
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Using the Hamburger Model to Enhance Paragraph Writing Performance for 6th graders at a secondary school in Thai Nguyen

Hoang Thi Hai Hoa¹ and Nguyen Thi Hong Minh²✉

¹*Chu Van An Lower Secondary School, Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam*

²*Thai Nguyen University of Education, Vietnam*

Corresponding Author: Nguyen Thi Hong Minh, **E-mail:** minhnh@tue.edu.vn

| ABSTRACT

Writing has remained a relatively challenging skill in English language teaching and learning for many learners, including the Vietnamese. This study aims to improve the paragraph writing performance of 6th graders at a lower secondary school in a northern city of Vietnam by incorporating the Hamburger Model in writing lessons. 40 students were selected as the participants, who applied the Hamburger Model for their paragraph writing. Tests and questionnaires were used as the two main data collection tools to assess the extent of improvement in students' writing skills, and examine their attitudes toward the use of the Hamburger Model for paragraph writing. The findings revealed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, demonstrating substantial improvement after the model's implementation. Additionally, students displayed increased confidence in their writing abilities, highlighting the effectiveness of the Hamburger Model in enhancing writing competence.

| KEYWORDS

Hamburger model, Action research, Writing skills, Attitudes, paragraph writing

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

RECEIVED: 16 November 2024

PUBLISHED: 30 November 2024

DOI: 10.32996/jeltal.2024.6.4.18

1. Introduction

Writing is a crucial language skill that must be taught in schools, as it plays a vital role in communication and learning. Effective teaching of writing involves guiding students through activities such as setting goals, generating ideas, drafting, revising, and editing. Hedge (2000) emphasizes that writing is a gradual process of developing a text through these strategies. Students also need to master sentence composition, paragraph building, and expressing ideas according to written English standards.

The goal of this research was to explore students' perceptions of using the Hamburger paragraph writing model and evaluate its effectiveness in enhancing the paragraph writing skills of 6th graders in a lower secondary school in the north of Vietnam. Specifically, the study sought to address the following three research questions:

Question 1. To what extent does the use of Hamburger Model enhance 6th grader's performance in paragraph writing?

Question 2. What are students' attitudes towards the use of Hamburger Model in writing paragraphs?

2. Literature Review

Writing offers numerous benefits, including the ability to convey ideas clearly, enhance creativity, deepen subject knowledge, and contribute to personal and professional success. However, many Vietnamese students struggle with writing English paragraphs due to challenges such as limited vocabulary, grammar issues, exam pressure, and a lack of engaging teaching methods. Schools often emphasize technical knowledge over creativity, which diminishes students' motivation and confidence in writing. The paragraph Hamburger Strategy is a strategy which informs students about the basic elements of a paragraph hamburger. This strategy has three main elements: (1) top bun an opening, (2) the patty as supporting ideas and (3) the last bottom bun as a closing sentence. It means that using this strategy in writing will make it easy to remember the basic components of a paragraph. It is provided with a visual model for students in which the model is the photo of the hamburger itself if it is on LCD or picture (Morin, 2013).

The Hamburger Model serves as a useful instructional tool for teaching paragraph writing skills, particularly to beginners and young students. However, educators should be mindful of its limitations and incorporate it into a broader writing curriculum that encourages creativity, critical thinking, and the development of more advanced writing abilities. By combining the Hamburger Model with other teaching approaches, educators can better prepare students for a wide range of writing tasks and academic challenges.

3. Methodology

This study focused on 40 sixth-grade students, aged 11-12, from an English class at a lower secondary school in a northern Vietnamese city. The participants, representing diverse backgrounds and writing abilities, engaged in activities designed to implement the "Hamburger Model" to enhance their paragraph writing skills. This model simplifies writing by breaking it into structured components, like the layers of a hamburger, making the process more approachable. The research sought to evaluate the effectiveness of this method across different skill levels, offering valuable insights to improve writing instruction. The students' enthusiasm and active participation reflected their commitment to enhancing their writing for both academic and practical communication purposes.

An action research design was employed to explore how the Hamburger Model supported the development of students' paragraph writing skills and to assess their attitudes toward this approach. The study utilized Kurt Lewin's Action Research Model, which follows a cyclic process involving planning, action, and reflection or fact-finding, ultimately leading to further planning for subsequent cycles (Lewin, 1946). This iterative framework allowed for continuous refinement of teaching strategies, ensuring a responsive and effective approach to writing education.

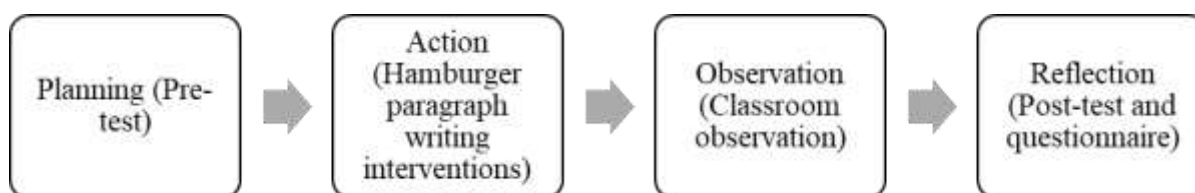


Figure 1. Data collection procedure
(Adapted from Lewin, 1946)

In the beginning, the pre-test was given to evaluate students' initial writing abilities through prompts focusing on organization, coherence, and clarity, with 40 students taking the test and the test time was 45 minutes. After the pretest, the hamburger model was applied to the process of teaching paragraph writing to students. A series of paragraph writing exercises were applied.

Students practiced writing paragraphs with different topics closely following their study program. The post-test with a similar format was administered to the students after 12 weeks of intervention. In addition, a close-ended questionnaire of 10 question items was employed to gather responses from 40 students regarding the application of the Hamburger paragraph model in learning writing skills.

The quantitative method was applied to analyze pre-test and post-test data, assessing improvements in students' paragraph writing skills before and after learning the Hamburger model. Statistical analysis gathered from questionnaires was also conducted using Microsoft Excel, which offers various tools and functions for processing and interpreting numerical data. The collected data was entered into Excel spreadsheets to facilitate calculations, generate summary statistics, and create visualizations.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

4.1.1. Changes in students' paragraph writing performance

Figure 2 illustrates the pre-test scores of 40 students on a paragraph writing exercise about the advantages of city life. Scores ranged from 4 to 7, with no extremely low (1-3) or high (8-10) scores. The most frequent score was 6, achieved by 47.5% of the students, leading to a mean score of 5.75 and a standard deviation of 0.86, indicating minimal variation in performance. The lack of extreme scores suggests the test was appropriately challenging but may not have effectively distinguished varying skill levels.

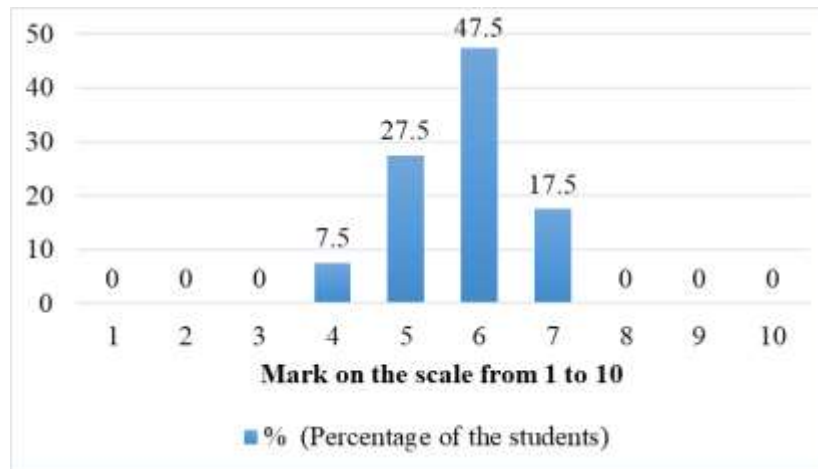


Figure 2. Pre-test scores of 40 students

Figure 3 presents the post-test scores of 40 students, who applied the Hamburger Model to write about the advantages of city life, showed significant improvement compared to the pre-test. The most common scores were 7 (32.5%) and 8 (25%), indicating that many students effectively used the HP model. Notably, 15% of students scored 9, reflecting near-excellent performance.

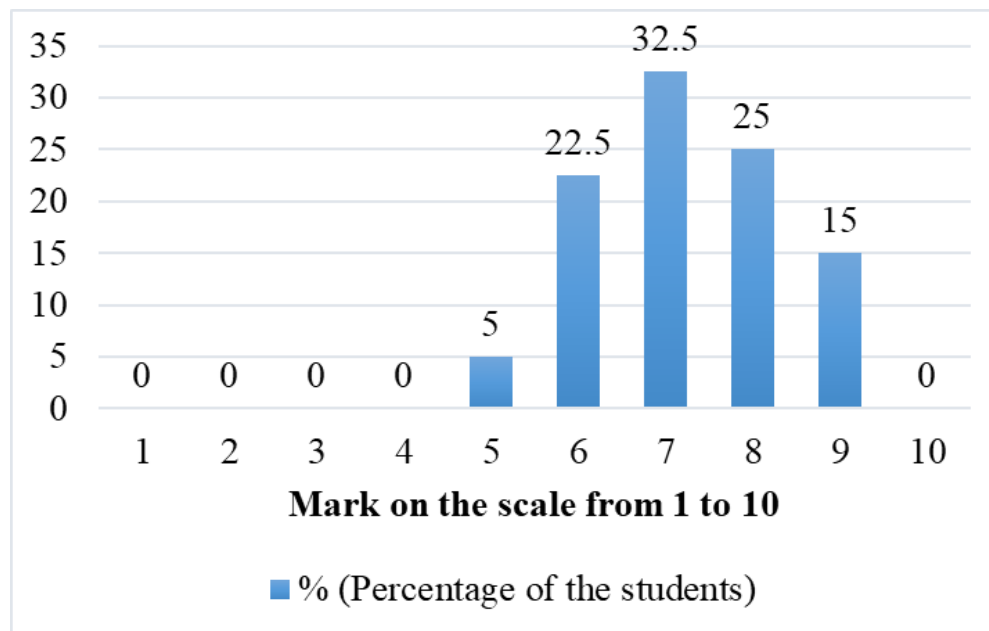


Figure 3. Post-test scores of 40 students

Figure 3 depicts the post-test scores of 40 students who utilized the Hamburger Model to write about the advantages of city life. The results show significant improvement compared to the pre-test. The most frequent scores were 7 (32.5%) and 8 (25%), demonstrating that many students successfully applied the Hamburger Model. Additionally, 15% of the students achieved a score of 9, indicating near-excellent performance.

The pre-test had a standard deviation of 0.862, reflecting relatively uniform performance among students. In contrast, the post-test standard deviation increased to 1.121, indicating greater variability in outcomes. This suggests differences in how effectively individual students adapted to the Hamburger Model. While the teaching method improved overall writing proficiency, the increased variability highlights that some students may need additional support to achieve progress comparable to their peers.

Table 1. Pre-test and post-test comparison

	Mean	St.dev
Pre-test	5.750	0.862
Post-test	7.225	1.121

4..1.2. Results from questionnaire

With the survey of students about their experience with the Hamburger Model, the Hamburger Model Effectiveness, Classroom Experience and Overall Feedback from students, the results showed that most students had a good perception of the Hamburger Model in improving their paragraph writing ability. Experience with the Hamburger Model, over 75% of students were interested in learning with the Hamburger Model, and nearly 50% of students agreed that this model created motivation for writing. Hamburger Model Effectiveness, over 50% of students felt that this model was useful and over 80% helped them improve their writing ability. In addition, classroom experiences and feedback from students were also positive, most students were more interested and confident in their writing, and they felt that their writing was more organized and coherent through the teacher's guidance.

4.2. Discussion

The study demonstrated a 25.65% increase in students' writing skills after applying the Hamburger Model, aligning with prior research that highlights its effectiveness in improving different aspects of writing.

Desti Nopita, Adzanil Prima Septy, and Khairul Harha (2014) investigated the use of the Hamburger Strategy to enhance EFL students' ability to write hortatory exposition texts. Their findings indicated that the strategy effectively addressed common writing difficulties, such as vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation. Similarly, the present study revealed that the Hamburger Model significantly enhanced paragraph organization, coherence, and grammatical accuracy for students in class 6A1, essential skills for producing well-structured writing.

Research by Clara Oktaviani Lusaka, Jamiluddin, and Erniwati (2015) on grade seven students also demonstrated the effectiveness of the Hamburger Strategy, reporting a post-test improvement exceeding 17%. The current study reflected similar results, with the average score increasing from 5.75 to 7.225, highlighting the success of the structured approach in improving writing proficiency.

Basima Ramadan Elshaer (2018) examined how the strategy influenced creative writing skills and attitudes in Palestinian 12th graders. Her research, which focused on fluency, flexibility, and originality, found the strategy beneficial for creative writing. Likewise, the present study observed that the Hamburger Model helped students better organize their ideas and express them clearly, which is essential for both creative and academic writing tasks.

The comparison of pre-test and post-test results in this study demonstrated notable gains in average scores and revealed a wider range of performance. While the Hamburger Model boosted overall writing skills, individual progress varied, indicating that some students needed more targeted support. This observation aligns with Elshaer's findings, which emphasized the importance of adapting the strategy for students with diverse learning needs.

In conclusion, this study, consistent with previous research, confirms the Hamburger Model as a practical approach for improving writing skills across various student groups and writing contexts. The significant progress observed in post-test scores underscores its value in developing technical and creative writing skills. However, the increased variability in scores suggests that modifications may be required to better accommodate students with different proficiency levels, a point also highlighted in related studies.

5. Conclusion

The implementation of the Hamburger Model in teaching paragraph writing to 6th-grade students showed clear improvements in both performance and student attitudes. Higher post-test scores, fewer writing errors, and increased confidence highlight the model's effectiveness in enhancing writing skills. Most students found the model helpful for organizing their thoughts systematically, though a few expressed neutral or lower confidence. Despite not being a new concept, the

Hamburger Model model had not been widely applied in writing instruction, and this study demonstrated its value in improving paragraph writing abilities.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

References

- [1] Basima Ramadan Elshaer, (2018). The Effectiveness of Using Paragraph Hamburger Strategy in Improving Palestinian 12th Graders' Creative Writing Skills and their Attitudes towards Writing, (Thesis: Faculty of Education, Master of Curricula and Teaching Methods, The Islamic University of Gaza, Gaza, 2018), p.3.
- [2] Clara Oktaviani Lasaka, Jamiluddin, Erniwati, (2015). Effect of Using Paragraph Hamburger Strategy on Students Writing Achievements. E-Journal of English Language Teaching Society (ELTS) Vol. No.1.
- [3] Desti Nopita, Adzanil Prima Septy, and Khairul Harha. (2014). The Implementation of Paragraph Hamburger Strategy to Improve Students' Ability to Write Hortatory Exposition Text. Computer Science. Vol 3. No. 4.
- [4] Hedge, T. (2005). Writing. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- [5] Lewin, K. (1946). Action research and minority problems. Journal of Social Issues, 2, 4, 34–46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1946.tb02295.x>
- [6] Morin. (2013).The Everything Kids Learning Activities Book. Adam Media.