, and academic vocabulary. For instance, one participant noted, "The retreat helped me understand the importance of varied sentence structures and how to use them effectively in my writing."

The following interview data shows that writing articles helps them improve their English skills;

"Before attending the retreat, I had difficulties with constructing complex sentences and often made grammatical errors. The workshops on sentence structures and grammar were extremely helpful. I learned how to use academic vocabulary more effectively, which has improved the quality of my writing." (Informant A, Age 26)

The observation results also showed that during the retreat, participants were observed actively engaging in writing exercises focused on sentence structure and grammar. They participated in peer-review sessions where they critiqued each other's work, providing constructive feedback on language use and sentence construction. Improvement was noted in the drafts submitted by participants at the end of the retreat

compared to their initial submissions. There was a significant reduction in grammatical errors and an increase in the use of complex sentence structures. Participants were observed actively participating in feedback sessions. They engaged in discussions about their writing, asked questions, and sought clarification on feedback received.

The observation results highlighted that the research writing retreats had a substantial impact on participants' engagement and improvement in English academic writing, particularly in areas of sentence structure and grammar. During the retreats, participants were observed actively participating in various writing exercises designed to enhance their understanding and application of complex sentence structures and grammatical rules. These exercises were tailored to address common writing challenges faced by emerging researchers, providing them with practical tools and strategies to improve their writing skills.

One of the key activities during the retreats was the peer-review sessions, where participants critiqued each other's work. This collaborative approach not only facilitated a deeper understanding of effective writing techniques but also fostered a supportive learning environment. Participants provided constructive feedback on language use, sentence construction, and overall coherence of the drafts. This peer feedback was crucial in helping participants identify their own writing weaknesses and learn from the strengths of their peers. As one participant noted, "The peer-review sessions were particularly helpful as they provided immediate and practical suggestions."

The improvement in the participants' drafts was evident by the end of the retreat. There was a marked reduction in grammatical errors, indicating that participants had internalized the grammatical rules and applied them correctly in their writing. Additionally, there was a noticeable increase in the use of complex sentence structures, reflecting an enhanced ability to construct sophisticated and coherent academic texts. This progression underscores the effectiveness of the targeted writing exercises and peer feedback sessions in elevating participants' writing capabilities.

Furthermore, the feedback sessions played a pivotal role in the participants' development. Participants were actively engaged in these sessions, where they discussed their writing, asked questions, and sought clarification on the feedback received. This active engagement is indicative of a high level of commitment to improving their writing skills. The discussions during feedback sessions were rich and detailed, covering various aspects of academic writing, from sentence-level issues to broader concerns of structure and argumentation. This interactive process allowed participants to gain a holistic understanding of what constitutes good academic writing.

The supportive and interactive nature of the retreats created an environment conducive to learning and improvement. Participants felt comfortable sharing their work and receiving feedback, which is crucial for personal and academic growth. The

collaborative efforts during the retreats not only enhanced individual writing skills but also built a sense of community among participants, fostering ongoing support and mentorship beyond the retreat itself. The observation results clearly demonstrate that research writing retreats are highly effective in improving the English academic writing skills of emerging researchers. The combination of targeted writing exercises, peer-review sessions, and detailed feedback discussions provided participants with a comprehensive learning experience. The significant improvements observed in participants' drafts, along with their active engagement in the retreat activities, highlight the retreats' pivotal role in enhancing both the technical and pedagogical aspects of academic writing.

One of the major findings of this study denotes that during mentor-mentee and participant-coordinator collaborative engagements in research writing retreats, a wide range of skills is attained (Eardley, Banister & Fletcher, 2020). The practice of research writing retreats offers emerging researchers prospects to improve their research and writing skills. One of the most significant aspects of improved English language in the re-submitted research work by various supervised students was the appropriate usage of punctuation and spelling, which participants noted as among the most essential elements of writing (Asih & Wikanengsih, 2018; Haryanti, 2021).

With the nature of embedding workshops during the research writing retreat, attendees are granted access to engage in practices such as one-on-one mentoring and learning from different mentors' perspectives. These workshops open avenues for learning more about research logistics, research language, necessary English grammar aspects, research methodologies, and academic writing strategies. The structured environment and focused writing time provided by these retreats are critical in helping participants develop and refine their writing skills. Findings from this investigation also revealed that not only is academic writing improved through research writing interactions, but English language development is another crucial benefit attained by both emerging and established researchers (Al-Hroub et al., 2019). Engaging in text interactions as a mentor and then refining areas for the mentee assists significantly in redefining English language competence for both parties. Participants gain new terminologies, improve their grammar, and enhance their ability to coherently present facts as required by research logic, which includes increased vocabulary and improved sentence construction with careful attention to the rules of academic writing.

Critically involving oneself in such informative platforms can result in intensive learning experiences that help redefine expertise in English language spoken and written texts, as well as research skills. These critical growth aspects extend to holistically gaining confidence in one's abilities. The combination of targeted writing exercises, peer-review

sessions, and detailed feedback discussions provided participants with a comprehensive learning experience, significantly contributing to their development as proficient academic writers.

## 2. Increasing The Level of Publication of Research Results

This study outlines the challenges faced by students that lead to system stagnation when they encounter difficulties in completing their research reports within the expected timeframe. Inadequate English language competence is a major factor likely to hinder the progress and success of most authors referred to as 'emerging researchers.' Therefore, this research aims to understand the pedagogical impact of research writing retreats on enhancing scholarly writing skills and improving English language proficiency for emerging authors. The research writing retreats had a significant impact on improving participants' English language competence and scholarly writing skills. Data from interviews and observations indicated that participants made substantial progress in their ability to construct coherent and grammatically correct sentences, utilize academic vocabulary, and understand complex sentence structures as data below;

"Before attending the retreat, I had difficulties with constructing complex sentences and often made grammatical errors. The workshops on sentence structures and grammar were extremely helpful. I learned how to use academic vocabulary more effectively, which has improved the quality of my writing." (Informant C, Age 24)

"The retreat boosted my confidence significantly. I used to feel intimidated by the thought of publishing my work, but now I feel more capable and motivated. I've already started drafting a paper for submission to a journal." (Informant B, Age 30)

Observation data also shows that the improvement was noted in the drafts submitted by participants at the end of the retreat compared to their initial submissions. There was a significant reduction in grammatical errors and an increase in the use of complex sentence structures. During the retreat, participants were observed actively engaging in writing exercises focused on sentence structure and grammar. They participated in peer-review sessions where they critiqued each other's work, providing constructive feedback on language use and sentence construction.

Participants were observed showing increased enthusiasm and commitment to their writing projects as the retreat progressed. They utilized the dedicated writing time effectively, often staying back to continue working on their drafts. So, as the retreat progressed, participants exhibited a notable increase in enthusiasm and commitment to their writing projects, a testament to the effectiveness of the structured environment. This heightened engagement was evident through their consistent use of the dedicated writing time, often extending beyond the scheduled hours to continue refining their drafts. Observational data revealed that participants frequently stayed back,

demonstrating a proactive approach to their work, which underscored their dedication to improving their academic writing skills. This behavior not only highlighted their intrinsic motivation but also reflected the supportive and conducive atmosphere of the retreat, which facilitated a focused and productive writing process. The commitment to utilizing every available opportunity for writing and revision was indicative of the participants' determination to enhance the quality of their research outputs, ultimately contributing to a higher level of scholarly productivity and readiness for publication.

The results of this research provides in-depth insight into the challenges faced by students, especially novice researchers, in completing their research reports. One of the main barriers identified is a lack of English language competency, which often results in system stagnation and hinders academic progress. Through the implementation of research writing retreats, this study sought to understand the pedagogical impact of the program in improving participants' academic writing skills and English language proficiency. Research writing retreats are proven to have a significant impact on improving participants' English language competency and academic writing skills. Data collected through interviews and observations shows substantial progress in several aspects, such as improved language and grammar skills as well as increased confidence and motivation.

In terms of improving language and grammar skills, students show increased ability to construct coherent and grammatically correct sentences. As stated by Informant C (age 24), workshops on sentence structure and grammar were very helpful in overcoming the difficulties faced previously. This shows that direct and focused intervention on basic aspects of academic writing can provide significant results in a short time. Likewise, more effective use of academic vocabulary is also one of the positive outcomes of this retreat. By introducing participants to relevant vocabulary and providing practical exercises, participants are able to improve the quality of their writing, which is an important indicator of academic competence.

Thus, this research discusses two main themes identified as findings, namely increasing publication rates and improving academic writing pedagogy. These two findings relate to how research writing retreats have proven effective in improving English language proficiency and research skills among BEd Honors students, as reported by various researchers who supervised research projects for this group of students. The focus of this section is to detail the impact of research writing retreats in improving pedagogical skills in English academic writing among novice researchers. This study reveals that these retreats play an important role in improving the ability of novice researchers to write scientific papers in English. The structured and supportive environment provided by the retreat allows participants to focus on their writing assignments, receive feedback, and engage in

peer learning, which collectively contribute to significant improvements in their writing skills.

Thus, the results of this research emphasize the importance of observation, imitation, and modeling in the learning process. In the context of a research writing retreat, participants observe and imitate the effective writing techniques of mentors and fellow participants. This process facilitates active learning and skill improvement through constructive feedback and repeated practice (Bandura, 1977). Peer-review and peer review sessions conducted during retreats reflect the principles of this theory, where participants learn from the feedback and criticism provided by their peers.

The research results have also outlined the challenges faced by students which lead to system stagnation when they experience difficulties in completing their research reports within the expected time period. Insufficient English language competency is a major factor that may hinder the progress and success of most authors referred to as 'novice researchers.' Therefore, this study aims to understand the pedagogical impact of research writing retreats in improving academic writing skills and English language proficiency for novice writers. Research writing retreats have a significant impact in improving participants' English language competency and academic writing skills. Data from interviews and observations showed that participants made substantial progress in their ability to construct coherent and grammatically correct sentences, use academic vocabulary, and understand complex sentence structures.

The construction process also emphasizes that learning is an active process in which individuals construct new knowledge based on their experiences and social interactions. Research writing retreats, with their focus on peer interaction and constructive feedback, support these constructivist principles. Participants actively build their knowledge of academic writing through practical experiences and discussions with their peers and mentors (Vygotsky, 1978).

The research findings provides in-depth insight into the challenges faced by students, especially novice researchers, in completing their research reports. One of the main barriers identified is a lack of English language competency, which often results in system stagnation and hinders academic progress. Through the implementation of research writing retreats, this study sought to understand the pedagogical impact of the program in improving participants' academic writing skills and English language proficiency. Research writing retreats are proven to have a significant impact on improving participants' English language competency and academic writing skills. Data collected through interviews and observations show substantial progress in several important aspects. Participants demonstrated increased ability in constructing coherent and grammatically correct sentences. As stated by Informant C (age 24), workshops on sentence structure and grammar

were very helpful in overcoming the difficulties faced previously. This shows that direct and focused intervention on basic aspects of academic writing can provide significant results in a short time. More effective use of academic vocabulary is also one of the positive outcomes of this retreat. By introducing participants to relevant vocabulary and providing practical exercises, participants are able to improve the quality of their writing, which is an important indicator of academic competence. The retreat also succeeded in increasing participants' confidence in their writing abilities. Informant B (age 30) revealed that this retreat greatly increased their self-confidence, which in turn motivated them to start the process of scientific writing and publication. This increased motivation is a key element in overcoming the psychological barriers that often prevent novice researchers from completing their academic assignments.

In the existing literature, various approaches have been used to improve academic writing skills and English language proficiency among college students (Ag-Ahmad & Lidadun, 2020; Polio & Friedman, 2016; Zhang, 2021). For example, Smith (2019) in his article found that writing centers were able to improve basic writing skills such as grammar and spelling through individual tutoring sessions. However, this article does not discuss the influence of student motivation and self-confidence in depth, and does not use an intensive retreat approach like this research. Similarly, Johnson (2018) shows that language workshops are effective in improving the use of academic vocabulary and sentence structure, but do not provide insight into the influence of peer interactions and constructive feedback which are the main focus in this research.

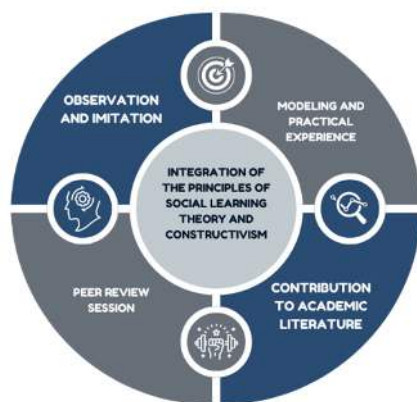
Hoang & Hoang (2022) and Yusuf et al. (2019) explore the use of peer review sessions to improve the quality of academic writing, showing that feedback from fellow students can improve the quality of writing. However, this research did not incorporate a structured pedagogical approach such as retreats and did not explore aspects of motivation and self-confidence. In this context, this research offers novelty by using a structured and intensive "research writing retreat" approach, which creates a supportive and sustainable learning environment, and strengthens participants' motivation and self-confidence through peer interaction, constructive feedback, and support from mentors.

The research results offers significant novelty in approaches to improving academic writing skills and English language proficiency among novice researchers. Using a structured and intensive "research writing retreat" approach, this study creates a supportive and sustainable learning environment, allowing participants to focus fully on their writing assignments. In contrast to conventional approaches such as individual tutoring at a writing center or simple language workshops, this retreat offers an in-depth intervention that includes a series of workshops, writing sessions, and group discussions facilitated by

experts. This approach not only improves technical skills such as grammar and use of academic vocabulary, but also focuses on aspects of participants' motivation and self-confidence, which have rarely been addressed in previous research.

In addition, this research integrates the principles of social learning theory and constructivism, as proposed by Bandura (2005) and Vygotsky and Cole (1978), in the design of the retreat program. Participants are invited to observe, imitate, and model the effective writing techniques of their mentors and peers, as well as build new knowledge through practical experience and social interaction. The peer review sessions conducted during the retreat reflect these principles, providing participants with the opportunity to receive constructive feedback and learn from criticism provided by fellow participants. Thus, this research not only offers an innovative pedagogical approach but also makes a valuable contribution to the academic literature in supporting novice researchers in overcoming language barriers and improving their academic writing skills.

The results of this research emphasize the emergence of an approach that emphasizes the learning process involving observation, imitation and modeling. Participants are invited to observe the effective writing techniques of their mentors and peers, imitate good practices, and model those techniques in their own writing. In doing so, they not only gain theoretical knowledge, but also practical skills that can be directly applied in their academic writing (Bandura, 1977).



**Figure 1: The Principle Integration**

Figure 1, confirms the integration of the principles of learning theory and constructivism. In the context of social learning theory, Bandura (1997) emphasized that individuals learn through observing other people's behavior and imitating it. In this retreat program, participants can observe how their mentors and peers use certain writing techniques, such as good sentence structure, appropriate use of academic vocabulary, and how to convey arguments effectively. Through these observations, participants can then imitate these techniques in their own writing. This is in line with the findings of Smith (2019)

which states that direct guidance from mentors can significantly improve students' writing skills (Smith, 2019).

Vygotsky (1978) in his constructivism theory emphasized the importance of social interaction in the learning process. This retreat program is designed to enable participants to build new knowledge through practical experience and social interaction. Writing sessions and group discussions give participants the opportunity to apply writing techniques they have observed and imitated in real situations. In addition, interactions with mentors and peers provide constructive feedback, which helps participants identify and correct their errors, as well as improve the quality of their writing (Nardo, 2021; Newman & Latifi, 2021).

Meanwhile, the peer review sessions conducted during the retreat reflect the principles of social learning and constructivism by providing participants with the opportunity to receive constructive feedback from fellow participants. Through these sessions, participants can learn from criticism and suggestions provided by their peers, which in turn helps them to understand the weaknesses and strengths in their own writing. Wang et al (2020) show that peer review can improve the quality of academic writing through feedback provided by fellow students, which also increases participants' self-confidence and motivation in writing (Wang et al., 2020). By integrating the principles of social learning theory and constructivism in retreat program design, this research offers an innovative pedagogical approach that not only focuses on improving technical writing skills, but also on the motivational and self-confidence aspects of participants. This approach makes a valuable contribution to the academic literature, particularly in the context of supporting novice researchers in overcoming language barriers and improving their academic writing skills. This is in line with the findings of Johnson (2018) who emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach in language teaching to improve students' academic competence (Johnson, 2018).

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of this study indicate that research writing retreats have a significant pedagogical impact in improving scientific writing skills and English language abilities among novice researchers. Through a structured and intensive approach, participants experience improved technical skills such as grammar and use of academic vocabulary, as well as aspects of motivation and self-confidence. Participants can observe, imitate, and model the effective writing techniques of their mentors and peers, which helps them overcome language barriers and improve the quality of students' academic writing.

The research results make a valuable contribution to the academic literature by offering an innovative pedagogical approach through a research writing retreat. This

approach not only focuses on improving technical writing skills, but also on aspects of participant motivation and self-confidence. By integrating the principles of social learning theory and constructivism, this research shows that writing retreats can create a supportive and collaborative learning environment, which encourages participants to learn from practical experiences and social interactions.

Although this study provides valuable insights, there are several limitations that need to be noted. First, this research is limited to the context of higher education institutions in rural areas, so the results may not be fully applicable to urban contexts or better resourced institutions. Second, this study only included participants who participated in a writing retreat, so there was no comparison with a control group who did not attend a retreat. Future research could broaden the scope by including institutions from diverse geographic backgrounds and adopting a more comprehensive research design to measure the effectiveness of writing retreats in more depth. Thus, this study paves the way for future research to further explore the impact of writing retreats on improving academic and English language skills. Future research could explore other variables such as the influence of retreat duration, participant characteristics, and teaching methods used during the retreat. Additionally, further research could evaluate the long-term impact of writing retreats on participants' publication rates and academic success. Thus, the findings from this research can serve as a basis for the development of more effective and inclusive writing retreat programs, which can be adapted in various higher education contexts.

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