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# CREATIVE WRITING IN ENGLISH: HOW FAR THE BANGLADESHI EDUCATION SYSTEM FOCUSES ON ITS DEVELOPMENT AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

THESIS

SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

BY

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UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

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2006

This thesis is dedicated

to

My beloved parents

Late Mohamud Kalimullah Patwary

&

Late Mrs. Hosne Ara Kalim

My loving wife

Mrs. Mahsina Momtaz Maria

&

My brothers and sister

Millat, Sayem, Javed and Zohra

# PREFACE

The widest range of English language programme is conducted in the school level which ends in the secondary level of education through the S.S.C. examination. But in reality, the students of the secondary level are showing a far below standard performance from the expectation especially in creative or independent writing ability. Though there has been a change in the status of English after 1971, this change did not bring about any remarkable improvement in teaching methodology. As a result, though there has always been a goal to flourish the creative writing faculty of the students, it has remained a dream.

This work puts the above problem areas and real scenario of creative writing in English in our secondary school level education into perspective. At the same time it also discusses the components and stages of what “the process of writing" should be.

It is my great pleasure and privilege to record my deepest sense of gratitude, indebtedness and thankful acknowledgement to Prof. Dr. Dil Afroze Quader, Institute of Modern Languages, Dhaka University for suggesting me all the necessary steps and for her constant supervision and inspiration throughout the progress of the work. She not only worked as my supervisor rendering official duties towards me but also helped me in all the steps of my research. It was her painstaking and continuous guidance that enabled me to carry out the research and complete this thesis.

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Finally, a bond of promise and obligation heartens me to mention the service of my beloved wife Mahsina Momtaz Maria who was a constant source of inspiration and a permanent helping hand during the whole course of my work. She not only created opportunities for me to work, but also, very often advised me on improving my work and typed different parts of my work. All these she did in addition to her regular studies and household work.

# ABSTRACT

The primary goal of the present study is to investigate if the teachers related to the ELT promotion programmes in the Secondary level schools of Bangladesh follow any particular method in teaching writing in the classroom. The study also examines what difficulties English teachers of the Secondary level schools face teaching writing independently in the classroom. A further purpose of the study is to determine the influence of the teachers' assistance to the students and monitoring of the students' work on their improvement of their independent writing ability.

In order to conduct the study, three research questions were formulated and then three null hypotheses were assumed as the probable answers to the research questions.

The data for the investigation were gathered from 197 students of class VIII, IX and X who were randomly selected from seven high schools of Dhaka Board and two English medium schools of Dhaka city. The data were also gathered from the teachers of the same schools visited. In order to get the data, the English writing lessons of the schools were visited and classroom observation reports were made. English writing proficiency tests were arranged and the writings of the students were collected as the data. Questionnaires were administered with the students and the teachers to collect data relevant to the study.

The data resulting were then analyzed in the light of mixed method of qualitative and quantitative researches. Analysis of the data reveals that most of the teachers in the study do not follow any particular method in teaching writing in English which is one of the main reasons for the students to remain weak in writing. The results further show that most of the students are weak in writing. The results further show that most of the teachers in the study do not have enough knowledge of the process of writing. As a result, they go their own ways to teach their students

writing independently. It is also revealed from the study that not only the teachers' inefficiency but also different sorts of limitations of the students and the education system are major hindrances towards the desirable achievement in students' independent writing ability. Teachers' assistance to the learners in framing ideas and their close monitoring of students' activities are found to be quite helpful to the improvement of students' writing ability.

Based on the results of the study certain recommendations for the improvement of EFL study in Bangladesh have been made. The investigator particularly recommends that English language teaching programmes for Bangladeshi high school students should focus on the modern approaches to teaching writing along with the up to date and compulsory teacher training programme and the regular monitoring of the teachers' role and teaching techniques in the classroom.

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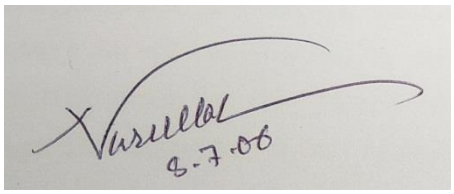
# Table of Symbols and Abbreviations

| Symbols/ Abbreviation | Expressions |
|---|---|
| CC | Communicative Competence |
| CLT | Communicative Language Teaching |
| GTM | Grammar-Translation Method |
| NCTB | National Curriculum and Textbook Board |
| EFL | English as a Foreign Language |
| ESL | English as a Second Language |
| i. e. | that is |

# Declaration

I do hereby declare that the research work incorporated in this thesis on **"Creative Writing in English: How Far the Bangladeshi Education System Focuses on its Development at the Secondary Level"** is the work performed by me and that no part of this thesis has been submitted previously in any university or institution for any other degree.



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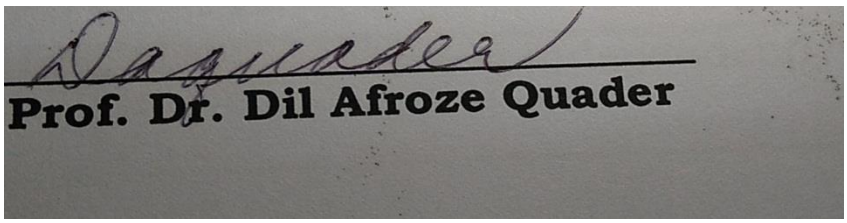
This is to certify that the thesis titled **"Creative Writing in English: How Far the Bangladeshi Education System Focuses on its Development at the Secondary Level"** submitted by Md. Nurullah Patwary in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree of Master of Philosophy in English Language Teaching has been completed under my supervision.

It is further certified that Md. Nurullah Patwary has fulfilled all conditions laid down in the Academic Ordinance with regard to the M. Phil, coursework, and that to the best of my knowledge the thesis contains his original research.

Dhaka




Prof. Dr. Dil Afroze Quader

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# *Chapter – 1*

# *Introduction*

# Chapter - 1

# Introduction

## 1.1 Importance, history and status of English in Bangladesh

For almost all the important purposes, the nations of the world are interdependent on each other and English has become the most used and most prestigious lingua franca among them. The situation in our country is not different. As Bangladesh is a former British colony, English enjoys a traditional and historical status here. English was brought to this sub-continent in the pre-colonial period in the 15th and 16th centuries. After the Englishmen had formed their own company, English became the language of communication of the elite people of both sides (Dil, S. Anwar 1996). That socio-historical context for the dominance of English was gradually taking shape at least by the end of the 18th century and *The Tutor*, the first book written to teach English to non-Europeans, supports this. It was published in Serampore in Bengal. The author John Miller himself printed this book in British Bengal in 1797 (Howatt 1984).

> In 1837 English and the vernacular languages had already replaced Persian in the proceedings of law courts-English in the higher courts and vernacular languages in the lower courts. Thus, in both education and law courts, language became a marker of two separate levels of social operation-the upper level for English, the lower level for the vernaculars. The policy of administrators consciously promoted the association of English with the status of privilege...(quoted from Das Gupta 1970 : 43-44)

During the Pakistan period English became the common language for communication between East and West Pakistan. Thus in the Pakistan period English started enjoying the status of second language in Bangladesh. (1962 report of Curriculum Committee). After the liberation, though the status of English was changed, English remained the most commonly used official and business language. Though in the school education Bangla became the medium of

instruction, English was still a compulsory subject through secondary and higher secondary levels. The 1972 Bangladesh Education Commission recommended that English should be offered as a second language from Class VI. Later, the NCTB included the course as a compulsory subject from class III upward. (Govt. of Bangladesh 1977). However, in quite a number of schools, English was taught from the beginners' class of primary schools; perhaps, "the pressure of public opinion was behind the unofficial policy of teaching English from the first class of the primary stage of education in Bangladesh." (Khatun, 1992:93). Gradually teaching and learning English was adopted as an important academic programme in almost all the educational levels in Bangladesh.

Now in all educational levels English is a compulsory subject. English is the medium of instruction in a significant number of higher educational institutions. Good English speaking and writing proficiencies are two of the most important preconditions to get a good job in many sectors of our country. English, in many cases, is the only medium of communication in the trade and commerce world at home and abroad. Considering the importance of improving English language proficiencies, English has been adopted as an important subject in the S.S.C and equivalent level of Bangladeshi education system (Haque 1999). But the real scenario of ELT in The Secondary level is very miserable. It is understood from the remarks of Ahmed (1999) who says:

> After ten or twelve years with English as a compulsory subject our school students wonder how to write a single sentence on their own. These students are however getting creditable marks in English as well as in many other subjects not on the basis of their creativity, but on the basis of their memorized materials. In challenging situations at higher stages of learning where there is no scope for learning by rote that is, learning without understanding, these students prove misfits.

Though an ambitious target for teaching English has been set in the curriculum of the S.S.C and equivalent levels, this target is hardly achieved because of some drawbacks of our education system practiced in the secondary level.

Let us see what goals are targeted in the secondary level of education and what the educationists say about the problems of our education policies and educational environment.

## 1.2 Aims of education at the S.S.C. level

According to the report of "National Committee on Education Policy (1997 page 63, 64), the aims of secondary education are:

- ✓ to help flourish the inherent qualities of the students,
- ✓ to prepare students as skilled manpower for taking part in the field of work specially in the economic activities of the country,
- ✓ to prepare students for higher education,
- ✓ to widen and consolidate basic knowledge of students acquired at the primary level,
- ✓ to impart enough knowledge in the students regarding basic educational matters,"

Considering these aims English language programme has also been named in the following manner.

The widest range of English language programme is conducted at the school level which ends in the secondary level of education through the S.S.C exam. According to the 1995 report of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board, by the end of the Secondary Level of education, it is expected that students will be able to-

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (a) Write | (i) simple instruction | (ii) summaries |
| | (iii) clear arguments | (iv) narratives |
| | (v) descriptions | (vi) dialogues |
| | (vii) formal and informal letters | (viii) reports. |

(b) They are supposed to demonstrate imagination and creativity in appropriate written forms.

(c) They are also supposed to be able to plan and organize the above tasks efficiently so as to communicate ideas and facts clearly, accurately and with relevance to the topic."

## 1.3 Problem areas of education system of Bangladesh:

### 1.3.1 Introduction

Though a good range of goals has been set in ELT at the secondary level, it is hardly achieved because of some longstanding problems in our education system and education institutions. Let us have a glimpse of the problem areas.

### 1.3.2 Insufficient budget

According to Haque (1981), education affects almost all the factors of development. Hence expenditure on education can be regarded as an investment that leads to the growth in national income. But he observes that in Bangladesh we tend to allocate an insufficient budget for education on the plea that we are poverty stricken, although we tend to spend much more for many unproductive sectors of the economy. As a result the education system of our country has hardly achieved any significant progress. Malek (2000) says, in Bangladesh the overall allocation to the education sector is only 2.5% of the G N P. This is much less than that of many developing nations. India, Thailand, Philippines, and Indonesia spend about 3% - 5% while Malaysia spends about 7% of their G N P for this purpose. According to an observation by UNESCO, the developing nations must allocate more than 3.4% of their G. N. P. (Gross National Products) for education sector. In Bangladesh the allocation should be 5% of the G N P in order to make a quick progress in raising the standard of education. These drawbacks are affecting not only the English language programmes of our schools but also our education system that has been affected with many prolonged problems.

Most of the educational institutions are not equipped with sufficient and modern teaching materials like various types of helpful books, magazines and teaching aids. The education programmes are very much old fashioned and restricted to a limited number of activities. It is a general picture that in almost all schools, students are solely dependent upon their teachers and they learn as much as the teachers help them to learn. If the teachers are qualified and helpful enough, students learn well and vice versa. In most cases students study very little beyond their books and teachers' instructions. But for ensuring all these services a good amount of monitory assistance is needed for the schools but Bangladesh cannot afford as much as is required to make the education programme successful.

### 1.3.3 Teachers

Scarcity of qualified teachers and lack of congenial atmosphere in our education institutions also have added to the crisis. A congenial atmosphere, where students can avail themselves of all kinds of supports from both school authorities and teachers, is a must for the expected improvement of students. Though there are some well-equipped educational institutions with congenial academic atmosphere, most of the educational institutions in the secondary level lack proper academic environment because of the lack of enough logistic support from the schools and academic; support from the teachers. Shaha (1981) sees a great shortage of dedicated and qualified teachers whose leadership is essential to make our education successful and productive. Ahmed (1999) also observes the same shortage. He observes that there is a great shortage of qualified and trained teachers in all the levels of school education. We can have a good idea about this matter from his following comment.

> In Bangladesh more than sixty percent of those who teach English at the Secondary Level have no professional knowledge and competence. English is

offered at the primary training institutes of teachers, but very few trainees take it seriously. As a result more than 90% of the teachers who have to teach English do so without any professional background.

### 1.3.4 Text books

Shaha (1981) comments that the text books of the primary and secondary levels are of poor standard. He observes that these neither possess intelligent and time befitting lessons nor attempt to provoke interest in the students regarding life and the world. As a result, the expected outcome of learning through studying the text books remains mostly unachieved.

### 1.3.5 Teaching method

Haque (1981) observes that the method of teaching is old fashioned. Teachers hardly follow any modern ways of teaching. This is true in case of English language teaching (ELT) too. The modern world follows the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method but in Bangladesh traditional Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) is so deep rooted in our teachers' mind that they usually do not try to come out of that method. Very few teachers even have got a sound knowledge of the CLT. As a result, though the students study English for a long time, they hardly achieve communicative competence both in spoken and written English.

### 1.3.6 Examination and testing system

Haque (1981) also observes that the examination system of our country is very old fashioned. In most cases teachers are not willing to bring about changes in the examination system in the light of the modern trends. For example, in ELT, the modern trend is to follow communicative approach in all the aspects but in case of class tests and examinations this is hardly considered by the teachers in Bangladesh. While teaching writing, teachers choose some easy and frequently used topics and ask the students to write compositions on those areas. Students can find out those compositions written in different guide

books. They learn those compositions by heart and reproduce them in the examinations. Teachers also select some common topics for the class tests and examinations. Students find it easy to attempt those topics. Many of them are seen scoring good marks in English but in fact they remain weak in writing. The old examination system is not diversified and practical. Both teachers and students find the Grammar-Translation method well suited to an examination system based on testing students' knowledge about textbook contents and grammar rules. So one (i.e. the method) perpetuates the other (i.e. the exam.) and vice versa. In this situation, though the syllabus objectives demand that students' ability to use the language (i.e. to use the language skills for communication) be tested, in fact, students' ability to memorize and copy the text book contents is virtually tested in the current examination system.

### 1.3.7 Teacher-student ratio

Haque (1981) also observes that the teacher-student ratio in our schools is greatly unbalanced. This imbalance is creating the lack of personal contact between the teacher and the learners. In such an atmosphere education cannot be expected to do much good to the educated and the society because the aims of education cannot be achieved in such an environment where too many students are attended by one teacher. According to E.V. Gatesby (1950) class size is also one of the major factors for the improvement of language learning. The pace of language learning slows down if there are more than ten adults and twenty students to one teacher. But the situation in Bangladesh is different. Ahmed (1999) observes that in Bangladesh the teacher student ratio is absolutely incompatible to a real learning situation. He comments that "When teachers face a class of 70/80 or even 300 (at higher secondary level) language teaching becomes almost an impossible task."

### 1.3.8 Poor turnout in the secondary level schools

According to an investigation report of the Secondary Education Development Project (1996) it is seen that only 30% of the primary level learners enter the

secondary level of education. Out of them 40% drop out. In fact only 8.3% of the learners of this age complete secondary level of education. It is really a frustrating picture in a developing country like Bangladesh where a very huge number of children remains uneducated.

### 1.3.9 Administration and management

In order to consolidate the education system the necessity of a smooth administration and supervision system is boundless. Specific rules and regulations are needed for the smooth functioning of an administration. But according to Malek (2000, 42-43) these rules and regulations are not well assembled. This weakness is found in the secondary level education of the private sector. In fact most of the secondary level of education is implemented by the private institutes. Malek (2000, 43) quotes a piece of information given by BANBEIS:

> Normally a High School comprises five grades from classes VI to X. Grades IX and X are considered secondary stage. There are many high schools which have classes I to X. Most of the high schools in the country are privately managed. All the junior high schools in Bangladesh are privately managed.

But the rules and regulations to regulate these institutions are not updated and properly assembled. These rules and regulations were in the latest published in a publication titled *Bengal Education Code* in 1931. In the meantime many of the social aspects have changed to a great extent. So the century old education codes may not be appropriate to the extent the present trend of education programme of this age demands.

In course of time, ELT world has also experienced a lot of changes. The changes have taken place in people's need to learn the language, in teaching methods and obviously teaching-learning environment. To cope up with all of these changes and to make our language teaching-learning activities successful a significant change is a must in education administration and management

which will ensure all sorts of services and monitoring of the concerned authorities engaged in the promotion of ELT in secondary level schools.

### 1.3.10 Educational environment

Islam and Monjur (1999:208) comment that though majority of the students study in rural institutions, the overall academic environment is not favourable enough in the secondary level educational institutions of rural areas. Most of the schools do not possess required number of chairs, tables, black-boards and other study materials. Most of the school buildings are old, so these schools cannot offer a congenial academic atmosphere. Moreover, there is a great shortage of teachers in the schools of rural areas. The number of English teachers is even far less. In many schools teachers from other disciplines teach English. Naturally E L T programmes with this type of teachers and in such an unfavourable environment cannot be fruitful to the desired level.

### 1.3.11 Mismatch between learners' needs and teachers' teaching methods

Another serious problem is that, in Bangladesh very little research has been done to document the nature and extent of students' needs, interests and difficulties with learning English. It is unknown for students to be asked about how effective and appropriate they find the teaching and what problems they encounter in studying English. Curriculum specialists and teachers take it for granted that the present curriculum and teaching methods are, naturally, the most suitable. Consequently, there is a mismatch between learners' needs and teachers' teaching methods which tends to hinder learners' achievement in developing language skills. (Rahman, 1996)

## 1.4 Desired ELT environment

Most of the schools of our country lack the desired ELT environment where all the necessary language skills- listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill and writing skill.

Apart from ensuring a congenial; academic environment, a special arrangement for teaching a foreign language must be made. In that arrangement it is to be ensured that all the language skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing are taught in an integrative way. But this type of arrangement is hardly found in our educational institutions because most of the teachers do not have any clear view of how to teach a foreign language like English and most of the schools are following a traditional way of teaching English. It is impossible to develop creative faculty in students unless they are taught all the language skills in an integrative way. It is because learning of a language requires all the four skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. Out of these four skills two are receptive and two are productive. To be developed the productive skills depend upon receptive skills. The improvement of speaking skill depends upon listening skill and the improvement of writing skill depends upon reading skill. On the other hand, all the four skills are required for someone's sound development of a language. If students want to improve their creative writing faculty, they have to improve all of the language skills. David Nunan (1991) observes, a number of interesting classroom techniques including conferencing emerged from the process approach to writing. The aim of conferencing is to encourage young writers to talk about their initial drafts with the teacher or with fellow students. The technique draws on principles of discovery learning as well as the notion of linking reading with writing. But this modern concept usually does not work in the secondary level education institutions of Bangladesh,. Probably the English teachers have not got enough knowledge of this modern concept and most of the educational institutions are also not well equipped to provide such an environment. As a result, though there is a goal to improve the creative writing faculty of the students, it remains a dream. The researcher himself bears the testimony to this situation. To have a clear idea about the ELT environment in the schools, the researchers' own experience of developing independent writing ability is given below:

## 1.5 Writer's own experience in developing independent writing ability while studying in Class VIII, IX & X

I was a student of Tejgaon Govt. High School, Dhaka. I completed my S.S.G. from the same school. In the S.S.C. examination I scored 58 in English 1st Paper and 64 in English 2nd Paper.

The major teaching activities by our teachers and our learning outcome are discussed below:

### 1.5.1 Texts:

For teaching English texts our teachers at first asked us to read part of a story or an extract or a poem for our text book. Sometimes they read out the part and tried to make us understand that by explaining in Bangla. We had to learn some word meanings and memorize answers of some given questions. The answers were available in the guidebooks. Sometimes the teachers even told us the answers. Teachers, very rarely, asked us to write anything new outside the fixed questions in the exercise. As a result, we got very few opportunities to develop our independent writing ability and had almost no knowledge of the process of writing. We had some idea about different lessons of our English textbooks but, probably, it was not enough to improve our free writing ability.

### 1.5.2 Essays and letters:

Regarding teaching essays and letters, teachers usually discussed some points related to the essay and the letter. Their discussion usually revolved around the topic or the subject-matter. Regarding the development of the essay and letter writing skills, teachers discussed very rarely. We were given some topics. Most of the essays and letters were found written in composition books prescribed for us and we memorized them from the essay or letter books. Almost all of the writing topics were repeated in the examination question papers many times. We were happy to get some known essay' topics or letters because we could memorize them and we were confident that we would get some of those in the examination. Through these classes though we could memorize some essays and

letters, our creative writing skill, the ability to write on our own, did not develop to a desired extent.

### 1.5.3 Grammar:

Grammar classes were easier for us because grammar classes dealt with limited grammatical features and easy grammar exercises. We were taught different grammatical aspects such as, uses of articles, voice change, narration, degrees of adjectives and adverbs, tenses etc. We were asked to work out some exercises in the classroom but most of the exercises included discrete sentences. There was no scope of using these rules in bigger writing texts or in writing for practical purposes. But in fact these types of grammar classes are effective for improving students' grammatical competence rather than communicative competence (CC). Though "grammatical competence" is an important concern for any communicative approach whose goal includes providing learners with the knowledge of how to determine and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances in real life situations" (Haque and Maniruzzaman 2000), it does not provide the learners with all the necessary components to improve their communicative competence.

But our grammar classes did not take into account the improvement of our communicative competence. The main aim was to develop our knowledge of grammatical features and in most cases the grammar exercises included discrete sentences. As a result, these classes contributed very little to the genuine development our independent writing ability.

## 1.6 Steps taken by the government to improve the E L T programmes

This is widely accepted that despite the considerable amount of time devoted to English language teaching, the general proficiency level and attainment of the majority of the high school students is unsatisfactory and disproportionately low. "The present state of English reveals a frustrating ELT scenario in Bangladesh.

The standards of teaching and learning have so miserably declined that the government as well as the conscientious section of our population have recently realized that something somewhere is seriously wrong in the whole business of teaching and learning of English in the country."(Haque 1999)

The overall weakness in English language skills, specially writing skill, among secondary and higher secondary level students has been a matter of great concern to parents, E L T teachers and educators since the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971. Therefore the then government set up an English Language Teaching Task Force to survey the state of ELT in the country. (Ministry of Education, Order No. 5/7 AS-38/75 dated 27-10-1975). The Task Force was asked to assess the personnel and teaching materials which were available at secondary, higher secondary and teacher training levels. It was also asked to make an assessment of the English language proficiencies of students at these levels.

The Task Force conducted necessary investigation in the above mentioned areas. Its findings, which became available from May, 1976 confirmed the poor level of achievement of both students and teachers. The Task Force observed that there was a great shortage of trained teachers of English at all levels. It also considered the lack of competent teachers at all levels the biggest single obstacle to English teaching in the country. The teaching methods observed were not suitable for effective learning because from the primary level, students were made to learn by rote without understanding.

On the recommendations of the Task Force, the National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee introduced an approximately graded syllabus at each level and new textbooks were prepared by the experts of both home and abroad. The Ministry of Education also took several corrective measures in the area of teacher training. "However despite various efforts at refining teaching methods, developing materials consistent with these methods, improving teachers'

qualifications, and improving evaluating techniques, the weakness in English teaching seemed to persist." (Haque 2000)

The state of independent writing skill is the worst of all the language skills in the secondary level education institutions. This has been observed by Ahmed (1999). He says:

> "Teaching English in our schools has taken a very miserable shape now-a-days. After ten or twelve years with English as a compulsory subject our school students wonder how to write a single sentence on their own. These students however, are getting creditable marks in English as well as many other subjects not on the basis of their creativity, but on the basis of their memorized materials."

So, the improvement of independent teaching writing ability in the secondary level schools, in my opinion, is to a great extent dependent upon the development of a well-organized and comprehensive plan that embraces all major aspects of the learning process.

Despite setting some clear goals and adopting different steps to improve the ELT scenario of the secondary level schools, very few systematic investigations into students' problem and development of creative writing or independent writing ability have been made. I believe that an understanding of students' genuine problems in improving their creative writing ability and teachers' main responsibilities in teaching students' writing skills in the classroom may help reshape ELT activities in the schools and therefore lead to increased efforts and proficiency.

## 1.7 Aim and significance of the study

### 1.7.1 Aim of the study

The goal of this study, therefore, is to investigate if the English teachers of the secondary level schools follow any particular method in teaching writing. This

study also examines what difficulties the English teachers face in the classroom in teaching writing independently. A further purpose of the study is to determine the influence of the teachers' assistance to the students and monitoring of the students' work on their improvement of independent writing ability. The last objective of this study is to relate the findings of the study to English language teaching programmes at the secondary level schools of Bangladesh.

### 1.7.2 Significance of the study

The study may be considered significant for several reasons. Since the purpose of the study is to investigate the role of the English teachers of the Bangladeshi secondary level schools and the difficulties the teachers face in teaching writing, it will be of relevance to the Ministry of Education in Bangladesh in its endeavour to improve English language teaching programme in the secondary level schools of the country. The knowledge derived from the study may provide a valid basis for modifying the present English language programmes. Furthermore, the study will provide insights into the influence of teachers' assistance on the improvement of students' writing skill.

## 1.8 Definition of Terms

### 1.8.1 Creative writing ability/independent writing ability:

This refers to the ability of the learners to express their own ideas and produce good pieces of writing independently and creatively in any real life situations.

### 1.8.2 English as a Second Language (ESL):

> "This refers to a learning situation where the target language is used within the surrounding society (e.g. international students' learning English in Britain, Canada, United States etc. or students learning English in countries of divergent linguistic backgrounds, such as the Philippines, India, Nigeria, Kenya and Belize, where English besides being a lingua franca between different linguistic communities is also a language

necessary for certain official, social, commercial or educational activities within the countries)." (Haque, 1989: 26)

Richards, Platt and Weber (1987) define the term in the following manner.

> "The role of English in countries where it is widely used within the country (e.g. as a language of instruction at school, as a language of business and government, and of everyday communication by some people) but is not the first language of the population (e.g. in Singapore, the Philippines, India, and Nigeria)."

### 1.8.3 English as a Foreign Language (EFL):

"This refers to a learning, situation where the target language is not spoken within the surrounding society, but used by someone for communication across frontiers or with people who are not his/her countrymen. This includes listening to broadcast, reading books or newspapers, commerce or travel (e.g. students learning English in Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, China, Germany etc.)". (Haque, 1989, Page-26)

Richards, Platt and Weber (1987) define the term in the following manner:

> The role of English in countries where it is taught as a subject in schools but not used as a medium of instruction in education nor as a language of communication (e.g. in government, business, or industry) within the country.

### 1.8.4 Writing proficiency test:

It refers to the test which was arranged to examine the creative writing ability of the students of the schools selected for conducting the study. The students were given a topic or a subject matter and were asked to write a paragraph or an essay or a letter selected for them. Later on, their papers were examined and scores were given on each paper.

# *Chapter - 2*

# *Ways of Teaching Writing and What the Process of Writing should Be: Theories*

# Chapter - 2

# Ways of Teaching Writing and What the Process of Writing should Be: Theories

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the theoretical background of methods of teaching writing, and the process of writing suggested by different scholars and the factors important in teaching writing and comparison of methods used in Bangladeshi classrooms with those suggested by the theory.

## 2.2 Approaches to developing writing skills

There are different approaches to developing writing skills.

According to David Nunan (1991) there are two approaches to developing writing skills: (i) product oriented approach and (ii) process approach.

i. The product oriented approach favours classroom activities in which learners are engaged in initiating, copying and transforming models of correct language. This usually occurs at the level of the sentence. Writing classrooms therefore are devoted in the first instance to sentence formation and grammar exercises.

ii. In the process approach the focus is on quantity rather than quality. The proponents of this approach suggest that learners should concentrate not on the correctness of writing but on the amount of writing. They want the learners to keep on writing and have confidence in writing on their own. This approach encourages collaborative group work between learners where attention to grammar is played down. The aim of collaboration also may be to encourage young writers to talk about their drafts with the teacher or with fellow

students. The technique draws on principles of discovery learning as well as notion of linking reading with writing.

There is a sharp difference between these two approaches. The primary concern of the product approach is grammatical accuracy and this is mainly restricted to discrete sentences. This approach suggests that grammatical accuracy will ultimately lead to good writing. On the other hand, the primary and the main aim of the process approach is to develop writing fluency and communicative competence in the learners without caring much about grammatical accuracy.

But Nunan (1991) suggests that for making language teaching programme effective the techniques suggested by the process approach should be integrated with the techniques of the product approach.

## 2.3 Process of writing: Different models

For producing a good piece of writing, one should have a good amount of knowledge of process of writing. For the ESL/EFL learners this knowledge is more important. To be as good as it can be, a piece of writing should go through a number of stages before it is finished. Though the stages vary for different types of writing and for different people, ESL learners should have an overall idea of the process of writing.

In almost every aspect of life the distinction between final product and draft is blurred. Normally the term draft is used for a version of the text that the writer knows he or she will improve on. Correcting or rewriting a draft is thus regular and very important part of the whole writing process. According to Zamel (1982), in process terms, skilled writers are much more aware of writing as a recursive activity involving revision of successive drafts of one's text during which one's ideas may change and they might make necessary modifications in the text. Let us now turn to the process of writing itself.

About teaching writing, Murray (1985) suggests just write hard, fast, make mistakes, and lose control. As Guy de Maupassant says, "Get black on white. See what happens. Let it run." Stand back. Plunge in again. Steal a phrase of a line of an idea or a feeling from what you've just written and try it again."

The model is:

**COLLECT PLAN DEVELOP = Draft**

Then the writer passes through that same sequence, again and again, emphasizing one stage of the process, or two, or all three — or even part of a stage — doing what is necessary to produce increasingly effective drafts.

Tribble (1986) quotes one of the most commonly reported outlines of the process of writing.

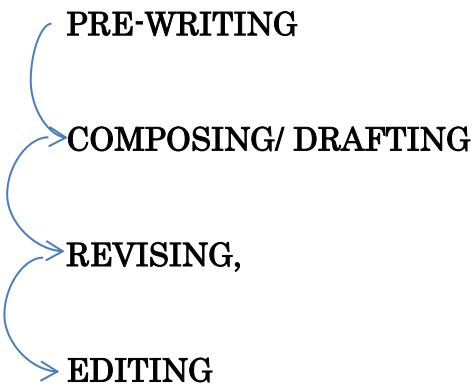


**Fig- 2.1: Tribble's outlines of the process of writing**

It is probable that the different stages appear more than once and in different sequences. Now let us see how different stages should be carried out during writing.

### 2.3.1 Pre-writing

Pre-writing activities include talking to people. As Hedge says "Collaborative writing in the classroom generates discussion and activities which encourage

an effective process of writing" (1988: 12), so, prewriting activities should include classroom discussion and sharing views among the learners.

### 2.3.2 Composing and drafting

Regarding starting composing **Tribble** (1986) puts his idea in the following lines:

> "During composing, writers move towards a text that most closely matches what they want to convey to their reader. Teachers can give the students some exercise giving a headline along with a set of focusing questions such a who? where? when? what? why? etc."

In this way teachers provide students with assistance in generating ideas, focusing and structuring.

#### The First Draft:

After all the work of gathering ideas and planning, Tribble (1986) suggests, the writer should begin to write. The first draft should be written straight through. After writing the first draft the writer should take some time and examine it in a fresh mind to have a better view of the whole paper. She should also try to get someone else to read the draft. A reader can help him see the strengths and weakness in his paper. Then he should check if the writing as a whole makes sense, if the points are properly explained and if it has a good beginning and a discerning ending. In the light of the above questions the writer may make necessary changes.

#### The Second Draft:

As the next step Tribble (1986) suggests that the writer then should make a fresh copy of his first draft and may make further corrections and modifications.

### 2.3.3 Preparing the final copy

#### Revising and editing

Students need to realize that revising and editing are integral parts of process writing. So they require a checklist of guidelines which will make it possible

for them to edit their work. Hedge (1988) suggests that the writer should check if he is sharing his impressions clearly enough with his reader, if he has missed any points of information, if the vocabulary has been used appropriately and if the paragraphs are written coherently. Following this checklist the writer can make necessary modifications and prepare the final copy.

## 2.4 Factors important in teaching writing

### 24.1 Modes of instruction

Hillock (1986) identifies four modes of instruction. These are: the presentational mode, the natural process mode, the environmental mode and the individualized mode.

The presentational mode happens at early stages where students follow teachers in practicing writing.

The natural process mode comes at the 2nd stage of the writing courses. This mode allows peer editing and revising of drafts which helps students to be self-dependent in expressing their own ideas.

The environmental mode, takes place when the instructor plans activities that result in high levels of students' interaction concerning specific problem solving activities.

The last mode Hillock (1986) identifies is the individualized mode where the teacher's lecture is minimized as much of the class time is spent in small group or individual task completion.

But the situation of most of the secondary schools of our country is different. In most cases only one mode takes place in our schools and that is the first mode, the presentational mode. This mode is followed all the year as students love following their teachers' instructions. As most of the English teachers are

not trained and qualified enough, they do not make arrangements for other three modes to take place in the classrooms.

### 2.4.2 Focus of instruction

Hillock (1986) observes that the study of traditional grammar has no effect on raising the quality of students' writing. Like Hillock it is also observed by E.V. Gatesby (1950, 143--150) that the study of grammar has no place in the process by which children learn a school language. He observes that the note of progress depends obviously upon the amount of time allotted to the language practice. Generally the focus of instruction is on traditional school grammar. In the case of our country, classroom teaching is mainly devoted to the learning of grammatical rules.

In a review of research on writing Zamel (1987) cites studies which show that less skilled writers tend to focus on the mechanics of writing and are inhibited by their concern of formal correctness. In process terms skilled writers are much more aware of writing as a recursive activity involving revision of successive drafts of one's texts during which one's ideas might change and he might rewrite the whole chunks of text.

Another important focus of instruction should be developing the communicative competence rather than grammatical competence in the learners. This has been supported by Widdowson (1996). According to Widdowson (1996) the grammar exercises that are devised should aim at developing natural language behaviour. He comments that the presentation of sentences as a random set of separate units not only discourage but also is likely to inhibit the development of the writing ability. Widdowson suggests that the grammar exercises should be related to the context of the reading passage. He states, "So although we want to relate the exercise material to the reading passage, we want to do it in a meaningful way, in a way which will

achieve real integration by getting learners to compose sentences as an integral part of the development of the writing ability.

Widdowson also comments that the effective teaching of language as communication calls for an integrated approach which represents different skills and abilities as aspects of a singly underlying activity. That means all the language skills--listening, speaking, reading and writing skills should be integrated in the language classes in order to get a better result in the writing classes.

About communicative competence (CC) we get a better idea from Candlin (1986-40). He describes communicative competence as:

> The ability to create meanings by exploring the potentials inherent in any language for continual modification in response to change, negotiating the value of convention rather than conforming to established principle. In sum, … a coming together of organized knowledge structures with a set of procedures for adapting this knowledge to solve new problems of communication that do not have readymade and tailored solutions.

More specifically communicative competence (CC) includes:

a) knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the language in real life situations,
b) knowledge of rules of speaking and
c) knowing how to use and respond to different types of language acts.

Richard, Platt and Weber (1987) illustrate the above points in the following words:

> When someone wishes to communicate with others, they must recognize the social setting, their relationship to the other person (s), and the types of language that can be used for a particular occasion. They must also be able to interpret written or spoken sentences within the total context in

which they are used. For example, the English statement *it's rather cold in here* could be a request, particularly to someone in a lower relationship, to close a window or a door or to turn on the heating.

### 2.4.3 Time of instruction

Good writing always needs care and time. It never comes in a hurry or by chance. Burton (1973) says that improving writing ability is a slow process and the shorter the instructional period, the less the improvement. Therefore, it is clear from the above suggestions that the more the instructional period and the more teachers' assistance the students get, the better is their writing standard.

### 2.4.4 Atmosphere of the writing classroom

Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (1987: 2-3) suggest that the atmosphere of the writing classroom should be warm and supportive. It helps if teachers show willingness to write too and to offer their attempts for class discussion. It helps if students can work together, assisting each other, pointing out strengths and weaknesses without taking or giving offence. This kind of atmosphere is essential as students learn better in an anxiety free environment.

Writing should relate to students' interests too. Zamel (1987) holds that writing skills can develop rapidly when students are given numerous opportunities to write where their concerns and interests are acknowledged.

## 2.5 Summary of the opinions of different writers on different aspects of writing

### 2.5.1 Focus of instruction

If we study different theories of developing writing given by Zamel (1987), Nunan (1991), Hillock (1984), E.V. Gatesby (1950) and Murray (1980), we will see that all of them suggest a common concept and that is the study of grammar has a very little place in developing students' writing standard, and writing

skills can develop rapidly when they are given enormous opportunities to write and when their interest and opportunities are acknowledged.

Nunan (1991), in addition to this view, suggests that for making writing classes completely successful free writing classes should be integrated with the practice of studying and imitating written models in the classroom. That means he puts emphasis on giving some input to the students so that they can have some sort of inspiration and confidence in starting their work.

### 2.5.2 Class size

According to E.V. Gatesby (1950) class size is also one of the factors for the improvement of language skills. The pace of language learning slows down if there are more than ten adults and twenty students to one teacher. Large class size obviously affects the writing lessons adversely. Large class size means very little assistance to the students, poor supervision of students' progress and poor individual care by the teacher.

### 2.5.3 Atmosphere of the classroom

Hedge (1988), Hillock (1984), Hemp Lyons and Heasely (1987) suggest that the writing lessons should have a warm and supportive atmosphere where the students feel encouraged to be engaged in group work and group editing.

### 2.5.4 Process of writing

Regarding the process of writing we see that Zamel (1987), Hamp-Lyons and Heasely (1987), Tribble (1986) and Murray (1980) suggest almost the same framework of prewriting, writing and rewriting activity. They want the writer to be busier and more caring in planning, correcting and improving their own writing than simply writing the first draft and submitting it to the teacher. But in the secondary schools of our country the practice does not conform to the framework given by the scholars. The writer's own experience of his school life and the classroom observation report say that English teachers here do not

think of planning, correcting and improving students' writing. Teachers simply ask their students to produce their writing and submit them to the teacher. The draft is the first and the last work.

## 2.6 Comparison between the writer's own experience of learning independent writing and the framework suggested by the scholars to develop writing skills

### 2.6.1 Dealing with the text and answering questions

This part was mainly a teacher centered activity. The teachers followed no particular teaching method in this case. They followed neither communicative approach of teaching nor did they have any aim to enable the students to use the language in real life situation. They first asked the students to read part of a story or an extract or a poem. Sometimes the teachers themselves read out the parts from the texts and explained them. The students had to learn some word meanings and memorize answers to some given questions related to the lessons. The classroom activities were restricted to these simple activities but if these activities are compared with the activities suggested by Communicative Approach' of language teaching, it would be clear how far the classes were away from reaching the target of communicative competence.

Haque and Maniruzzaman (2000) comment that the performance of a language learner is not identical with a behavioral record. They support Hymes' (1972) view in this regard. They summarize Hymes' view as:

> As Hymes (1972) maintains, the performance of the language learner is not identical with a behavioural record, but takes into account the interaction between the knowledge of language use, the competence of others, and the cybernetic and emergent properties of events themselves. Hence, communication is deemed to be interaction based, to involve unpredictability and creativity, to take place in a discourse and sociocultural context, to be purposive behavior, to be carried out under performance constraints, to involve use of authentic language, and to be

> judged as successful or not on the basis of behavioural outcomes. Recent formulations of communicative competence thus provide a description of the knowledge required to use language in social contexts, the knowledge of grammar rules, the knowledge of how language is used to achieve particular communicative goals, and the recognition of language use as a dynamic process.

If we look at the above ideas and the main focus of the language classroom suggested in section 2.4.2, we will see that the language classes in Bangladesh are far behind the goal of reaching 'Communicative Competence' where only simple reading, understanding the text meanings and learning some word meanings were the total language teaching activity. On the part of the students, our main aim was just to pass the exam with good grades and teachers' aim was to complete the syllabus as smoothly as possible. They did not bother much about the students' achieving 'Communicative Competence'. The classes were not much interactive and were not used as the means of improving students' communicative skills. They might not have enough knowledge of the modern approaches of ELT or they might have thought that their way of teaching was the perfect way to teach a language. This view is also supported by Ahmed (1999) who comments that in Bangladesh more than sixty percent of those who teach at the secondary level have no professional knowledge and competence.

### 2.6.2. Essays and letters

Written English classes were not much interesting and lively as teachers held discussions on some known topics of essays and letters which the students had to memorize. In almost all English exams, teachers selected some topics most of which were familiar to the students. Therefore, it is clear that the main activity of the writing classes was the learning of some selected and traditional essays, paragraphs and letters by rote.

But this activity is not parallel to the activities suggested by different scholars to improve students' writing skills. In comparison to the activities suggested by the famous ELT scholars to improve writing, the activities of our classroom were less productive and less practical. As a result, the students including me were deprived of the lessons and instructions to develop our creative writing ability, the ability to write on our own to express our feelings and opinions and to serve the purposes of writing for fulfilling the need of the real life needs.

# *Chapter - 3*

# *Research Questions and Research Hypotheses*

# Chapter - 3

# Research Questions and Research Hypotheses

## 3.1 Research Questions

### 3.1.1 Introduction

In the background discussion in Chapter-1 and Chapter-2 some research questions were formulated to carry out the present investigation. The research questions are discussed below.

### 3.1.2 What methods are the English teachers following to develop students' independent writing ability?

As teachers are key persons to teach writing in the classroom, their role and ways of teaching are important factors to bring about an expected improvement in the students. Students' improvement of writing skill depends upon what method the teacher is following in the classroom. So it is worth knowing if the English teachers are following any good methodology to teach writing or not.

### 3.1.3 What difficulties do the teachers face in developing independent writing ability in English classes?

Generally English teachers are blamed for the students' poor writing skill but in a developing country like Bangladesh there are a lot of other causes which are hindering students' language learning activities. All the parties –the educators, the policy makers and the students—should know what those difficulties are and problems the teachers are facing in carrying out their ELT programmes. Unless the problems are identified, the shortcomings are known and necessary steps are taken to overcome those causes, writing development programme will not be successful in secondary level schools.

### 3.1.4 What is the relationship between teachers' assistance to and 'monitoring of students' work and the improvement of students' writing ability?

In our schools usually teaching is a one way process, but teaching writing in a foreign language is not such a simplistic job. It requires a good deal of interaction between the teacher and the students, teachers' right assistance during the writing endeavour arid teacher's proper monitoring of the students' works. In this research work, it will be examined how teachers' assistance to and good monitoring of the students' work affect students' writing ability.

## 3.2 Research Hypotheses

### 3.2.1 Introduction

In the light of the purposes discussed before, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the present investigation. How far the assumptions of the researcher are valid will be assessed as the research is carried on.

### 3.2.2 a Hypothesis l. a

In most cases English teachers of the secondary level schools of Bangladesh do not follow any particular method in teaching writing. They usually teach writing in their own ways. They usually select some easy and common topics for different types of composition tasks and ask students to collect, study and learn some essays and compositions related to those topics by heart.

Later on, they evaluate students mainly on those selected compositions. As a result, students remain weak in writing and when they face a new topic of writing, they do not feel comfortable and confident to write on that topic.

Teachers do not follow any particular method in teaching writing because, probably, they do not have a good knowledge of the modern approaches to teaching writing. As they were trained and experienced in GTM, they feel comfortable in learning and memorizing some grammatical features and selected compositions. The main aim of most of the teachers seems to bring

about grammatical competence rather than communicative competence in the students. As a result, though the students have some theoretical knowledge of English grammar, they do not get enough support from their teachers to improve their writing skill.

### 3.2.2.b Hypothesis l. b

Most of the teachers do not possess enough knowledge of the process of writing. As a result, they go their own ways to teach their students writing independently which hardly helps students improve their writing ability.

Lack of proper training and up-to-date study materials may be the causes of this shortcoming of English teachers. On the other hand most of the teachers lack proper qualification to teach students independent writing skills. I observed it when I was a school student. I also came to know about this limitation through reading articles written by different language teachers and researchers.

### 3.2.3 Hypothesis 2

Though the lack of teachers' proper efficiency is mainly blamed for the poor performance of the students in developing writing skills, there may prevail some practical difficulties that teachers face while carrying out their jobs. Students' weakness in framing ideas, lack of enough knowledge of the process of writing, weakness in grammar, poor vocabulary and bad spelling may be some of the weaknesses most students possess which also may play as hindrances to the development of their writing ability.

I think teachers may experience these shortcomings in the students because most of the students lack the standard which their teachers expect from them. These weaknesses of the students might be the result of the ineffective teaching method adopted by the teachers and the lack of appropriate teaching-learning environment in the EFL/ESL classrooms.

### 3.2.4 Hypothesis 3

Teachers' assistance to the students in framing ideas and their close monitoring of students' activities help them write better. The more teachers help students in creating and expressing their ideas and the closer is their monitoring of students' progress, the better will be their students' independent writing ability.

I think teachers are the key persons to ensure the improvement of students' free writing ability. As teachers deal with students for quite a long time and regularly, they know what their students' shortcomings are. On the other hand, most of the Bangladeshi students, in my opinion, are very much teacher dependent. So they feel encouraged when teachers give them personal care and monitor their activities. They usually follow their teachers' command in learning lessons. So if teachers extend sufficient assistance to students and if they monitor their work to a required extent, students will be able to have a desirable improvement in their free writing ability.

# *Chapter - 4*

# *Research Method*

# Chapter - 4

# Research Method

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with different aspects of the research method. It will discuss the kind of data collected for the research, the duration of data collection, the sample, the students and teachers whom the data were collected from and the schools where the data were collected from. It will also highlight the processes which were followed to collect the data and to observe the writing classrooms and finally the problems the researcher encountered during the collection of the data.

## 4.2 The sample

As the area of the research is teaching writing English particularly in the secondary level schools, the data were collected from the students of classes ranging from class VIII to X and their concerned English language teachers. As these three classes are considered to be the most important classes of the secondary level and creative writing skills are taught mainly in these classes, the data were collected from the students of these classes. In total nine classrooms of nine schools were visited. In these classrooms in total 312 students were present. Among them 288 students were boys and 24 were girls. Their ages were in between 14 and 16.

## 4.3 The schools

For collecting necessary data for my research work I visited nine educational institutions. It took me 11 months starting from October 2001 to August 2002 to complete the visits of the institutions. For visiting the institutions I had to make appointments with the authorities concerned. I briefed them the purpose of my visit and they gave me a time to visit a classroom. Seven Bangla medium schools and two English medium schools were selected for observation and data collection.

Bangla medium schools were selected as the purpose of the study was to investigate the state of the independent writing ability of the students of mainstream secondary level schools of Bangladesh. English medium schools were selected in order to see the differences between the teachings of writing in the two streams of institutions. The authorities of these schools could be contacted easily because I had some acquainted persons in these schools. The Bangla medium schools I visited are Rajuk Uttara Model School, Dhaka, Bindubashini Govt. High School, Tangail, King Khaled Institute, Dhaka, Tejgaon Govt. High School, Dhaka, Govt. Science College, Dhaka, Badshah Faisal Institute (Boys') and Badshah Faisal Institute (Girls'). The English medium Schools I visited are Manarat Dhaka Int'l College School and New Horizon Int'l Academy.

## 4.4 The data

For answering my research questions I decided to examine the creative writing ability of the students of average standard. For this I decided to collect writings of students of some high schools. To have a clear and complete view of the real state and problems of the ELT activities specially teaching English writing activities, I collected data and opinions of English teachers teaching in the classrooms I visited through interview and questionnaire. I also decided to collect students' opinions about the problems they faced in developing their writing ability. I also decided to explore students' opinions about the reasons of the gap in between the real state of their writing ability and the expected standard set by the Bangladeshi education system.

## 4.5 The process

1 visited the writing classes on the appointed times and briefed the teachers the process of data collection. The process consisted of five steps—observing different activities of the writing class, getting the questionnaire filled by the students, getting the questionnaire filled by the teachers and interviewing English teachers of the visited classes regarding the ways they usually conducted their writing classes and arranging a writing proficiency test on an extempore topic.

At the start of every lesson the teacher introduced me to the students and briefed them the purpose of my visit. When the teacher started the lesson, I began writing the observation report. I sat at the back of the class so that I could observe all the activities and the attention of the students was not diverted. Ruth Wajnryb (1997) says "An observation task is a focused activity to work on while observing a lesson in progress. It focuses on a small number of aspects of teaching and learning and requires the observer to collect data or information for the actual lesson, such as the language a teacher uses when giving instructions or the patterns of interaction that emerge in a lesson.....". She also suggests the researchers to collect data of the activities and group them into the following sections:

1. The learner
2. Language
3. Learning
4. The lesson
5. Teaching skills and strategies
6. Classroom management
7. Materials and resources

Accordingly I prepared some coding sheets (see Appendix- B) suggested by the same author. While observing the classes I filled in the coding sheets and collected necessary data. Some teachers gave a short lecture before the test had begun but some teachers started conducting the test straight away without having any pre writing discussion. Before starting the test, some of the teachers themselves selected the topics and some of them asked me to select a topic for the test. Some of the tests were on paragraph writing and some of them were on essay and letter writing. During the proficiency test the teacher present in the class and I monitored their work and I took down all the points required for making a classroom observation report of each class. After the test had been over, the teacher collected the papers. Later that day, the teacher examined the papers and handed them over to me with the grades and their remarks.

After the class I selected some of the students randomly and got them to fill in the set questionnaire to collect different information related to their experience of learning writing in English.

I also spent some time with the concerned English teachers of the schools. I interviewed them as well as got them to fill out a questionnaire in order to collect required information related to their experience of teaching writing. We had talks in a friendly manner though some of them seemed to be a bit cautious during the talk.

## 4.6 Problems encountered

I faced some difficulties in obtaining permission to visit some classrooms. Sometimes it was very difficult for me to convince the teachers to visit their classes. Some of the teachers seemed too much cautious about my observing their classes.

They might have done so either to hide their weaknesses in English or they might not have been well prepared to conduct the writing classes.

Though I asked the teachers to select an extempore topic in order to examine the students' independent writing ability, some of the teachers selected some very common topics which the students might have practiced many times before. This hampered the research work to some extent because my main aim was to investigate their independent writing ability. As they selected such topics that their students might have been aware of, the purpose of obtaining genuine data from the writing proficiency tests partly failed.

# *Chapter-5*

# *Analysis of Data*

# Chapter - 5

# Analysis of Data

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis of data collected for the research. It will present and analyse students' statements, teachers' statements, students' writings, and the classroom observation reports. This chapter will also compare students' statements, teachers' statements and classroom observation reports and students' productions of the Group A with those of Group B. Analyses of all sorts of data have been divided into two groups - Group A and Group B. The grouping was done on the basis of the students' performance in the writing tests administered by the researcher and on the scores given by the researcher for each paper. The researcher evaluated and graded the papers on the basis of the following criteria:

- structure of the composition (organization of ideas)
- use of student's own ideas
- use of content words (appropriate vocabulary)
- use of grammar and punctuation (grammatical features and morphology)
- length

10 marks was allocated for each criterion and the total marks for each paper was set as 50. Three schools were included in Group A. The written products of these schools were found better than the products of the students of the other six schools which were included in Group B. The schools were divided as follows:

| Sl. No. | Group A | Sl. No. | Group B |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rajuk Uttara Model School | 1 | King Khalid Institute |
| 2 | New Horizon Academy | 2 | Tejgaon Govt. High School |
| 3 | Manarat Dhaka Int'l College | 3 | Govt. Science College School |
| | | 4 | Badshah Faisal Institute (Boys') |
| | | 5 | Badshah Faisal Institute (Girls') |
| | | 6 | Bindubashini Govt. High School |

**Table 5.1 Grouping of schools done on the basis of the students' overall performance in the writing proficiency tests**

## 5.2 Analysis of the students' statements

### 5.2.1 Introduction

In order to get a clear idea about the students' own feelings and the problems regarding the improvement of their creative writing ability 4 or 5 students were chosen randomly from each class visited. In total 38 students were interviewed using a questionnaire put in Appendix B. Their statements have been analyzed under the following categories:

- Time spent for written English classes.
- What the students liked to do best in English classes.
- Difficulties the students faced in improving free writing ability.
- What the students expected from their teachers to get rid of the difficulties.

### 5.2.2 Analysis of the statements of the students of the Schools of Group-A

Ten students of the schools of Group - A were given the questionnaires. The attending teachers helped me do the selection. The students were selected randomly. Their statements were then analyzed and the analysis is given below:

#### 5.2.2.1. Time spent for written English classes:

| SI. No. | Name of the School | No. of the student samples answered the question | Time spent for written English classes each week |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Rajuk Uttara Model School | 4 | 3 hours |
| 2 | New Hosizon Academy | 3 | 3 hours |
| 3 | Manarat Dhaka Intl College | 3 | 3 hours |

**Table-5.2: Time spent for written English classes every week by the teachers of Group A**

About the contact time, it is seen that the students of this group got about 3 hours every week for writing English classes which seemed to be more than the time spent in the schools of the other group.

### 5.2.2.2. What the students liked to do best in English classes?

| No. of the student samples answered the question | Liked writing | liked speaking | Liked listening |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 7 | 2 | 1 |

**Table - 5.3 Activities liked by the students of Group A in English Classes**

In reply to the question of what the students liked to do best in their English classes, out of 10 students 7 students said that they liked writing activities. This interest is a primary condition for the acquisition of any language skill. According to Krashen's Monitor Model theory and Affective Filter Hypothesis it is understood that the less the students are afraid of learning a language, the more is their achievement.

In reply to another question titled "Do you like writing? Why?" all the students said that they liked writing and nine out of ten students said that they liked writing because they wanted to improve their writing ability and express themselves.

### 5.2.2.3. Difficulties the students faced in improving free writing ability

| Types of Difficulties the student samples faced | No. of student samples faced the difficulties | Total number of student samples responded |
|---|---|---|
| Weakness in grammar | 4 | 10 |
| Lack of vocabulary | 5 | |
| Weakness in framing ideas | 5 | |
| Bad spelling | 2 | |
| Weak in letter writing knowledge | 1 | |

**Table - 5.4: Types of difficulties the students of Group A faced in improving their free writing ability**

From the answers to the question, "What difficulties do you face in improving free writing ability?" it is clear that the major areas of difficulties the student samples have in improving their writing ability are:

- Weakness in grammar
- Weakness in vocabulary and

- Weakness in framing ideas

Regarding the difficulties the students faced in improving free writing ability, 5 students out of 10 said that they found it difficult to generate ideas and use appropriate vocabulary in expressing their ideas; 4 of them said that they made some grammatical mistakes; 2 of them said that their spellings were bad; and one of them said that he was afraid of writing.

### 5.2.2.4. What the students expected from their teachers to get rid of the difficulties

| Types of assistance the student samples expected | Number of student samples proposed the type of assistance | Total number of student samples responded to the question |
|---|---|---|
| More help in enriching grammatical knowledge | 5 | 10 |
| Giving proper guideline to improve their writing | 3 | |
| Teaching better in the class so that students could understand teachers' lectures better | 1 | |
| Giving more individual care | 3 | |
| Helping enrich vocabulary | 6 | |
| Correcting mistakes well | 1 | |
| Helping students improve spellings | 3 | |
| Selecting interesting topics for class work and home work | 1 | |

**Table- 5.5: Types of assistance students of Group A sought from their teachers to improve their free writing ability**

In order to overcome the difficulties in writing the students wanted their teachers to give them more time, more care and clear guidelines.

In fact the development of students' writing largely depends upon the time given for this purpose and the reception of the 'comprehensible input' from the teachers (Krashen, 1982). According to Burton (1973), improvement of writing ability is a slow process and the shorter the instructional period, the less the improvement. So it is clear that the more time the students get from their teachers the more comprehensible input they will receive and the better will improve their writing skill.

### 5.2.3 Analysis of the statements of the students of the schools of Group B

From the schools of group B 28 students were given the questionnaires. Different parts of their statement are analyzed below.

#### 5.2.3.1. Time spent for written English classes:

| SI. No. | Name of the school | Number of the student samples answered | Time spent for written English classes every week |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | King Khaled Institute | 6 | 1.5 hours |
| 5 | Tejgaon Govt. High School | 6 | 1.5 hours |
| 6 | Govt. Science College School | 4 | 2.5 hours |
| 7 | Badsha Faisal Institute (Boys') | 6 | 2 hours |
| 8 | Badsha Faisal Institute (Girls') | 2 | 2 hours |
| 9 | Bindubashini Govt. High School | 4 | 2 hours |

**Table- 5.6: Time spent a week by the English Teachers for written English classes**

About the instructional period, it is seen that the students of this group got about 2 hours every week for writing classes which was less than the time spent for the same purpose in the schools of Group A.

#### 5.2.3.2. What the students liked to do best in English classes

The answers in reply to the question "What do you like to do best in the English class?" are displayed in the following table.

| No. of student samples answered the question | Liked writing | Liked speaking | Liked listening | Liked reading |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | 16 | 6 | 2 | 4 |

**Table- 5.7: Activities liked by the students in the English classes of Group B**

Out of the 28 students, 16 said that they liked writing best in English classes. Out of these 16 students only 2 students said that they liked writing because they wanted to improve their writing standard and creativity but others had different purposes like enriching vocabulary, learning grammatical rules and making their handwriting good but 50% of the students could not say clearly why they liked writing. Purpose is an important prerequisite to improve writing skill. Unless the students know why they have to acquire a particular skill of a language, it is very difficult for them to develop that skill. Therefore, we can say that this attitude might have affected their endeavour to improve their writing in English.

### 5.2.3.3 Difficulties the students faced in improving free writing ability:

The difficulties the students of Group B faced in improving free writing ability are displayed in the following table.

| Types of difficulties the student samples faced | No. of student samples faced the difficulties | Total number of student samples answered the question |
|---|---|---|
| ➢ Weakness in grammar | 23 | 28 |
| ➢ Lack of vocabulary | 23 | |
| ➢ Weakness in framing ideas | 11 | |
| ➢ Bad spelling | 17 | |
| ➢ Weakness in reading and understanding | 1 | |
| ➢ Difficulty to cope with the new teaching method—Communicative Language Teaching Method | 1 | |
| ➢ Lack of confidence | 2 | |

**Table- 5.8: Types of difficulties the students of group B faced in improving their free writing ability**

Regarding the difficulties the students faced in improving free writing ability, 11 students said that they faced difficulties in developing ideas. Most of the students said that they were weak in English grammar, vocabulary and spellings. Observing the problems of these types different applied linguists related to the ELT have proposed some solutions. According to David Nunan (1991) the scholars of the product oriented approaches to the development of writing favour classroom activities in which the learner is engaged in initiating, copying and transforming models of correct language. Therefore, writing lessons should be devoted in the first instance to sentence formation and grammar exercises. Dystra and Pralston (1967, 135-141) suggest the concept of control as a gradual way of improving free writing ability. The control is regularly of the kind which employs several composition exercises to cover one grammatical feature. The first composition is rigidly controlled while the last one is almost a free composition. The next grammatical feature is to be covered is again highlighted in several exercises. The first of which is rigidly controlled and the last is almost a free writing. This programme allows enforcement of correct writing procedures; it gives students a sense of progress and improvement (a) which builds confidence in their own ability to write and (b) motivates them to further improve their writing ability. It is observed from the data that most of the students are concerned about accuracy. Though accuracy is also important in building someone's confidence in writing, the modern approach of writing, the process theory of writing says students should be encouraged to go on with writing caring little about grammatical accuracy at the primary stage.

### 5.2.3.4. What the students expected from their teachers to get rid of the difficulties

In reply to the question, "What do you expect your teachers to do to help you write better?" the students mentioned different types of assistance. These are shown in the following table.

| Types of assistance the student samples expected from their teachers . | No. of the student samples proposed the type of assistance | Total number of student samples replied the question |
|---|---|---|
| More assistance in enriching knowledge of grammar | 14 | 28 |
| Proper guidelines from teachers to improve writing | 16 | |
| Better teaching method so that they could have a clearer idea of how to improve writing | 5 | |
| More individual care | 4 | |
| Vocabulary enrichment programme | 5 | |
| Correcting mistakes well | 3 | |
| Helping speak fluently | 4 | |
| Communicating with students in English | 2 | |
| Encouraging students to write more | 2 | |
| Giving more time to free writing classes | 2 | |
| Giving much more homework | 1 | |

**Table - 5.9: Types of assistance the student samples of Group B expected from their teachers**

Regarding their expectations from their teachers, sixteen students out of twenty eight said that they wanted more assistance and guidelines from teachers as, they said, they did not know how to frame ideas and what to do to improve their writing standard.

Fourteen students wanted their teachers to help them learn English grammar and vocabulary' better so that they could feel confident in writing. A good number of students also suggested a better role of teachers in the classroom. They expected that their teachers should give them more individual care, evaluate their writing well, communicate with them in English and help them improve their spoken English. All these points imply that teachers should be much more active and caring in the classroom to improve students' independent writing ability.

### 5.2.4 Conclusion

On analyzing the statements of the students of Group B it can be clearly said that students' writing ability is partly dependent upon the time spent by the teachers for the writing classes but the teachers got inadequate time for this purpose.

As to the students' favourite activities in English language classes, almost half of the students said they liked other activities like listening, reading or speaking. Out of the half of the students who liked writing, eight of them even could not show any practical reason for learning writing. Eight students said that they liked writing because they wanted to improve their independent writing ability. In such a context it can be said that the students of Group B were deprived of proper motivation from their English teachers as they even did not know why they were learning writing.

With regard to the difficulties the students faced, it is evident that most of the students were weak in English grammar and vocabulary. Many of them said that they found it difficult to generate ideas while writing.

The necessity of more assistance and proper monitoring of the teachers is also reflected from the answers to the question, In answer to this question, "What do you expect from your teachers to help you write better?", most of the students of both the groups—Group A and group B demanded that their teachers should have given them more time, more care and more guidelines to improve their independent writing ability. Most of the students of Group B opined that their teachers should have helped them more to learn grammar and vocabulary better so that they could feel confident in writing independently and creatively.

### 5.2.5 Comparison and contrast between the statements of the students of Group A and Group B

#### 5.2.5.1 Time spent for written English classes

Regarding the instructional period, it is seen that the students of Group A got more time than the students of group B from their teachers. From the summary of the statements it is seen that the students of Group A got about 3 hours every week for writing classes while the students of Group B got about 2 hours a week from their teachers for the same purpose. About the instructional period Burton (1973) says that improving writing ability is a slow process and the shorter the instructional period the less the improvement. In the light of this proposition it can be concluded that the students of Group A might have been more benefited by their teachers than the students of Group B.

### 5.2.5.2 What the students liked to do best in English classes?

70% of the students of Group A said that they liked writing in the English classes while the rate is 57% in Group B. It thus can be concluded that the students of Group A were more motivated to write in English by their teachers than the students of Group B. According to Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Haq (1986), achievement in English is facilitated by favourable attitudes towards and strong motivation for learning the language. In both cases the students of Group A were found in a better position than the students of Group B which indicates that the students of Group A were better in writing than the students of Group B.

### 5.2.5.3 Difficulties students faced in improving free writing ability

Regarding the difficulties the students faced in improving free writing ability, students of both the groups reported almost the same types of difficulties. The major areas of difficulties the students mentioned are as follows:

- Weakness in grammar
- Lack of appropriate vocabulary
- Weakness in framing ideas
- Bad spelling

But most of the students of Group A said that they found it difficult to form ideas and use appropriate vocabulary in expressing their ideas. A big majority of the students

of Group B reported that they found it difficult to use correct grammar and appropriate vocabulary to go on with their writing.

#### 5.2.5.4 What students expected from their teachers to get rid of the difficulties

The types of assistance most of the students expected from their teachers were almost identical. The most common types of assistance students of both the groups expected from their teachers are given below:

- More assistance in enriching grammatical knowledge
- Proper guidelines to improve writing ability
- Better classroom teaching so that the students could understand the teachers' lectures well
- Vocabulary enrichment programme
- More individual care
- More meticulous and caring evaluation of their writings

**The other types of assistance the students suggested are:**

- Selecting interesting topics for classwork and homework
- Spelling developing lessons
- Creating more opportunities for more classroom interaction
- Encouraging students to write more

## 5.3 Analysis of teachers' statements

### 5.3.1 Introduction

As part of data collection programme the English teacher of every class selected for the classroom observation was given a questionnaire. The questionnaire contained questions about different aspects of classroom teaching and learning of writing. They filled out the questionnaires and gave their opinions. Their statements are analyzed below. The analysis then has been divided in two sections as the schools were divided into two groups—Group A and Group B. In section 6.3.2 the analysis of the statements of the teachers of the institutions of Group A has been given. The analysis

of the statements of the teachers of Group B has been given in section 6.3.3. The analysis was done under the following categories:

- Nature of the writing tasks done in the class
- Guidelines given by the teacher to improve writing
- What should be emphasized in the writing class—fluency or accuracy?
- Method of correction the teacher followed while checking students' writings
- Difficulties teachers faced in the class room

### 5.3.2. Analysis of the statements of the teachers' of the schools of Group A

#### 5.3.2.1 Nature of the writing tasks done in the class

In order to get an idea of the nature and area of the writing work the English teachers were dealing with in the class the question, "What were the last three topics done in the class?" was set in the questionnaire. The answers found in the questionnaire are placed in the following table.

| Sl. No. | Name of the School | Areas/Topics Studied |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Rajuk Uttara Model School | 1. Essay : My favorite writer<br>2. Essay: My favorite foreign diet<br>3. Writing an application for opening a health centre |
| 2. | New Horizon Academy | 1. Essay: Problems of Dhaka<br>2. ,, : Importance of games and sports in our life<br>3. ,, : Money is the basis of all happiness |
| 3. | Manarat Dhaka | 1. Essay: Transport system of our country<br>2. Summary writing<br>3. Project work on publishing a school magazine |

Table- 5.10: Nature of work done in the schools of Group – A

From the above table it is seen that all the teachers were dealing mainly with essay writing and the topics seem to be true to life and related to the context the students were in. The topics, therefore, seem to be practical and interest providing to the students. The other activities the teachers taught are application writing, summary writing and conducting a project work on publishing an English magazine containing different types of writing.

### 5.3.2.2. Guidelines given by the teachers of Group A to improve writing

The guidelines the teachers of the schools of Group A gave to improve their students' writing are given in the following table:

| Sl. No. | Name of the School | Suggestions and guidelines |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Rajuk Uttara Model School and College | I. Extensive practice of writing<br>II. Submitting homework regularly<br>III. Pre writing discussion |
| 2. | New Horizon Academy | I. The teacher taught the students the elements of a good writing—grammatical features, appropriate vocabulary, good spelling, organization of ideas, and decoration.<br>II. He also established a framework before he asked the students to start any writing activity. |
| 3. | Manarat Dhaka | I. The teacher helped the students to make a good plan before starting writing.<br>II. He also gave them tips to achieve grammatical accuracy. |

**Table - 5.11: Guidelines given by the English teachers of group A to improve writing**

So it is seen from the data that the teachers of this group emphasized proper planning of writing. They taught the students how to start and how to end a piece of

writing and how to develop the main body. They also helped the students by giving an outline of the writing so that the students could learn how to develop ideas in order to produce a piece of writing. This is also noticeable that the teachers of these schools put less emphasis on grammatical accuracy. They encouraged their students to focus on the writing expressing their ideas and feelings, which seemed to have helped the students to be anxiety free about committing grammatical mistakes. The guidelines the teachers gave to improve students' writing ability are quite parallel to the guidelines given by the proponents of the process approach discussed in chapter 2. Hedge (1988), and Tribble (1986) suggest prewriting activities where the students will think, discuss and make a good plan of what and how they will write. The proponents of the process approach of writing like Zamel (1982), Hillock (1986), E. V. Gatesby (1950) also suggest that the study of traditional grammar has little effect on the improvement of independent writing ability.

### 5. 3.2.3 What should be emphasized in the writing class—fluency or accuracy?

In reply to the question, "What do you think should be emphasized fluency or accuracy?" two teachers of school 1 and school 2 suggested that both fluency and accuracy are to be emphasized in the classroom while one teacher of school 3 suggested that only accuracy should be emphasized while teaching writing.

### 5.3.2.4. Method of correction the teachers of Group A followed while checking students' writing

In reply to the question, "When are the corrections of the students' writing products done?" two teachers, the teachers of school 2 and 3 said that they corrected the papers after the class. The teacher of school 1 said that he corrected the papers sometimes during the class and sometimes after the class.

From this data it is clearly understood that the students of the schools of Group A could utilize most of their writing class times having the direct contact of their

teachers. This seemed to have helped them a lot to improve their writing skill. According to Burton (1973), the improvement of writing skill is dependent upon the instructional period received by the students. He says that the shorter the instructional period, the less is the improvement. It is, thus, clear from the suggestions that the more the instructional period students receive and the more teachers' assistance the students get the better will be students' writing standard.

With regards to the method of correction teachers of all the three schools said that they corrected the teachers' work by marking all the mistakes and giving comments about the mistakes on their papers. This procedure seemed to be helpful to the students as they got a chance to understand their mistakes and this might have led them to get rid of the mistakes gradually.

### 5.3.2.5. Difficulties teachers of Group A faced in the classroom

In reply to the question, "What difficulties do you face in teaching writing?" the teachers of group A mentioned different types of difficulties. A picture of the difficulties the teacher faced is given in the following table:

| Total no. of teacher samples answered the question | Types of difficulties the teacher samples mentioned | No. of teacher samples mentioned the difficulties |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | 1. Lack of learners' interest in working hard to improve writing in English. | 3 |
| | 2. Students' weakness in planning and framing ideas properly. | 2 |
| | 3. Difficulty in teaching grammatical features to weak students. | 1 |
| | 4. Lack of carefulness in writing sentences accurately. | 1 |

**Table - 5.12: Difficulties the teachers of Group A faced in the classroom to teach writing**

In case of difficulties teachers faced in teaching writing, all the teachers commented that students were not willing to write independently. They also commented that in most cases students were not creative because they were not confident enough to form their own ideas for extempore topics and they were dependent upon the teachers for forming ideas. In fact this is quite a common complaint of the teachers about their students. Their comments might not have been completely true in case of all of the students. This might have been true in case of some of the students.

### 5.3.3. Analysis of the statements of the teachers of the schools of Group B

#### 5.3.3.1 Nature of the writing work done in the class

The topics and the areas of composition writing the teachers were dealing with are displayed in the following table.

| Sl. No. | Name of the School | Topics/Areas studied |
|---|---|---|
| 4. | King Khalid Institute | 1. Letter: to a friend describing a picnic<br>2. Paragraph: A railway station<br>3. Essay: A journey by train |
| 5. | Tejgaon Govt. High School | 1. Essay: Birds of Bangladesh<br>2. Paragraph: A street hawker<br>3. Application: for a transfer certificate |
| 6. | Govt. Science College School | 1. Story writing: The fox and the crow<br>2. Writing dialogues<br>3. Paragraph: organizing a birthday party |
| 7. | Badshah Faisal Institute (Boys') | 1. Paragraph: The house I live in<br>2. Essay: Fruits of Bangladesh<br>3. Reading Comprehension: Model Q/A practice |
| 8. | Badsha Faisal Institute (Girls') | 1. Paragraph: A railway station<br>2. Paragraph: Travelling as a part of education |
| 9. | Bindubashini Govt. High School, Tangail | 1. Letter writing<br>2. Paragraph writing<br>3. Writing question answers from |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | texts |

**Table - 5.13: Nature of work done in the schools of Group - B**

From the above chart it is seen that the teachers of almost all of the schools selected some common topics. These topics are so well-known that most of the essays and compositions can be found in the grammar and composition books available in the market, so the students could learn the compositions from the books. On the other hand, most of the topics such as "A Railway Station', 'Birds of Bangladesh', 'A street Hawker', 'Fruits of Bangladesh' were simply factual topics, which were not true to their life. Therefore, these topics might not have helped the students to improve their creative writing ability. Though some of the topics such as 'A Journey by Train', 'The House I Live in' provided some scope for the students to put their ideas, most of the topics might not have been very much helpful to flourish the students' creative faculty.

### 5.3.3.2 Guidelines given by the English teachers of Group B to improve writing

The guidelines the English teachers of group B gave are given in the following table:

| Sl. No. | Name of the School | Guidelines given by the teacher samples |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | King Khalid Institute, Dhaka | 1. to increase vocabulary<br>2. to strengthen grammatical knowledge<br>3. to practice writing |
| 5 | Tejgaon Govt. High School, Dhaka | 1. tips to improve vocabulary<br>2. discussed different grammatical features<br>3. guidelines to organize their ideas |
| 6 | Govt. Science College School, Dhaka | 1. tips to enrich vocabulary<br>2. supplied the students with model writings<br>3. guided the students to develop ideas through giving some hints about the topic |
| 7 | Badshah Faisal Institute (Boys'), Dhaka | 1. asked the students to read English newspapers, magazines and story books<br>2. asked the students to watch TV and Radio programmes<br>3. asked the students to write letters to friends and relatives. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 8 | Badsha Faisal Institute (Girls'),Dhaka | 1. asked the students to take care of reading, spelling and listening |
| 9 | Bindubashini Govt. High School, Tangail | (did not write anything) |

**Table-5.14: Guidelines given by the English teachers of Group B to improve their students' writing**

Of the six teachers, three asked the students to practice reading, writing and listening, two emphasized learning grammatical rules and enriching vocabulary and one teacher did not give any instruction. It is seen that no one had a clear idea of the ways of teaching writing. This might have happened because of their lack of proper training.

### 5.3.3.3 What should be emphasized in the writing classes—fluency or accuracy?

In this regard, out of six teachers three teachers emphasized both fluency and accuracy, two teacher's emphasized only fluency and one teacher emphasized only accuracy. According to the modern approach, the process approach of writing, fluency should be mainly emphasized in order to improve students' independent writing ability. Accuracy can be emphasized in grammar classes but while the students are writing, they should be encouraged to concentrate basically on the contents of writing without caring the grammatical mistakes much. From the teachers' statements it was seen that they had different ideas about the focus of teaching writing in English. The modern theories of writing focus on fluency rather than on accuracy. Zamel (1987) and Hillock (1986) suggest that writing classes must be devoted to numerous opportunities to write but attention to grammar is played down. Therefore, from their suggestions it is seen that the main focus of the writing classes must be on fluency rather than on accuracy. Though Nunan (1991) concludes that for making writing classes successful, process writing should be integrated with the practice of studying and imitating written models in the classroom, the focus should not be on accuracy at the development stage. From the teachers' statements it is seen that they

do not have a common opinion about the focus of classroom teaching. Unless the teachers have a clear idea of the focus of writing, students' writing ability will not be built on a solid foundation.

### 5.3.3.4. Method of correction

Regarding doing correction of the students' writing products, four teachers of Group B said that they corrected students' writing during the class and two teachers said that they made the corrections after the class. In fact teachers should spend most of the instructional periods in assisting students to improve their writing craft. If they check their students' works during the lessons, students will not get enough support from their teachers to create ideas and achieve fluency in their writing and hence they suffer from some loss in achieving the expected level of fluency. With regards to the link between teachers' instructional period and the development of students' writing skill, Burton (1973) also bears the same view.

About the ways of correcting students' products only one teacher gave a clear idea that he corrected students' grammatical and spelling mistakes but others did not give any clear idea regarding this matter. From the teachers' comments it is clear that the teachers did not have any clear idea about the method of correction and evaluation of students' works.

### 5.3.3.5. Difficulties the teachers of Group B faced in the classroom

In reply to the question, "What difficulty do you face in teaching writing?" the teachers of the schools of Group B talked about various types of difficulties. The summary of the difficulties is given in the following table:

| Total no. of teacher samples answered the question | Types of difficulties the teacher samples mentioned | No. of teacher samples mentioned the difficulty |
|---|---|---|
| | I. Students' weakness in grammar | 4 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | II. Students' lacking in appropriate vocabulary | 4 |
| | III. Poor spelling of students | 3 |
| | IV. Inability of the school to supply useful teaching materials | 2 |
| | V. Faulty English language syllabus | 1 |
| | VI. Lack of proper English learning environment | 1 |
| | VII. Lack of students' creative ability | 1 |

**Table 5.15: Difficulties the teachers of group B faced in the classroom in Teaching writing**

Some of the difficulties the teachers faced in teaching writing were quite common. Most of them reported that students were as a whole weak in grammar and vocabulary and were afraid of writing independently. Some of them talked about their poor spelling too but none of the teachers wrote about the students' knowledge of the process of writing or their creative faculty. From their statements it becomes clear that the English classes were not effective enough to bring about necessary development in the students. As a result, the students remained weak in all the basic writing skills.

### 5.3.4 Comparison and contrast between the statements of the teachers of Group A and Group B

#### 5.3.4.1 Nature of the writing work the teachers arranged in the previous three classes

From the statements of the teachers of Group A, it is seen that the most common type of work the teachers of this group were doing was essay writing. The topics of the essay writing were, for example, 'My Favourite Writer', 'My Favourite Foreign Diet', 'Problems of Dhaka', Transport system of our country'. The topics seemed to be helpful to the development of the students' independent writing ability as they were either true to their life or related to the context they were in. The other activities the teachers were dealing with were application writing, summary writing and a project work on publishing an English magazine containing different types of writings.

On the other hand, the most common areas of writing work the teachers of schools of group B were dealing were paragraph writing and essay writing. The topics of paragraph writing were 'A Railway Station', 'A Street Hawker,' 'Organizing a Birthday Party', The House I Live in' etc. And the topics of the essay writing were 'A Journey by Train', 'Birds of Bangladesh', and 'Fruits of Bangladesh. Most of the topics seemed to be traditionally used topics which are usually available in the composition books recommended or referred for their reading. Many of the topics like ‘A street hawker', 'Fruits of Bangladesh’ were simply factual topics which were not much helpful to the development of the independent writing ability of the students. Though some of the topics like 'A Journey by Train' and The House I Live in' provided the students with some opportunities "to express their own ideas, very few teachers selected these types of topics.

According to Zamel (1987) for the beginners subjects of writings should be related to students' interests. Zamel holds that writing skills can develop rapidly when students are given numerous opportunities to write where their concerns and interests are acknowledged. According to Zamel's observation, the topics the teachers of Group A

selected for writing practice were more helpful to the development of students' writing ability than the topics selected by the teachers of Group B.

### 5.3.4.2 Guidelines given by the English teachers to improve students' writing ability

From the data. presented in 6.3.2.3 it is seen that the teachers of Group A emphasized proper planning of writing. They taught the students how to start and how to end a piece of writing and how to expand the ideas into different paragraphs. This is also noticeable that teachers of this group put less emphasis on grammatical accuracy. They encouraged their students to write more and more to express the students to be free from the anxiety of writing independently and committing grammatical mistakes. These guidelines are quite parallel to the guidelines given by the proponents of the process approach. Scholars of this group like Hedge (1988), Tribble (1986), and Murray (1980) suggest prewriting activities as an important step towards the development of students' writing ability where the students will think, discuss and make a good plan of what and how they will write. The proponents of the process approach of writing, Zamel (1982), Hillock (1984), and. E.V. Gatesby (1950) suggest that the study of traditional grammar has little effect on the improvement of students' writing ability.

On the other hand, the teachers of Group B gave some general instructions to the students. Of the six teachers, three asked the students to practice reading, writing and listening and two emphasized learning grammatical rules. One teacher did not give any instruction. From the above observation it can be said that no teacher of this group had a clear idea of the ways of developing writing, so they failed to give any particular guideline to the students to improve their writing ability.

### 5.3.4.3 What should be emphasized in the writing classes— fluency or accuracy?

Regarding this point a great percentage of teachers of both the groups thought that both fluency and accuracy should be emphasized equally in the writing classes though some of the teachers emphasized either fluency or on accuracy. The proponents of the process approach of writing suggest that grammatical accuracy play little role in the development of the writing skill. Hillock (1984) observes that the study of traditional grammar has no effect on raising the quality of students' writing. Like Hillock it is also observed by E.V. Gatesby (1950, 143-150) that the study of grammar has no place in the process by which children learn a language. He suggests that the note of progress depends obviously upon the amount of time allotted to the language practice i.e. fluency.

### 5.3.4.4 Method of correction the teachers followed while examining students' writings

Regarding the time when teachers correct students' writings, it is seen that the teachers of Group A corrected the writings of their students after the class though one of them reported that he corrected the papers sometimes during the class. On the other hand, most of the teachers of Group B said that they corrected students' writings during the lesson. Four teachers out of six said that they corrected the writings during the lesson.

Regarding the method of correction, teachers of Group A said that they examined students' works by marking all the mistakes and giving comments about the mistakes on their papers. This procedure seems to be helpful to the development of students' writing ability as they got a chance to understand their mistakes which might have led them to get rid of the grammatical mistakes gradually.

On the other hand, in Group B, only one teacher out of six of could give some clear idea about the correction of students' writings. He said that he corrected students'

grammatical and spelling mistakes but the other teachers could not give any clear idea about this matter. From the teachers' comments it can be clearly said that the teachers of Group B might not have had enough ideas about the method of correcting students' scripts.

As the teachers are one of the main components of the language class, the efficiency of the teachers heavily affected the performance of the students. Gardner and Lambert (1972) state that "Of course teaching techniques and teachers' personalities can certainly affect the attitudes and motivation of students." Other applied linguists like Papalia and Zampogna (1972) observe that the achievement in students' foreign language learning depends mostly on the teacher. If we consider these observations, we can conclude that the students of Group A were benefited more than the students of Group B as the teachers of Group A were found better in giving proper guidelines to overcome the mistakes. This was proved through the performance of the students of Group A.

### 5.3.4.5 Difficulties teachers faced in the classroom

Qualitative differences were found in between the two groups regarding the difficulties the teachers faced in the class while teaching writing. All the teachers of Group A reported that their students were not hard working enough to improve their writing. Two teachers out of three also reported students' weakness in planning and arranging ideas properly.

On the other hand, majority of the teachers of Group B reported three main difficulties they faced in teaching writing. The difficulties are: students' weakness in grammar, vocabulary and spellings. Two teachers also commented that the current English language syllabus of the secondary level was a faulty one while other two teachers reported the lack of proper English learning environment and Jack of students' creative ability to be the impediments to the development of students' writing ability.

It is seen that the problems of the students of Group A were different from the problems of the students of Group B. According to the teachers' statements they did not face any grave difficulty as their students did not possess any big problems like the students of Group B. The problems of the students of Group B were their weakness in grammar, vocabulary, spellings which can be considered some of the basic challenges students usually face in developing writing. The difficulties the teachers of Group A faced were related to their students' becoming perfect in writing. From their statements it is also understood that the students of Group A had already achieved some standard of writing as they did not report any weakness in grammar, vocabulary and spelling. Their main problems were they were not much hard working and they could not plan and frame their ideas properly.

## 5.4 Analysis of students' performances in the writing proficiency tests

### 5.4.1 Introduction

For analyzing students' writings I divided the schools into two groups: Group A and Group B. Three schools—school 1, 2 and 3 were included in group A. The other schools— school 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 were included in Group B.

| Group A | Group B |
|---|---|
| 1. Rajuk Uttara Model School<br>2. New Horizon Academy<br>3. Manarat Dhaka. | 4. King Khalid Institute.<br>5. Tejgaon Govt. High School.<br>6. Govt. Science College School.<br>7. Badshah Faisal Institute (Boys')<br>8. Badshah Faisal Institute (Girls')<br>9. Blndubashini Govt. High School |

**Table 5.16: Groups of schools done on the basis of the quality of students' productions in the writing proficiency tests**

The group wise analysis of the students' writings was done on the basis of following criteria.

* structure of the composition (organization of ideas)
* use of students' own ideas
* use of content words (appropriate vocabulary)

* use of grammar and punctuation (grammatical features and morphology)
* length

### 5.4.2 Analysis of the writings of the students of Group A

**Structure:** On analyzing the writing test papers of sixty six students of Group-A, it was found that most of the writings were well structured. That means they began their writing well, developed their ideas in several paragraphs and gave a discerning conclusion to their writings.

**Use of students' own ideas:** Most of the students developed their ideas independently and used cohesive devices. Most of them were able to express their own ideas in their writings and this gives a testimony of independent writing ability of the students of this group.

**Use of content words:** Most of the students used a wide range of content words making their writings interesting. In the tests the topics of the essay writing were, 'Best Ways to Use the Leisure Times', The Daily Diet', Thoughts of The Present and Hopes for the Future', 'Some Sweet Memories'. Some of the content words they used are creature, nutritious, nutrient, preserve, menu, unavoidable, gossiping, perpetual, concentration, exhausting, sunbathing, all knowing, ever merciful, hazardous, retrospection, etc.

**Use of grammar words:** Most of the students displayed a sound grammatical knowledge and produced correct sentences though some of the students committed some minor mistakes. Some of the mistakes the students committed are related to the use of have/has and appropriate prepositions.

**Length:** 40 students out of 66 wrote quite a satisfactory length of writing. On an average they wrote 20 sentences in their papers.

### 5.4.3 Analysis of the scripts of the students of Group B

- **Structure:** On analyzing the papers of this group it was found that most of the students of this group failed to produce well-structured writings. That means they could not give an appropriate introduction, a discernible conclusion to their writings and organize their ideas well. All of their ideas were found intermingled. The only exception was school 9. Most of the students of this school could write their letters fulfilling all the criteria needed to write a letter but the fact is that the subject matter of the letter was very much familiar to them as this letter was usually taught in almost all schools of the secondary level.

- **Use of students' own ideas:** Except the students of school 6 almost all the students of other schools of Group B could not reflect their individual ideas in their writings. They either produced some sentences from rote learning or expanded the ideas the teachers gave them as hints. Only the students of school 6 were found to have used their own ideas but their writings lacked cohesive devices and they committed different sorts of grammatical mistakes in their writings.

- **Use of content words:** Most of the students used a very limited range of content words and in most cases the students of the same school used almost the same set of content words which proves that the students produced their writings from their rote learning. Examples of some of the content words they used are common person, carry, basket, generally, important, luggage compartment, experience, drawing room, dining room, kind, guardian etc.

- **Use of grammar:** Grammatical mistakes were a common feature of the products of this group. Most of the students committed different types of grammatical mistakes in their writings. The only exception was the students of school 9 who made very few grammatical mistakes. However, examples of some common mistakes the students of all the other schools committed are given below:

a. **Subject-verb disagreement:** "Tomorrow our Christmas." "We are visit of friends, father, and mothers.", "He leaves a very hard life.", "There are a study rooms for Me." etc.

b. **Inappropriate use of Prepositions:** "I get up at train and took my seat near the window.", "Our kitchen stand in North ....." "There is a small canal in beside my house." etc.

c. **Meaningless and ill-structured sentences:**
"The house, in which I live in brick building.", "There are many people going to many other places.", "Now I am setting a chair in the station.", "Some fish, some fruits, some chicken.", ".....for this smoke can not come another room." etc.

Some students Group B made other types of mistakes too besides the mistakes mentioned above. Some of them are given below:

d. **Inappropriate use of articles:** Students of school 5, 6 and 7 made mistakes in the use of articles. Some examples of the mistakes are, "He is a one of the person among the labour.", "A different hawker sells different things.", "So the fresh air can easily enter in my house.", I see a nice and beautiful nature.", "After days I came to Kamalapur Station." etc.

e. **Improper use of tenses:** Students of schools 5 and 6 committed mistakes related to tense. Some gxamples of mistakes of this type are "His dress is dirty because he is poorness.", "A hawker is man who delivered daily.", "I get your letter today." "I can saw there are many coolies were running another from another." etc.

f. **Inappropriate use of singular and plural nouns:**
This kind of mistake was made by the students of school 4 and 5. Examples of such mistakes are, "I bought a watch for my uncle, two shari for my aunt and one frocks for my cousin.", "A street hawker is a common people all everywhere in your country.", "A howker is a most important persons of our society." etc.

- **Length:** Most of the students wrote quite a good length. Except some of the students of schools 4 and 8, almost all of the students produced quite a satisfactory length of writing.

## 5.5 Analysis of the performance of the students in writing proficiency tests, based on the scores given by the researcher

### 5.5.1 Introduction

In order to examine the creative writing ability of the students of the classes visited, a writing proficiency test was arranged in each class. Sometimes the English teacher present in the class selected the topic and sometimes I selected the topic. The teacher present helped me to administer the proficiency test. After the test the teachers marked some of the papers. Later I marked all the papers again by myself. The papers were marked out of 50 marks and the marking scheme I selected was as follows:

- Structure of the composition (organization of ideas) - 10 marks
- Use of students own ideas - 10 marks
- Use of content words (appropriate vocabulary) - 10 marks
- Use of grammar (grammatical features and morphology) - 10 marks
- Length. - 10 marks

Out of this 50 marks I fixed 25 (50% marks) as the passing grade and 30 (60% marks) was considered a satisfactory standard of creative writing. After marking the scripts, I divided the schools into two groups—Group A and Group B on the basis of the performance of the students, their scores. A picture of the performance of the students of different schools is shown in the following table.

| | Schools of Group - A | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Names of Schools Visited | Total Number of students participated in the test | Number of students scored less than 50% marks | Number of students scored 5O%-60% marks | Number of students scored more than 60% marks |
| 1 | Rajuk Uttara Model School Dhaka | 40 | -- | 4 (10%) | 36 (90%) |
| 2 | New Horizon Academy, Dhaka | 11 | -- | 1 (9%) | 10(91%) |
| 3. | Manarat Dhaka Int'l College School | 15 | -- | 3 (20%) | 12 (80%) |
| Schools of Group - B | | | | | |
| si. No. | Names of Schools Visited | Total Number of students participated in the test | Number of students scored less than 50% marks | Number of students scored 50%-60% marks | Number of students scored more than 60% marks |
| 4. | Bindubashini Govt. Boys' High School, Tangail | 40 | 18(45%) | 15 (38%) | 7 (17%) |
| 5. | King Khalid Institute, Dhaka | 12 | 10(83%) | 2 (17%) | -- |
| 6. | Tejgaon Govt. High School, Dhaka | 33 | 13 (40%) | 8(25%) | 12 (35%) |
| 7. | Govt. Science College School, Dhaka | 33 | 28 (85%) | 3 (9%) | 2 (6%) |
| 8. | Badshah Faisal School (Boys') | 9 | 7 (77%) | 2 (23%) | . -- |
| 9. | Badshah Faisal School (Girls') | 4 | 3(75%) | 1(25%) | -- |

Table 5.17: Performance of the students of the schools of the two groups: Group A & Group B

### 5.5.2 Analysis of the performance of the students in the writing proficiency tests

The performance of the students of the first three schools seems to be quite satisfactory. The schools lie in Group A. The schools are Rajuk Uttara Model School, New Horizon Academy and Manarat Dhaka Int'l College School. The most remarkable matter is that none of the students of these schools scored less than 50% marks and 90% students of Rajuk Uttara Model School, 91% students of New Horizon Academy and 80% students of Manarat Dhaka Int'l College School scored more than 60% marks.

In group B there were six schools named Tejgaon Govt. High School, Govt. Science College School, Bindubashini Govt. High School, King Khalid Institute, Badshah Faisal School (Boys') and Badshah Faisal School (Girls'). According to the performance chart 40% of the students of Tejgaon Govt. High School, 85% of the students of Govt. Science College, 45% of the students' of Bindubashini Govt. High School Tangail, 83% of the students of King Khalid Institute, 77% of the students of Badshah Faisal School (Boys') and 75% of the students of Badshah Faisal School (Girls') scored less than the passing grade. If we consider 60% marks minimum marks for a satisfactory standard of creative writing, we will see 35% students of Tejgaon Govt. High School, 6% of Govt. Science College School, 17% of Bindubashini Govt. Boys' High School and no students of King Khalid Institute, Badshah Faisal High School (Boys') and Badshah Faisal High School (Girls') got this standard.

## 5.6 Comparison and contrast between the products of the students of the institutions of two groups

### 5.6.1 Structure

The products of most of the students of Group A were found well-structured having a meaningful introduction, a well-organized body and a discerning conclusion while the writings of most of the students of group B were found poorly structured. The

performance of the students of schools 4 and 8 of Group B were found worse than that of the other schools in case of structuring their ideas.

The teachers of Group A might have given their students enough guidelines about the structure of a written composition and might have made them practice writing much and these combined efforts might have led the students to show a better performance in structuring ideas.

The teachers of Group B, on the other hand, might have given the students insufficient guidelines and made them write little. As a result, the performance of the students of group B might have been poorer than that of the students of group A.

### 5.6.2 Use of students' own ideas

Most of the students of group A were found creative enough in producing their own ideas. That means they were able to produce their own ideas independently. Their writings were quite diversified and reflected their own ideas. For example, the students of school 1 wrote about their own eating habits while the students of school 3 gave their own opinions on how best they could spend their leisure times.

On the other hand, most of the students of the institutions of group B failed to reflect their own ideas.in their writings. Though they wrote their texts individually, most of the writings of the same institution were almost identical. This suggests that the students memorized some particular compositions from a particular composition book and reproduced them in their writings. If we look at the writings of the students of school 5, it will be clear to us. The task for the students of school 5 was writing a paragraph on “A Hawker”. Most of the students wrote the same sentences in their papers. This shows that the students were not accustomed to expressing their own ideas in their writings. Rather, they were dependent on their rote learning.

The teachers of Group A might have played a better role in the class, motivated the students to write on their own and had a better idea of the process of writing. These

factors might have led the students to attain the ability of expressing their own ideas. Haque (1989) refers to a study carried out by some researchers. He says:

> "One such study was carried out by Papalia and Zampogna (1972) for the purpose of investigating the effect of teacher behaviour on students' continuing foreign language study. They found that this depended mostly on the teacher and to a lesser extent on the relevance of the course. Other researchers also consider teachers to be one of the most important influences on student motivation (e.g. Girard, 1977; Kharma 1977)."

So, it can easily be concluded that the teachers of Group A took practical steps and motivated the students to help them achieve the ability to write independently. They also seemed to have a good knowledge of the process of writing which they tried to disseminate among the students. As a result, the students could achieve a good standard of writing ability. On the other hand, the teachers of Group B might have failed to teach their students the right process of writing and this might have been the root cause for the students of Group B of being poorly creative.

### 5.6.3 Length / Fluency

The students of Group A were found more fluent than the students of Group B. Almost all of the students of this group were able to write as much as they were asked to write. For example, the students of school 3 wrote about 280 - 300 words in their essays. Out of 66 students 50 students ended their writings properly.

The students of Group B were found less fluent than the students of Group A. Though many of the students could write the required length, sixty seven students of this group failed to do so. For example, the students of schools 4 and 8 wrote much less than they were asked to write.

Students' lacking of proper guidelines to improve writing, and lack of proper classroom atmosphere where the students are given enormous opportunities to write

might have led the students of Group B write less than the students of Group A. The teachers of Group A helped the students write well and established a warm and supportive environment in the writing classroom which ultimately led them write better than the students of Group B. These views are supported by some applied linguists. Regarding classroom atmosphere Hemp-Lyons and Heasley (1987, 2-3) suggest that the atmosphere of the writing classroom should be warm and supportive. It helps if teachers show willingness to write too and offer their attempts for class discussion. It helps if students can work together, assisting each other pointing out strengths and weaknesses without taking or giving offence.

Regarding the development of writing skills Zamel (1987) holds that writing skills develop rapidly when students are given enormous opportunities to write and when their interests and concerns are acknowledged.

So it can be easily concluded that the teachers of Group A were able to establish a better classroom atmosphere and motivate the students to write more than the teachers of Group B did to their students.

### 5.6.4 Vocabulary range / content words

Most of the students of Group A used a wider range of content words accurately. Some of the words used by the students are: significant, well-known, utilize, synonym, entertainment, tragedy, strewed, inclined, nutritious etc. But most of the students of Group B used a limited set of content words which seems to be a proof of their dependence upon rote learning. Some of the content words used by most of the students of these schools are: common, person, daily life, carry, basket, goods, shout, loudly, essential goods, generally, important, different etc.

The students of Group A were exposed to a variety of language skills like—reading, writing, speaking and listening more than the students of Group B. The more the learners get exposed to different language skills the more would be their attainment in learning new and appropriate words and hence writing. This is understood from

the comments of Widdowson (1996) who holds that the effective teaching of a language as communication calls for an integrated approach which represents different skills and abilities as aspects of a singly underlying activity. David Nunan, (1991) in addition, suggests that for making writing classes completely successful free writing classes should be integrated with the practice of studying and imitating written models in the classroom.

So in the light of the above comments we can understand that the students of Group A got more exposure to the target language in different forms of language skills than the students of Group B did. As a result, the students of Group A got opportunities to learn a wider range of appropriate vocabulary and apply them in their writings.

### 5.6.5 Grammar

Regarding displaying the knowledge of grammar, the performance of the students of Group A were found much better than the students of group B. Almost all of the students of group A were able to use grammatically correct sentences. Some of the sentences they wrote are "Leisure is that sweetest of moments when a man has nothing to do, when he is on his own and can use his time according to his own will.", “The continuity of this cycle has to be broken by an extra time to revive one's freshness.', "Man is mortal", "Though this is a universal truth, man still wants to preserve some memories and live for a long time." etc.

On the other hand most of the students of Group B were found weak in grammar. Many of them committed a lot of grammatical mistakes though some of them used their grammatical knowledge quite correctly. They made different types of grammatical mistakes. The kinds of mistakes they made are Subject-verb Disagreement, Improper Use of Articles, Inappropriate Use of Prepositions, Inappropriate Use of Singular and Plural Nouns, Lack of Sequence of Tenses, and Ill-structured Sentences. Some of the mistaken sentences are "Tomorrow our Christmas", "I shall come back our house", "He is a one of the person among labour.", "I as receive the station.", "It is a summers vacation, in the train windows." etc.

The faulty way of dealing with the grammar exercises might have led the students to do so many mistakes. The teachers of Group B might not have linked the grammar exercises to the development of natural language behaviour that means the development of students' communicative competence. They might have directed the students to do the grammar exercises in detached sentences. Regarding the development of grammatical competence, Widdowson (1996) comments that the presentation of sentences as a random set of separate units not only discourage but also is likely to actually inhibit the development of writing ability. He suggests that grammar exercises should be related to the context of the reading passage. He states, "So although we want to relate the exercise material to the reading passage, we want to do it in a meaningful way, in a way which will achieve real integration by getting the learners to compose sentences as an integral part of the development of the writing ability." So from his observation it is clear that unless the students are taught to practice formation of sentences as an integral part of the writing for communication, students might not be able to use their knowledge of grammar in the time of composing a greater text.

If we analyze the classroom observation reports, we will see the students of the schools of Group A received better guidelines, better assistance from their teachers to flourish their creative writing faculty than the students of the schools of the Group B. According to the teachers' statement it is seen that the teachers of these schools gave helpful guidelines to the students to improve their writing. They discussed the process of writing, planning, writing fluently and editing and rewriting. They also gave a good amount of time to the students and emphasized more of fluency rather than accuracy. Moreover, the teachers were found very active in the class. They were helping the students to develop their ideas and were monitoring their students' work. As a result, the students felt courageous to go on with their writing. All these matters might have resulted in a good standard of writing.

In case of Group 'B" the students of Tejgaon Govt. High School, King Khalid Institute, Bindubashini Govt. Boys" High School did not receive any guidelines from the teachers. They could write to some length because their topics were very familiar to them which they might have done many times before. Analyzing the teachers' statement it is found that most of teachers mainly emphasized grammatical accuracy of the students. It is also seen that no teacher had a clear idea of the ways of teaching writing. As a result, the students also could not know how to create and develop ideas and how to structure writing. They seemed dependent upon their rote learning. More so, the teachers failed to grow interest to learn writing in the students. It is seen that out of the 28 students of Group 13 who were interviewed only 2 students said that they liked writing best because they wanted to improve their writing standard and creativity. About the difficulties they faced in improving free writing most of the students said that they were weak in English grammar, vocabulary and spellings and some of them said that they faced difficulties creating ideas. The failure of the teachers is clearly revealed in such cases. Though most of the teachers emphasized grammatical accuracy, their students were mostly weak in grammar and their ways of teaching contributed little to the improvement of their writing. Therefore, it is clear that the students of the schools did not receive adequate assistance from their teachers. From the above data we can deduce that the more assistance the students receive from their teachers the better is their performance in creative writing.

## 5.7 Analysis of the classroom observation reports

### 5.7.1 Introduction

In this part of the text the classroom observation reports have been summarized. The schools were divided into two groups as mentioned before, on the basis of the observation of teachers' teaching methodology and students' performance in the class and their performance in the writing proficiency tests. The analysis has been done under the following categories.

- ❖ Class size
- ❖ The language the teacher used
- ❖ Utilization of the class time

- ❖ Teaching skills and strategies adopted by the teacher
  - prewriting activities
- ❖ Atmosphere of the classroom
  - Teacher's assistance to the students in developing their ideas
  - Teacher's monitoring of students' progress of writing during the writing lesson

### 5.7.2 Analysis of the classroom observation reports of the schools of Group A

#### 5.7.2.1 Class size

The number of the students of schools 2 and 3 were quite satisfactory while the number of the students of school 1 was a bit more than the expected number of learners an EFL classroom should have. The strengths of the classes of schools 2, and 3 were 12 and 25 respectively while the strength of school 1 was 42. According to E.V. Gatesby (1950) the pace of language learning slows down if there' are more than ten adults and twenty young students to one teacher. In the light of this principle the class size of school 2 and 3 are quite agreeable.

#### 5.7.2.2 The language the teacher used

The teachers of all the three schools used English while conducting the classes. All the teachers seemed to be fluent in spoken English. They paid their lecture in English and talked to the students in English. The students seemed to have understood their teachers' lecture.

#### 5.7.2.3 Utilization of the class time

The duration of the class time of the schools 1, 2 and 3 were 40 minutes, 90 minutes and 45 minutes respectively. The teachers took around 5 minutes, 5 minutes and 6 minutes respectively for the administrative work and they utilized rest of the time for the purposes of teaching writing.

### 5.7.2.4 Teaching skills and strategies adopted by the teachers (Prewriting activities)

All teachers of these schools had resorted to some prewriting activities before they asked the students to start their writing proficiency tests.

The teacher of school 1 was doing paragraph writing. The topic of the day was "The Daily Diet." He gave the students some instructions about the paragraph and wrote down some questions regarding the topic on the board. Then he discussed the questions and gave his own answers regarding his own daily diet. Then he held a short question-answer session engaging some of the students to answer the questions regarding their daily diet. The students seemed to be confident enough to write down the paragraph. After warming up enough for the writing test, he asked the students to start writing. The teacher of school 2 was dealing with essay writing. The topic of the day was Best Ways to Enjoy the Leisure Times. But before the teacher asked the students to get into the main business of writing, he had arranged some prewriting activities. At first he delivered a short lecture about the topic. Then he wrote down the following points on the board and discussed them one after another.

- Introduction
- Necessity of leisure in our life
- The ways we can enjoy our leisure times
- Conclusion

In the next stage the teacher reminded the students of the elements of a good writing. The elements, he talked about, were structure, appropriate vocabulary, correct grammar, good spelling and overall decoration.

Then he divided the class into three discussion groups and asked the students to have a brief discussion about the development of ideas and process of writing the essay. The students engaged themselves in a group discussion for some time and then they wrote the essay.

The teacher of school 3 also did some prewriting activities. At first he delivered a lecture on how to produce a good writing. He wrote down the elements of a good

writing on the board and discussed them. His found fluent in spoken English and he emphasized the grammatical correctness and clear organization of ideas to produce a piece of good writing. The answer scripts along with the questions were supplied with me. The topics were as follows:

- Thoughts of the present and hopes for the future
- Some sweet memories

The teacher then orientated the students to the subject matter by doing a short discussion about some of his own experience and allowed some of the students to discuss some of their own experiences and ideas. Finally, the teacher asked the students to start writing.

So it is seen that the teachers of this group had organized some prewriting activities before they went into the main business of writing. These activities are supported by the ELT experts on writing. Both Hedge (1988) and Tribble (1986) suggest prewriting activities as an essential part of the process of writing. Hedge (1988) comments "Collaborative writing in the classroom generates discussion and activities which encourage an effective process of writing" (1988:12). So we see that the teachers of the schools of Group A resorted to some practical method of teaching writing.

### 5.7.2.5 Atmosphere of the Classroom

#### Teacher's assistance to the students in developing their ideas

The atmosphere of the classroom of the schools of Group A was found quite warm and supportive. All the teachers were very active in the class. They not only helped the students frame ideas but also created an environment where the students got an opportunity to talk to each other and plan their writing. All the teachers monitored the progress of the students' work while they were writing. Because of the support of the teachers, the students got sufficient input and stimulus to produce their writings quite confidently. The atmosphere the teachers of this group created in the classrooms seems to be parallelled to the atmosphere of the classroom suggested by Hamp Lyons and Heasly (1987:2, 3). They suggest that the atmosphere of the writing

classroom should be warm and supportive. That means it should ensure that the teachers should show willingness to write too and to offer their attempts for class discussion. They also observe that this kind of atmosphere helps if students can work together, assisting each other, pointing out strengths and weaknesses without taking or giving offence. This kind of atmosphere is essential as students learn better in an anxiety free environment. The teachers of Group A seemed to have been able to create such an environment in the classroom.

**Teachers' monitoring of students' progress:**

All the teachers of this group were found to monitor the progress of the students' writing tests. They checked whether the students were facing any problem in framing ideas and all of them were working independently.

### 5.7.3 Summary of the analysis of classroom observation reports of the schools of Group A

The overall situation of the teachers' performance, and students' performance and outcomes of the students of the schools of the group seemed to be helpful to flourish the independent writing ability of the students. Teaching methodology of the teachers seemed to be effective. Their selection of topics, integrating of the language skills, their guidelines for the students to go forward and write and their monitoring of students' writings seemed to be very useful.

### 5.7.4. Analysis of the classroom observation reports of the schools of Group B

#### 5.7.4.1 Class Size

The average class size of the schools of Group B was very huge. Except the schools 4 and 8, the number of students was more than 50 in all other schools which is quite higher than the suggested number of learners in an EFL classroom of young learners. E.V. Gatesby (1950) suggests that for an effective EFL class the number of young learners should not be more than 20. In the light of the suggestion the average strength of the classes of this group was much higher,

### 5.7.4.2 The language the teacher used

Of the six teachers of the schools of this group the teachers of school 6, 7 and 8 spoke quite a good amount of English while conducting the class. Of the three teachers, two were found fluent. The other was not much fluent in spoken English. The teachers of the rest three schools used English very little. They often used Bangla.

### 5.7.4.3 Utilization of the class time

Most of the teachers of this group either wasted a great deal of time by being late or took a lot of time for doing administrative work. Out of 6 teachers only one teacher, the teacher of school 4, took 2 minutes for the administrative purpose. The other teachers the teachers of school 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 took about 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 10 minutes, 17 minutes and 10 minutes respectively for administrative and other activities. Using such big amount of time for the administrative and other purposes seemed to be much higher than necessary in the administrative and other purposes in a class of average 40 minutes.

### 5.7.4.4 Teaching skills and strategies adopted by the teachers of Group B

- **Prewriting activities**

Of the six teachers of this group, three teachers, teachers of schools 4, 5 and 9 did not undertake any prewriting activities. These teachers simply wrote down the topics or the subject matters on the board and asked the students to produce the compositions according to the instructions. The students, without asking anything, started to do their work. The other teachers, teachers of schools 6, 7 and 8 conducted a limited scale of prewriting activity. The teacher of school 6 held a brief lecture on the given work. She conducted the class on personal letter writing. The subject matter was "Write' a letter to your friend describing your experience of a train journey.". .

At the first stage she wrote some words related to the subject matter on the board. After that she narrated some of her experiences of a train journey to the students. Finishing her speech, she asked the students to write a letter on the given subject

matter. She neither discussed the format of the letter nor gave the students any idea about how to begin the letter, how to end it and how to organize ideas. She even had not engaged the students in any collaborative work before she asked them to start writing.

The teacher of school 7 conducted the class on paragraph writing. The topic he was dealing with was "The House I Live in". At the beginning of the class he wrote down some words and phrases on the board as notes. After that he expanded the notes into sentences. Then he asked some students some questions. It seemed that the teachers wanted some particular answers from the students. He asked some yes / no questions like "You live in a house, don't you?", 'The house you live in is beautiful, isn't it?" etc. After explaining the notes for about ten minutes he asked the students to write a paragraph on the given topic.

The teacher did not engage the students in any group work. The students worked individually all along.

The teacher of school 8 was doing paragraph writing. Before she asked the students to start their work she had a brief discussion on the following topics:

a) "Food, one of the basic needs of human life."

b) "The House I Live in."

She was mainly focusing on the first topic as the second one was the subject matter of the previous class. In the beginning she wrote down some notes from the notebook on the board. The notes were as follows:

- food
- necessity of food
- nutrition
- food of the primitive society
- modern people have variety of food

The teacher then explained the points. She neither asked the students any question nor did the students ask her any. She even did not engage the students in any group discussion. The students then started writing a paragraph on one of the topics given

by the teacher. They worked individually and quietly for some time. Some of the students seemed very nervous to write instantly and they refused to write. Some of the students took the test.

### 5.7.4.5 Atmosphere of the classroom

- **Teacher's assistance to the students in developing their ideas**

None of the teachers of this group extended their assistance to the students to generate their own ideas. All the teachers except the teacher of school 6 were just sitting on their chairs as silent observers during the students' work. Though the teacher of school 6 moved around the class, she did not initiate any interaction with any student.

- **Teacher's monitoring of students' progress**

None of the teachers monitored the progress of their students' work. Neither they asked the students any question nor did they feel any necessity to see whether any student was facing any problem in framing or putting their ideas.

### 5.7.5 Summary of the analysis of the classroom observation reports of the schools of Group B

The overall performance of the teachers and students and learning outcomes of the students of schools of Group B did not seem to be satisfactory for the improvement of the students' independent writing ability. Most of the teachers of this group did not do any pre writing activity to warm up the students for being ready to write, to frame their ideas and to produce a good composition. Two teachers did some pre-writing work but it was very little in comparison to the practical need. They also failed to create a warm and supportive environment in the classroom. The students did not get any opportunity to engage themselves in the collaborative group work which is suggested by the ELT scholars like Hedge (1988) and Tribble (1986). The teacher neither gave the students any practical guidelines to improve their writing nor did they monitor the progress of their work.

### 5.7.6 Comparison and contrast between the Classroom observation reports of the schools of two groups

#### 5.7.6.1 Class size

The average class size of the schools of Group B was found much larger than that of Group A. The average number of students in the classes of the schools of Group B was 44 which was almost double the size of Group A. According to the applied linguists of this field, class size is an important factor that affects the attainment of a language. E.V. Gatesby (1950) comments the pace of language learning slows down if there are more than ten adults and twenty young learners to one teacher. In the light of this proposition, we see that the number of students of the classes of the schools of Group A was quite nearer to the suggested number of students in the English classes of the schools of group B was much higher than the suggested number. This high number might have affected the overall teaching-learning environment of the schools of Group B and consequently students' writing ability.

#### 5.7.6.2 The language the teacher used

All the teachers of Group A were found delivering lectures in English while only one third of the teachers of Group B delivered lectures in English. As Bangladeshi learners mainly get exposed to English environment in the classroom and as the learning of a foreign language mostly depends upon the teacher (Girard, 1977), the learners of Group A might have been benefited more in learning writing than the learners of Group B.

#### 5.7.6.3 Utilization of class time

It was seen that the teachers of the schools of Group A spent less class time in administrative work than the teachers of the schools of Group B. The teachers of Group A spent an average of 5 minutes in administrative work during the class while the teachers of Group B spent more than 10 minutes for the same purpose. As the students of Group A were used to more time of instruction and practice than the students of Group B, the students of Group A might have been benefited more in improving their writing than the students of Group B.

### 5.7.6.4 Teaching skills and strategies adopted by the teachers

**Pre-writing activities:** All the teachers of Group A organized some sorts of pre-writing activities before they asked the students to start writing. Some of the activities they undertook were: initial discussion about the subject matter,
conducting a question answer session, giving some instruction about brainstorming and arranging ideas, organizing group discussion among the students, discussion about the basic elements of writing etc.

On the other hand only three teachers of Group B organized pre-writing activity on a limited scale in their classes. The other three teachers did not initiate any pre-writing activity. Examples of pre-writing activity the teachers of group B undertook are: delivering a brief lecture about the task, writing notes on the board, giving some helpful vocabulary etc. These three teachers neither encouraged the students to ask questions nor did they ask the students to do some group work before they started writing. As prewriting activity is an important step towards developing students' writing and which has been suggested by many applied linguists like Hedge (1988) and Tribble (1986), the students of Group A seemed to have been guided more by their teachers than the students of Group B most. It was also found that most of the students of Group B did not get any support from their teachers. This difference in assistance to the students might have affected the writing ability of the students of both the groups with the students of Group A doing better than the students of Group B.

### 5-7.6.5 Atmosphere of the classroom

**Teachers' assistance to the students in developing ideas:** The atmospheres of English classes of Group A were found much more supportive and warmer than the classrooms of Group B. All the teachers of group A were found active. They not only helped the students frame ideas but also created an environment where the students got an opportunity to talk to each other and plan their writings.

On the other hand, the classrooms of Group B seemed to lack proper atmosphere as most of the teachers were not found extending any assistance to the students to frame their ideas before or during their writing tasks. It seemed that the teachers of Group B did not have enough idea of establishing a supportive environment in the classroom. As this kind of atmosphere is seen as an essential prerequisite to develop students' writing ability which is suggested by many applied linguists like Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (1987: 2-3), the students of Group A seemed to have attained a better writing ability than the students of Group B.

**Teachers' monitoring of the students' progress**

All the teachers of Group A were found monitoring the progress of the students' work. They were found more or less active in the classroom moving around the classes and replying to the queries of students and helping them frame ideas.

But the teachers of the schools of Group B were not found monitoring their students' progress at all. Except the teacher of school 6 all the teachers were sitting at their tables. The teacher of school 6, though was moving around the class, did not interact with the students.

This data suggests that the students of Group B were deprived of proper motivation and assistance from their teachers. As a result, the students received very little comprehensible inputs. According to Krashen and Terrell (1983) sufficient comprehensible input is a prerequisite for the development of a language. Krashen (1982) observes that learners with high motivation generally do better. Krashen and Terrell (1983) suggest that for the desirable improvement of a language as much comprehensible input as possible should be presented. They also suggest that whatever helps comprehension is important. Considering all these observations we can say that the learners of Group B had very little input and motivation from their teachers which might have hindered their progress to a great extent.

## 5.8 Brief comparison between different aspects of Group A and Group B

| Areas & Categories | Group A | Group B |
|---|---|---|
| 5.8.1 Students' statements | | |
| a. Time spent for written English classes each week | 3 hours | 2 hours |
| b. What students liked to do best in English classes | Writing (70% students) | Writing (57% students) |
| • Main difficulties students faced in improving writing. | ❖ Weakness in grammar ❖ Shortage of vocabulary ❖ Weakness in organizing ideas | ❖ Weakness in grammar ❖ Shortage of vocabulary ❖ Bad spelling ❖ Lack of confidence |
| d. What students expected from their teachers to get rid of the difficulties | ❖ Help in learning more necessary grammatical features ❖ More guidelines to improve writing skill ❖ Help in enriching vocabulary | ❖ Help in enriching grammatical knowledge ❖ Proper guideline to improve writing ❖ Help in enriching vocabulary |
| 5.8.2 Teachers' statements | | |
| a. Nature of work done in the writing class | Mainly essay writing | Mainly paragraph writing |
| b. Common guidelines given by the majority of the teachers to improve students' writing | ❖ Ideas about the elements of a good writing ❖ correct grammar, appropriate vocabulary ❖ good spelling ❖ organization of ideas and decoration of the writing | ❖ No common, guidelines were found. ❖ Different teachers gave different suggestion ❖ The mainly asked the students to enrich vocabulary grammar and practice writing. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **c. What should be emphasized in the writing class: fluency or accuracy** | ❖ Majority of the teachers emphasized both accuracy and fluency. | ❖ Majority of the teachers emphasized both accuracy and fluency. |
| **d. Method of correction teachers followed while checking students' writing** | ❖ Majority teachers said that they usually corrected the copies after the class.<br>❖ All the teachers corrected the writing by marking the mistakes giving comments about the mistakes on their papers. | ❖ Majority of the teachers said that they corrected the writings during the class time.<br>❖ Most of the teachers could not give a clear idea about the method of correction. |

**5.8.3 Analysis of students' production**

| Areas & Categories | Group A | Group B |
|---|---|---|
| **a. Structure** | Most of the writings were well structured. | Most of their writings were not well structured. |
| **b. Use of students' own ideas** | Students were able to produce their own ideas independently. | Most of the students were unable to produce their own ideas. They simply reproduced some memorized ideas. |
| **c. Length/Fluency** | Almost all the students were found fluent. | Many of the students were not found fluent. |
| **d. Vocabulary range/use of content words** | Most of the students used a wide range of content words. | Most of the students used a limited set of content words. |
| **e. Grammar** | Most of the students were able to write grammatically correct sentences though some of the students committed some minor mistakes. | Most of the students were found weak in grammar. They committed a variety of grammatical mistakes. The kinds of mistakes they committed are :<br>• subject-verb disagreement<br>• improper use of articles<br>• inappropriate use of prepositions<br>• inappropriate use of singular and plural |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | nouns, lack of sequence of tenses and ill-structured sentences |
| 5.8.4 Classroom observation reports | | |
| a. Class size | Average number of students: 27 | Average number of students: 43 |
| b. Use of English during lectures | 100% | around 50% |
| c. Utilization of class time for academic purposes | 90% | 75% |
| d. Teaching skills and strategies | 100% of the teachers organized prewriting activities. | 50% of the teachers organized prewriting activities to some extent. |
| Areas & Categories | Group A | Group B |
| e. Atmosphere of the classroom | ❖ 100% of the teachers were active in helping students generate ideas.<br>❖ 100% of the teachers monitored students' work. | ❖ Most of the teachers were silent during the work.<br>❖ Teachers almost did no monitoring. |
| 5.8.5 Performance (scores) of the students in the writing proficiency tests (Papers were marked out of 50) | | |
| a. Total no. of students took the proficiency test | 66 | 131 |
| b. Percentage of students scored less than 50% marks | 0 | 67 |
| c. Percentage of students scored more than 60% marks. | 87 | 5 |

Table 5.18: Brief comparison of different aspects between Group A and Group B

## Conclusion

From the above depicted brief comparison between different aspects of the two groups, it is evident that the students of Group A had a much better writing skill from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives than the students of Group B. The analysis of data and the comparison between different aspects of the data of the two group, Group A and Group B, reveals the difference. Let us now discuss the differences and see how they affect the writing ability of the students.

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From the analysis of the students' statement it is evident that the students of Group A got much more time every week for practicing writing in English classes than the students of Group B. Regarding the instructional period Burton (1973) observes that improving writing ability is a slow process and the shorter the instructional period the less the improvement. From this observation it can be said that the students of Group A might have been more benefited from their teachers than the students of Group B did which might have ultimately led the students of Group A to a better standard of writing ability.

Regarding the students' inclination to writing activities, it is seen that the students of group A were more inclined to writing than the students of group B. The motivation of the teachers to develop writing might have led the students to be more interested in writing. According to Haque (2000) achievement in English is facilitated by favourable attitudes towards and strong motivation for learning the language. In both cases the students of Group A were found in a better state which might have helped them to perform better in writing than the students of Group B.

As regards the main difficulties students faced in improving writing, it is seen that students of both the groups faced some difficulties in grammar and vocabulary. In addition to these, some of the students of Group A said that they found it difficult to organize ideas and the students of Group B reported their weakness in spellings and their lack of confidence in writing independently. Though the students of Group A faced some difficulties in grammar and vocabulary, they did not report about lack of confidence. So it can be deduced that the students of Group A were more confident

than the students of Group B regarding their independent writing ability. The state of being inconfident affects second language acquisition greatly which has been reflected in Krashen's (1981) "The Affective Filter Hypothesis." Krashen sees the learner's emotional state or attitudes as an adjustable filter that freely passes, affects inputs necessary to acquisition. A low affective filter is desirable, as it impedes or blocks less of these necessary inputs. Richards and Rodgers (1995) present the matter as follows:

"The hypothesis is built on research in second language acquisition: which has identified three kinds of affective or attitudinal variables related to second language acquisition.

1. **Motivation:** Learners with high motivation generally do better.
2. **Self-confidence:** Learners with self- confidence and a good self-image tend to be more successful.
3. **Anxiety:** Low personal anxiety and low classroom anxiety are more conducive to second language acquisition."

So the Affective Filter Hypothesis states that acquirers with low affective filters seek and receive more input and interact with confidence. Anxious acquirers have high affective filters which prevent acquisition from taking place. In the light of the Hypothesis it can be said that the students of Group A developed the writing skill better than the students of Group B did as majority of the students of Group B were suffering from lack of confidence.

As to the supports students wanted from their teachers to get rid of the difficulties, it is seen that though students of both the groups talked about almost the same types of assistance, assistance to teach grammar and vocabulary better, students of Group B commented that their teachers should have given them proper guidelines to improve writing. This clearly reveals that students of Group B were deprived of proper guidelines of developing writing. This deficiency might have led them to suffer from lack of confidence which ultimately might have affected their writing greatly.

Regarding the nature of work, it is seen that teachers of Group A conducted writing classes mainly on essay writing while the teachers of Group B dealt with mainly paragraph writing. From this data it can easily be concluded that the students of Group A were more accustomed to writing longer texts than the students of group A.

As regards the guidelines given by the teachers to improve students' writing, a sharp difference is seen between group A and group B. Teachers of Group A gave the students clear ideas about the elements of a good writing—correct grammar, appropriate vocabulary, good spelling, organization of ideas and decoration but most of the teachers of Group B did not do so. They asked the students to study grammar enrich vocabulary and practice writing but they did not suggest how to practice or what to practice. As the students of Group B did not get proper guidelines about the improvement of writing, they remained weak in writing which was reflected in their writing proficiency tests.

A similarity is found between the majority of the teachers of both the groups regarding putting emphasis in the writing class. Teachers of both the groups suggested that both accuracy and fluency should be emphasized in the writing class. But the modern theories of writing mainly focus on fluency rather than on accuracy. Zamel (1987) and Hillocks (1989) suggest that writing classes must be devoted to numerous opportunities to write but attention to grammar is played down. Accuracy can be emphasized in the grammar classes but when the students are writing, they should be encouraged to keep on writing without fearing the grammatical mistakes much. Though Nunan (1991) concludes that for making writing classes successful, process writing should be integrated with the practice of studying and imitating written models in the classroom, it can be said that the focus should not be on accuracy at the developmental stage.

It is seen that majority of the teachers of Group A corrected students' scripts after the class while majority of the teachers of Group B corrected the scripts after the class. As the teachers of Group A corrected copies after the class, the students of

Group A got more instructional period from their teachers than the students of Group B. According to Burton (1973) the improvement in writing is a slow process and the shorter the instructional period, the less the improvement. This factor might have affected the writing of the students of Group B as they got less instructional period from their teachers than the students of Group A did.

As to the method of correction, a sharp difference is seen between the teachers of Group A and the teachers of Group B. The teachers of Group A corrected their students' writings marking all the mistakes and giving comments on the mistakes on their papers. Students of group A might have been benefited out of their teachers' way of correcting their writings more than the students of Group B did as their teachers did not follow any clear guideline to correct the writing.

On analyzing students' products collected from their writing proficiency tests, it was found that the products of the students of Group A were better in both quantity and quality than those of Group B. The writings of Group A were well-structured while most of the writings of Group B were less structured. The most remarkable aspect of the products of Group A is the students were able to produce their own ideas independently while most of the students of Group B failed to do so. They mainly produced some of their memorized ideas. The students of Group A used a wide range of content words accurately while the students of Group B used a limited number of content words and many of the students of the same institute used almost the same set of content words in their writings. In terms of all these three factors—structure, using own ideas and vocabulary the writings of the students of Group A were much more creative than those of Group B. The students of Group A were much better in grammar too. Most of the students were able to write grammatically correct sentences though some of the students committed some minor mistakes. On the other hand most of the students of Group B were found to be weak in grammar as they made different types of grammatical mistakes. The students of Group A were found more fluent in writing than the students of Group B as most of them could write the

required length. On the other hand, many of the students of Group B failed to write the required length, Classroom observation reports also reveal a good number of differences between the English classes of group A and group B. The average class size of Group B is much bigger than that of group A. The average number of students of the classes of Group A was 27 while the average number of students of the classes of Group B was 43 (jus double the strength of group B). According to E.V. Gates by (1950), the pace of language learning slows down if there are more than ten adults and twenty young students to one teacher. In the light of this observation it can be said that the language learning pace of the students of Group B was much slower than that of the students of Group A. In other words, it can be said that the overall teaching-learning environment of Group B classes was greatly affected by the big class size.

Regarding using English in the classroom, it is seen that the teachers of Group A conducted the English lessons completely in English while most of the teachers of Group B frequently used both Bangla and English. As a result, the students of Group A were exposed to English much more than the students of Group B. In other words, it can be said that the students of Group A received much more input than the students of Group B.

As to the utilization of class time it was found that the teachers of Group B spent much more time in administrative work than the teachers of Group A did. The data shows that teachers of Group A spent around 90% of the class time while the teachers of Group B spent around 75% of the class time in teaching writing. So it is obvious that the students of Group A had more input from their teachers than the students of Group B did. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, the more the students have input the more is their development of language. Krashen and Terrel (1983) suggest that people acquire a language best by understanding input that is slightly beyond their current level of competence. The more is the instructional period the more is comprehensible input received by the students. Krashen and Terrel say "An acquirer can move from a stage I (where I is the acquirer's level of competence) to *a* stage I+1

(where I+1 is the stage immediately following I along some natural order) by understanding language containing I+1. (Krashen and Terrel 1983:32)

They also suggest that if there is a sufficient quantity of comprehensible input, I+1 will usually be provided automatically.

From these views, we can conclude that the students of Group A were better in writing than the students of Group B.

In this regard it is also seen that the teachers of Group A arranged much more prewriting activities than the teachers of Group B did. The data reveals that 100% of the teachers of Group A arranged prewriting activities while only 50% of the teachers of Group B did so to some extent. From this data too it is seen that the students of group A had much more comprehensible input than the students of Group B. Obviously the students of Group A learned writing better than the students of Group B.

As to the atmosphere of the classroom, it is seen that the classrooms of Group A were much more supportive than the classrooms of Group B. The data reveal that all the teachers of Group A were active in the class helping the students generate ideas and motivating them to go on with writing while only 17% teachers of Group B were found doing so. On the other hand, while the test was going on, all the - teachers of group A were found to be monitoring their students' work while none of the teaches of Group B were doing so. In this regard Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (1987:2-3) suggest that the atmosphere of the writing classroom should be warm and supportive where teachers show willingness to help students develop writing and offer different types of classroom activities like class discussion, group discussion and create an anxiety free environment. They also suggest that this kind of supportive and anxiety-free environment is essential for the desirable improvement of a language. The atmosphere of the classrooms of Group A is much more conforming to the atmosphere suggested by Hamp-Lyons and Heasley than that of the classrooms of Group A. This

factor might have led the students of Group A do better in writing than the students of Group B. This picture has been reflected in writing proficiency tests. The chart of the writing proficiency test given on page 65 shows that the performance of the students of Group A was far better than that of the students of Group B. The data reveals that none of the students of Group A scored less than 50% marks while 67% of the students of Group B scored less than 50% marks. On the other hand, 87% students of Group A scored more than 60% marks while only 5% of the students of Group B scored more than 60% marks.

## 5.10 Presentation of the findings

### 5.10.1 Introduction

The questionnaires, classroom observation reports and papers of the writing proficiency tests used in this research were studied and analyzed. The test papers had been scored by hand. The results of the analysis were then used to reject or accept the following null hypotheses developed to guide the current study.

### 5.10.2 Hypothesis 1.a

*In most cases English teachers of the secondary level schools do not follow any particular method in teaching writing. They usually teach writing in their own ways. They usually select some easy and common topics for different types of composition work and ask the students to learn those compositions by heart. Later they test students on those selected compositions. As a result, students remain weak in writing and when they face a new area of writing, they do not feel confident to write on that area*

Based on the results of the concerned matter presented in Table-5.11 and the classroom observation reports given in Appendix this hypothesis was accepted. The results show that majority of the teachers (66.6%) did not follow any particular method in teaching writing. These teachers said that they put emphasis on grammatical accuracy in their classes.

From their replies it is found that most of them thought mainly grammatical accuracy would bring about a significant improvement in students' writing ability. They did not put any emphasis on any other aspects of the modern approaches to teaching writing. Based on the information obtained from Table-3 it is seen that the topics the teachers dealt with in the writing classes were very common which are usually used by almost all the schools of Bangladesh. Most of these compositions were familiar to the students as these were available in different composition books sold in the bookshops and they could easily reproduce them. However, this way their independent writing ability cannot improve.

### 5.10.3 Hypothesis 1.b

Most *of the teachers do not have enough knowledge of the process of writing. As a result they go their own ways to teach their students writing independently.*

Based on the relevant part of the classroom observation reports and the analysis of the teachers' statements this hypothesis was largely accepted. From the reports and the analysis it was revealed that very few teachers gave the students practical guidelines and prograrnmes to improve their writing. Their statements suggest that the teachers, specially the teachers of Group B knew very little of the process of writing skill. Although some of them gave the students some guidelines, those were not enough to give the students a clear idea of improving their writing skills.

### 1.10.4 Hypothesis 2

*Not only teachers' inefficiency but also different sorts of limitations of the students and the education system are the hindrances towards the desirable achievement in students' independent writing ability.*

Based on the analysis of classroom observation reports given in Appendix and the findings presented in Table-5.5 this hypothesis was largely accepted. Analyzing the classroom observation reports it was found that most of the teachers were not trained. Of the 9 teachers only 3 teachers were found using some modern ways of teaching

writing. All the other teachers were found almost inactive in the class. They were found mainly gave lectures on the basis of the text books they had with them and were found having little knowledge of modern ways of teaching writing. According to Tables-5.12 and 5.14, it was also found that not only teachers' inefficiency but also different sorts of limitations of students and education system of our country are hindrances to the desirable achievement in the students' independent writing ability. From the table it is seen that out of 10 teachers 5 teachers commented that their students did not show enough interest in writing. They also observed a good number of limitations in the students. 6 teachers talked about their weakness in grammar, 5 teachers observed weakness of spelling in their students and 2 teachers commented that schools needed to provide them with more teaching materials for helping students learn writing better.

The findings of tables-5.4 and 5.8 show that of the 38 students, who answered the questionnaires, 20 students (55%) said that they were weak in creating ideas and lacked proper knowledge of writing, 26 students (67%) said that they were weak in grammar, 26 (67%) said that they were weak in vocabulary, and 21 (55%) said that they were weak in spellings. These findings show that lack of proper knowledge of improving writing, weakness in grammar, poor vocabulary and poor spelling were the major difficulties the students were facing in improving writing. From Table-5.8 and Table-5.9 it can also be concluded that the education system of Bangladesh could not create such an environment which can efficiently help the students overcome their weaknesses—weakness in grammar, lack of vocabulary, weakness in framing ideas, bad spelling, and give proper guidelines to improve their writing skills.

### 5.10.5 Hypothesis 3

*Teachers' assistance to the students in framing ideas and their close monitoring of students' activities help them write better. The more teachers help students in creating and expressing their ideas and the closer is their monitoring of students' progress, the better will be their students' independent writing ability.*

Based on the results presented in Table-5.17 and the findings presented in the classroom observation reports in Appendix this hypothesis was largely accepted. The results presented in table-5.17 and the findings presented in the classroom observation reports yield very positive co-relations between teachers' assistance to the students in framing ideas, and the improvement of students' independent writing ability.

The classroom observation reports show that the students of the schools of Group-A received more assistance, better guidelines and more monitoring from their teachers than the students of the schools of Group-B. The students of the schools of Group-B were benefited very little from their teachers as it seemed that the teachers knew very little about the ways of teaching writing and most of them were found to be passive in the classroom.

The results presented in Table-5.17 show that the performance of the students of the schools of Group-A was satisfactory. The most remarkable matter is that none of the students of these schools scored less than 50% marks. Vast majority of students of these schools scored more than 60% marks which show that the students of these schools possessed a satisfactory proficiency in creative writing. On the other hand majority of the students of Group-B scored less than the passing grade and a poor percentage of the students scored more than 60% marks, a generally considered satisfactory standard of creative writing ability.

# *Chapter - 6*

# *Conclusions and Recommendations*

# Chapter - 6
# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 6.1 Conclusions

In the light of the findings presented above, a number of conclusions can be drawn. However, several constraints on the scope of these conclusions have to be recorded.

Firstly, the study is exploratory in nature and represents a preliminary step to a hoped-for-research effort aimed at improving English language teaching in Bangladesh. This study has, thus, revealed some of the factors that appear to affect the learning of writing skills of the secondary level students of Bangladesh.

Secondly, the fact is that the sample was drawn from the urban population of Dhaka and Tangail. Thus, the conclusions may not apply to rural populations.

With keeping all the reservations in mind, the conclusions that follow can legitimately be reached.

In most of the secondary level schools English teachers do not follow any particular scholarly method in teaching writing. They usually teach writing in their own ways. That is to say, they do not follow any modern approach to teaching writing. In case of our schools it has been found that in general the teachers follow a one way traditional method of teaching. They do not bother for the development of students' creative or independent writing ability. It seems that the teachers make no discrimination in between a receptive and a productive skill. Being unaware of the students' communicative need for learning English and of the latest development of the trends of teaching writing, teachers usually do not want to take extra care of the students and give extra time for the expected and real development of the students' creative writing faculty. Though some of the teachers seem to be applying some of the strategies discussed above to develop writing,

most of the teachers seem to follow the traditional reading and writing activities covering some common and easy composition work beyond which neither the teachers seem to know anything nor are the students able to do any work independently.

As regards the sufficient knowledge of the teachers of the process of writing, the results of the current study show that very few teachers have a clear knowledge regarding this point. From their responses to the open question as to the guidelines the teachers follow and the guidelines they give their students to improve their writing ability, it is evident that the teachers do not have a clear idea about the process of writing: pre-writing, composing, re-writing and editing. Though they give some guidelines to the students, their guidelines differ greatly from each other. It has also been found that it is not the education system but the teachers who are mainly responsible for the students' weakness in the creative writing ability. It has been observed that most of the teachers do not allow the students to write independently. They want their students to memorize some particular essays and compositions. As a result, students usually do not want to do any work themselves and hence they remain weak in creative writing craft. Most of the teachers are found less dedicated than expected in order to develop students' creative writing ability. They usually like sitting in their chairs and ask their students to write whatever they can but do not give them enough guidelines to develop ideas and undertake writing.

As to the hindrances to the desirable achievement in students' independent writing ability, the present study shows that the lack of expected efficiency of the English teachers and different sorts of limitations of the students are the major hindrances. From their responses to the open question as to the difficulties the students faced in improving free writing ability, it is clear that majority of the students have got weakness in English grammar, vocabulary and spellings and framing ideas. In fact these are the basic elements of a good writing. Though the students study English throughout their school life and during the school life they

study prescribed English text books in every class and work out different sorts of grammar exercises and deal with a good number of composition activities, they remain weak in all the above mentioned aspects of writing. From the data it is revealed that the main difficult areas of grammar for the students are subject-verb agreement, use of prepositions, use of articles, sequence of tenses, and use of singular and plural nouns. All these findings say that not only the lack of proper efficiency of the teachers but also the weakness of the students regarding the above mentioned matters are the major hindrances to the development of students' independent writing ability.

The results of the present study also show a significant and positive relationship between teachers' assistance to and close monitoring of students' activities and the improvement of students' writing ability. This positive co-relation suggests that the students who received better attention and care from their teachers scored significantly higher in English proficiency tests than the students who received very little attention and care from their teachers. This indicates that the attainment in students' independent writing ability may largely depend upon the efficiency and devotion of the teachers in the classroom. This is also supported by Gardner and Lambert (1972) who state that "…of course teaching techniques and teachers' personalities can certainly affect the attitudes and motivation of students....." Besides this, some other studies also reveal a strong co-relation between teachers' assistance and the improvement of the foreign or second language. Paplia and Zampogna: (1972) find that the advancement of the foreign language study depends mostly on the teacher's behaviour and motivation and to a lesser extent on the relevance of the course.

In fact the main responsibility of the teachers is to create a warm and anxiety free environment in the classroom where the learners get enough motivation, support and assistance to repair all of their weaknesses and difficulties and work together through mutual exchange of ideas and assistance to improve their learning. This is supported by Hamp Lyons and Heasly (1987: 2-3). They suggest that the

atmosphere of the writing classroom should be warm and supportive. They observe that it helps if teachers show willingness to offer their attempts for class discussion and if students can work together assisting each other, pointing out their strengths and weaknesses without taking or giving offence. They also comment that this kind of atmosphere is essential as students learn better in an anxiety free environment. The obvious conclusion that should be drawn from the results of the present study is that learners receiving proper assistance of trained and devoted teachers will be more successful. In order to make students successful in independent or creative writing they must be provided with a reliable company and caring assistance of trained and devoted teachers.

## 6.2 Pedagogical Suggestions

To meet the English language needs of the country, to fulfill the expectations of the nation and the expectations of different parties—the government, the students, the guardians, and the employers—a language policy, that will direct towards a thorough need analysis and designing a syllabus incorporating the findings of the investigation and latest development in the field of ELT, is needed. To cater these needs appropriate textbooks, favourable English teaching and learning environment, availability of qualified English teachers and plenty of helpful teaching materials must be ensured. Again, these materials should be used as they are intended to be used. That means teachers and students should know how to use them. For this to happen, both teachers and students should be meticulously orientated to the course curricula.

Teachers and other parties should remember that students need English to use it in real communication. To make it sure that students are achieving desirable improvement in all necessary writing skills, the curricula of the writing courses must be updated.

Finally, at every level of writing development programme, appropriate measures should be taken by all the concerned parties so that real learning happens. For

making this endeavour a success regular evaluation of the outcomes of and adjustments to the programme should be carried out in a befitting manner.

The final part of this concluding chapter puts forward certain measures for all those concerned with the English language development programme at the secondary level.

### 6.2.1 Recommendations for the policy makers

The policy makers should do the need analysis not only considering the students' English language needs but also taking into account the existing ELT scenario, infrastructure of the institutions, longstanding ELT tradition of the country, and teachers' and learners' attitude towards English.

In order to achieve the ELT target the government should develop the infrastructure of the institutions and train up the officials working at different levels of curriculum development. For the proper actualization of the language programme the objectives which are set in the planning levels should be properly understood and materialized by the parties working in the implementation levels.

Research and development programmes like teacher-training, workshop, seminar, publishing journals and bulletins should be undertaken and implemented in the right manner.

### 6.2.2 Recommendations for the NCTB

At present NCTB prepares and publishes curriculum documents as guidelines for teachers and textbook writers and produces text books of primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. When new text books are introduced, it sometimes carries out teacher training programmes to orientate the teachers with the new books.

For the proper implementation of the curriculum the NCTB can take the following steps:

1) **Text books and supplementary materials**

For making the text book contents interesting and effective the following steps are suggested:

a) Text contents should be authentic and include original and retold works of creative writers.

b) Language should be presented at discourse. Opportunities should be provided for integrated language skills. There should be enough scopes of and some obligation for practicing free and independent writing skill.

c) Text books should include varieties of topics and themes. All the lessons should cover necessary elements of writing related grammatical features, appropriate vocabulary, and the appropriate format or structure of the composition. Necessary guidelines and ideas should be given to produce more compositions of similar areas.

d) Communicative grammar books should be introduced.

e) Workbooks should be written and provided for additional exercises.

f) Teachers' books which have been promised in the national curriculum (report 1995 vol. II) should be published and distributed in advance so that teachers can work in line with the expectations and the policy of the language planners.

2) **Teacher training**

In order to increase the efficiency of the English teachers and orient them to the modern trend of ELT and" the text books, NCTB should arrange regular training programmes for the teachers and teacher training programmes should be made mandatory for all the language teachers.

3) **Using mass media**

Electronic and print media can be used for spreading the policy of the government very fast. On the television some model classes on improving students' language skills with special emphasis on independent writing ability can be broadcast. Newspaper can also play an effective role in this regard. In addition to these steps the respective education boards and the associations of educational institutes can publish ELT journals where the experts and teachers of different institutes will write.

### 6.2.3 Recommendations for education boards

The education boards should monitor the ELT programmes of the schools and see if those are implementing the curriculum and if the teachers are teaching the students the way the planners have intended it. The vigilant teams should also monitor if the teachers are following any lesson plan and if they are practically acquainted with the modern approaches to the process and development of teaching writing.

### 6.2.4 Recommendations for the teachers

Teachers are the key persons for bringing about desirable improvement in students. With the changed view of the ELT programmes, teachers should also make necessary modifications in their role.

For teaching students writing independently and creatively a teacher should ensure the following things:

In the beginning of the class the teacher should interpret what is intended in the planning level of the curriculum. They should be able to use communicative language materials and books effectively.

Teachers should not only cover the syllabus and complete the lessons but also make sure that learning is taking place in the students. For doing so teachers should ensure participatory classroom activities. There should be enough scope of

teacher-student and student-student interactions and assistance. Pair work and peer editing should be a regular part of the classroom activities.

Teachers must have a sound knowledge of the process of writing and disseminate the same knowledge among the students at the very outset of the writing programme.

While teaching teachers should evaluate how far learning is taking place. After the completion of each class, they must measure students' achievements and put forward necessary recommendations to improve their writing.

Teachers should be very active in the class. They should help the students in creating ideas and monitor the students' progress of writing and help them eliminate their fear of writing.

They should also motivate their students to develop extensive reading and free writing habits and discourage them to depend upon rote learning.

Finally, a rational curriculum should be planned to meet the secondary learners' needs taking into account all the hurdles they face in improving writing and teachers face in teaching writing.

# APPENDIX

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# APPENDIX - A

## Classroom Observation Reports of the Visited Schools

### 1) Classroom observation report of Rajuk Uttara Model School, Dhaka

For visiting an English Classroom of the school I had to talk to the Principal of the college who referred me to the Vice Principal and the Vice Principal made all kinds of arrangements for me to visit an English class. I visited the class on 2nd July 2002. Mr. Vice Principal led me to Class IX-B where the English teacher Mr. Zakir Hossain received me. He was conducting an English language class. The duration of the class was 40 minutes. The class started at 9.00 am.

At first the teacher introduced me to the class and then I took a seat at the back of the classroom. The teacher then started his lecture. The class was on paragraph writing. He gave a short speech on the topic - "The Daily Diet". He conducted the class in English. Then he wrote down some questions on the ' board. The questions were as follows:

i. What is the main item of your food?
ii. How many times a day do you have it?
iii. What do you have at lunch?
iv. What do you have at dinner?
v. Do you have any food in between the meals? If so, then what?

He then asked some of the students to answer the questions. Sometimes he himself was answering the questions. The teacher then asked the students if they had anything more to know. Finally, he asked the students to develop a paragraph on their own daily diet on the basis of these questions given above.

The students worked individually. The teacher was active in the class and he moved round the class. Sometimes he helped the students generating ideas.

Sometimes the students discussed some of the points with the teacher. The students wrote for about 20 minutes. Then he collected some of the answer scripts of the students who finished earlier. The teacher checked some of the copies in the class and the rest after the class. After all the students had submitted their copies, the teacher collected their scripts and ended the class. I thanked all the students for their cooperation in making my visit successful. The students of that class and all the teachers concerned of the English department of that school seemed to be cooperative. I really enjoyed the visit to that school.

## 2) Classroom observation report of New Horizon Academy

With prior permission of the Principal of the academy I visited it on the 21st of August 2002. Mr. Abdur Rahim Pramanic was the teacher to receive me in IX-A. The class was an English writing class. The duration of the class was 1 (one) and a half hours. The class started at 10.00 am and continued up to 11.30 am. The teacher entered the classroom at 10.05 am. He took about 5 minutes for administrative work.

First of all, the teacher briefed the students about the purpose of my visit to the class. Then he started his lecture. The lesson was on essay writing and the topic of the day was-

"Best ways to enjoy the leisure time"

He delivered a short lecture about this topic. He gave them some hints to develop an essay on the discussed topic. The hints were as follows:

- Introduction
- Necessity of leisure in our life
- The ways we can enjoy our leisure times
- Conclusion

Then the teacher reminded them of the elements of a good writing and asked them to write a composition of 300 words on the given topic. The students were given about one hour time to organize their ideas and write the essay. The teacher was found active during the task. Sometimes he shared ideas group wise and sometimes he helped individuals in generating ideas. Sometimes he answered some questions from the students. He formed three groups and asked them to have some discussion amongst themselves for generating ideas. After the group work the students wrote quietly. At the end of the class he collected all the papers from the students and concluded the class. He checked the scripts after the class.

## 3) Classroom observation report of Manarat Dhaka

I visited Std. VIII-B of Manarat on the 15th August 2002. The class started at 8.00 am and ended at 8.45 am. The teacher, Mr. Nurul Islam Khan entered the class at 8.05. He received me very cordially. The students seemed to be very much curious to know the purpose of my visit. I briefed them the purpose of my visit and then took my seat at the back of the classroom.

He took 6 minutes for the administrative work and then started his lecture on how to produce a good writing. He wrote the elements of a good writing on the board. The elements he mentioned are given here:

- ✓ good spellings
- ✓ appropriate vocabulary
- ✓ correct grammar
- ✓ clear organization
- ✓ decoration

His English was very good and he conducted the whole class in English. He put emphasis on clear organization of ideas and grammatical correctness for producing a good writing. Then he asked the students to get prepared for writing an essay. He asked for an extempore topic from me. I gave them two topics. The topics were as follows:

- Thoughts of the present and hopes for the future
- Some sweet memories

The teacher then asked the students to write an essay on either of the topics. I expected that he would write some helpful words on the board but he did not do so. However the students worked individually. They asked the teacher a few questions. Some of the questions were "What kind of thoughts should we write about?", "Should we write about all the memories?", and "How long will be the

essay" etc. The teacher then discussed some of his experiences regarding the points and allowed some of the boys to discuss some of their own memories and ideas. Then the teacher asked them to write an essay on any one of the topics. They worked quietly and finished writing at about 8.40. To help the class go on with the task, the teacher assisted some of the students in generating ideas and discussed some weaknesses of their writings. He also had allowed the students to have group discussion for some time before writing. After they had finished the work, I thanked them for their cooperation. The teacher checked the papers after the class.

## 4) Classroom observation report of King Khaled Institute, Dhaka

For visiting the institute, I had to take prior permission from the Headmaster. The appointed day of my visit was 3rd August, 2002. Mr. Shafiqur Rahman was the English teacher to receive me on that day. I visited an English writing lesson of class ten. The duration of the class was 40 minutes. The class started at 10.35 pm. We entered the classroom at 10.40 pm. The teacher introduced me to the class and then I took a seat at the back of the class. Primarily the students looked very curious to know about the purpose of the visit and they talked to me for some time, but later they concentrated on their work. It was a small class of 12 students. The teacher took about 2 minutes for the administrative work.

The class was on formal letter writing. Though the class was an English writing class, the teacher spoke Bangla very often. The teacher did not give the students any guideline to do the work. He straight went before the board, wrote the subject of the letter and asked the students to write the letter. The subject matter was as follows:

"Write a letter to your friend describing a picnic you have recently enjoyed."

Though the topic was an extempore one, it was quite a common one and the teacher did not discuss the format of a formal letter. Neither he asked the students any questions, nor did the students ask the teacher any questions. They simply started writing and worked individually. The teacher did not monitor the class while they were writing. They wrote for about 20 minutes and then submitted their scripts to the teacher. The teacher checked some of the scripts in the class and the rest of the scripts after the class. At the end of the class I thanked the students for the cooperation. The teacher then concluded the lesson and we left the class room.

## 5) Classroom observation report of Tejgaon Govt. High School, Dhaka

Tejgaon Govt. High school is the school where I passed my school life. The Headmaster and many of the teachers were glad to find me there and knowing the purpose of my visit. I managed a prior permission from the Headmaster to visit a classroom. The English teacher, Mr. Shafiqur Rahman, led me to Class X-A to observe an English language class. The duration of the class was 40 minutes and the class started at 1.20 pm but we entered the class at 1.25 pm. He spent about 5 minutes for the administrative work. After he had introduced me to the class, I sat at the back of the classroom to observe the class.

The teacher started his lecture on writing a paragraph on "A Hawker". Though the teacher was briefed by me about the nature of the work to be done in the class, he did not follow that. I had asked him to conduct a free writing class on an extempore topic but the topic which he was dealing with seemed to be a known topic to the students. However, the teacher simply wrote down the topic of the paragraph on the board and asked the students to write a paragraph on the topic. He started his lecture in a very plain way. Though the class was a writing class, the teacher did not give them any guideline to start the writing or establish any framework for the students to work confidently. He even did not use the board. The teacher seemed to be passive in the class. The students wrote the paragraph for about 25 minutes. They worked individually and the teacher simply sat on his chair during their work. After some time the students submitted their papers to the teacher. After receiving the papers the teacher declared the class end. I thanked the students for their cooperation and left the classroom. The teacher checked the papers after the class and handed them over to me.

## 6) Classroom observation report of Govt. Science College School

I made a visit to Govt. Science College School on the 3rd of July 2002. I had to obtain the permission from the Principal of the college prior to my visit. He allowed me to visit Class IX-B where the English teacher was Mrs. Atia Naz. She received me very cordially knowing that this was the college where I had done my H.S.C. from.

The class started at 1.00 pm but the teacher entered the classroom at 1.10. At first she introduced me to the students and I gave a short speech on the purpose of my visit to the class. The students were very enthusiastic knowing that I was a former student of their college. Then I took a seat at the back of the classroom. The teacher conducted the class on informal letter writing. The subject of the letter was:

"Write a letter to your friend describing your experience of a train journey."

At first she gave a description of her own experience of a train journey. Then she wrote some words related to the subject of letter on the board. The words are as follows:

Station, Ticket, Luggage, Compartment, Passenger, Hawker, Coolie, Natural beauty.

After this, she asked the students to write a letter on the given topic. She did not give any briefing on how to write an informal letter. The students did not ask her any questions. It seemed that they were not used to asking questions in the class to share ideas with the teacher.

The students wrote about 30 minutes and at the end of their work the teacher collected their papers. During their writing she moved around but she did not share any ideas with them. The students worked individually. After the scripts had been collected, I thanked the students and left the classroom. The teacher checked the papers after the class.

## 7) Classroom Observation Report of Badshah Faisal Institute (Boys')

I visited a writing lesson of class IX B of the Institute on 13th June 2002. Earlier I had talked to the Principal of the Institute to make the arrangements for my visit to the classroom. On the appointed day, Mr. Principal cordially received me and introduced me to the English teacher of the class, Mr. Sazzad Farooqui. I discussed the purpose of my visit with him. Then he led me to the classroom. We entered the classroom at 10.05 am. The duration of the lesson was 40 minutes.

The teacher introduced me to the students. I took my seat at the back of the class. The teacher took around ten minutes for administrative work. The topic of the day was "The house I live in". He conducted his lecture as part of his lesson plan.

He used the board to write down some notes related to the topic but the students were not involved in writing the notes. It was the teacher who supplied all the notes which were as follows:

- Beautiful
- Facing- Fresh air
- Tin shed- brick built
- Bed rooms and drawing, dining
- Study room
- Kitchen
- Flower garden
- High road ,
- River
- Happy

The teacher then explained the notes and he asked the students some questions. It seemed that the teacher wanted some particular answers from the students. He asked them some yes/no questions like, "you live in a house, don't you?", "The

house you live in is beautiful, isn't it?" etc. The teacher was not fluent in spoken English. After explaining the notes for about 10 minutes he asked the students to write a paragraph on the given topic.

The students then started writing the paragraph. They took about 20 minutes to complete the writing. The students worked individually. The teacher did not monitor their writing. The students simply finished writing and submitted them to the teacher. The teacher checked the scripts after the class.

## 8) Classroom observation report of Badshah Faisal Institute (Girls')

On the same day, 13th July 2002, I visited another classroom of the institute. The class was Class IX A. Ms. Nazmun Nahar was the teacher to receive me. The duration of the class was 40 minutes. We entered the class at 11.00 and it seemed that the teacher informed the class of my visit prior to my entry. I took my seat at the back of the classroom.

The teacher straight moved into the activity. She talked on the following topics one after the other: "Food, one of the basic needs of human life" and "The house I live in". She used the board a little. She wrote a few words and a few points related to the first topic on the board.

**The points are as follows**

- Food
- Necessity of food
- Nutrition
- Food of the primitive society
- Modern people have variety of food

The teacher wrote the points from her notebook. She did not involve the students to find out any new points. The students just copied the points on their note books. She then explained the points. During the speech no interaction took place. Then the teacher asked the students to write a paragraph on either of the given topics.

The house I live in' had been discussed the class before. The students then wrote quietly for some time. Some of the students seemed to be nervous to write instantly while the others wrote quietly. The students worked individually. No collaborative or group work was there. They wrote about 10 minutes.

The classroom was moderately decorated and airy. The teacher was quiet during their work. After 20 minutes she collected the papers and declared the class end. She graded the papers after the class.

## 9) Classroom observation report of Bindubashini Govt. High School, Tangail

For visiting Bindubashini Govt. High School, I had to take prior permission from the Headmaster. The appointed day of my visit was 24th June 2002. Mr. Sayedur Rahman was the English teacher to receive me on that day. I visited an English writing lesson of class ten. The duration of the class was 40 minutes. The class started at 12.35 pm. We entered the classroom at 12.40 .pm. The teacher introduced me to the class and then I took a seat at the back of the class. The students looked a bit curious to know about the purpose of the visit, but later they concentrated on their work. The teacher took about 10 minutes for the administrative work.

The class was on formal letter writing. Though the class was an English writing class, the teacher spoke Bangla very often. The teacher did not give the students any guideline to do the work. He wrote the subject of the letter on the board and asked the students to write the letter. The subject matter was as follows:

"Suppose you are Raton. Recently your father has been transferred from here to Dhaka. Your family will also move there soon. But you want to continue your studies here. Now write an application to the headmaster seeking a seat in the hostel".

Though the topic was an extempore one, it was quite a common one and the teacher did not discuss how to write a formal letter. Neither he asked the students any questions nor did the students ask the teacher any questions. They simply started writing and worked individually. The teacher did not monitor the class while they were writing. They wrote for about 20 minutes and submitted their scripts to the teacher. The teacher checked some of the scripts in the class and the rest of the scripts after the class. After the class the teacher told me that as the students had already known how to write a formal letter, he did not discuss the format.

# APPENDIX -B

## Questionnaire for the Teachers

*Name:*.....School: .....

**Topic:**

***Creative writing in English: How far the Bangladeshi Education System focuses on its development at the Secondary level, (Classes VIII, IX & X.)***

**Questions:**

1. How many English classes do you take per week?.....
2. What is the duration of each class?.....

   How much time do you spend for administrative work in each class?

   .....

3. How many classes do you spend on writing per week?.....

4. What were the last three topics studied in the writing class?
   a) .....
   b) .....
   c) .....

   What is the next topic?.....

5. What kinds of guidelines do you give your students to improve their writing ability?.....

   .....

6. What do you think should be emphasized in developing writing--fluency or accuracy?

   .....

7. When are the corrections of the students' writing products done?

.....

How do you make the corrections?.....

.....

8. What difficulties do you face in teaching writing:

a) .....

b) .....

c) .....

---

Signature of the Teacher

# Questionnaire for the Students

Name:.....

Class:.....Date:.....

School:.....

**Questions:**

1. How many hours do you get per week for writing English classes?

   .....

2. What do you like best to do in English classes?

   .....

   .....

   .....

3. Do you like writing? Why?

   .....

   .....

   .....

4. What difficulties do you face in improving free writing ability?

   .....

   .....

5. What do you expect from your teachers to help you write better?

   .....

   .....

6. What were the last three topics you studied in the writing class?

   a)

   b)

   c)

7. What is the next topic?.....

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Signature of the Student

# APPENDIX - C

# Names of the Schools Surveyed

Names of the schools surveyed and the dates for the administration of the questionnaires, the writing proficiency tests and classroom observation are given below:

| S1. NO. | Name of School | Date of the classroom observation and writing proficiency test | Date of the administration of the questionnaires |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1) | Rajuk Uttara Model School, Dhaka | 02.07.2002 | 02.07.2002 |
| 2) | New Horizon Academy, Dhaka | 21.08.2002 | 21.08.2002 |
| 3) | Manarat Dhaka | 15.08.2002 | 15.08.2002 |
| 4) | King Khaled Institute, Dhaka | 03.08.2002 | 03.08.2002 |
| 5) | Tejgaon Govt. High School, Dhaka | | |
| 6) | Govt. Science College School, Dhaka | 03.07.2002 | 03.07.2002 |
| 7) | Badshah Faisal Institute (Boys'), Dhaka | 13.07.2002 | 13.07.2002 |
| 8) | Badshah Faisal Institute (Girls'), Dhaka | 13.07.2002 | 13.07.2002 |
| 9) | Bindubashini Govt. High School, Tangail | 24.06.2002 | 24.06.2002 |

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