

**An Analysis of Writing Skills in English of  
Secondary Level Students from Schools Affiliated to PSEB and  
CBSE in Three Districts of Malwa Region of Punjab, India**

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**Abstract**

This paper presents an analysis of the performance of secondary level learners from schools affiliated to Punjab School Education Board (PSEB) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in three districts namely Sangrur, Barnala, and Mansa of Punjab (India) with regard to writing skill in English. Random sampling procedure was adopted for the selection of 200 students (100 each from schools affiliated to PSEB and CBSE) of grade 10 from ten schools (5 each from the two boards; and 20 students per school) from each district. The assessment of the writing ability of students was made from the two paragraphs written by each of them regarding their daily life. These written samples were analysed on the basis of five components -- Content, Organisation, Vocabulary, Language use, and Mechanics. When the 't-test' was applied on the data, the results revealed a significant difference in the performance of learners from the schools affiliated to the two boards. Furthermore, the performance of the students from the two boards in five sub-skills of writing was also compared.

**Key words:** Writing skill, EFL, PSEB, CBSE.

**1. Introduction**

Writing is a fundamental aspect of academic and communicative competence in present educated world. Writing well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is a process that needs to be taught, practiced, and assessed. It is defined as “a reflective activity that requires enough time to think about the specific topic and to analyse and classify any background knowledge. Then, writers need a suitable language to structure these ideas in the form of a coherent discourse” (Behizadeh and Engelhard 189). It is seen as “a complex activity, a social

act which reflects the writer's communicative skills which is difficult to develop and learn, especially in an EFL context" ((Behizadeh and Engelhard 189). Richards and Renandya are also of the opinion that this difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas but also in translating these ideas into readable texts (303). The student who learns to write English has not only to cope with the mechanical problems connected with the script of the language but also with the problems of ease and fluency of expression, of grammatical and lexical accuracy and of the appropriateness of the style of writing as demanded by the occasion or situation (Varghese 78). It can be said that the writing skill includes a number of sub-skills as word selection, organization, syntax, grammar, content, fluency, and mechanics etc. In addition to this, the task of writing is not a single stage process. Tompkins and Hoskisson also talk about five stages of writing process which are - prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing (211-222).

## **2. Teaching Writing in English**

The ability to write in English is important both for educational and professional purposes. "Writing effectively in English is highly valued in the academic world as it allows teachers, students, and researchers to extend their intellectual production to international communities. Professionally, the need to write in English has become essential in today's global community as it allows citizens from different cultures to communicate through letters, e-mails, business reports, web pages, etc." (Weigle 22).

In the context of Indian students, it can be observed that learning to write in English is not easy for them due to a number of reasons. The foremost among them is the fact that it is not their first language. Their first language influences at every stage of learning process such as during word selection and sentence construction. Their difficulties are compounded by the fact that the teachers themselves have studied English as a second language, and many of them may not be adept at subtleties of teaching writing in this language. In writing classes, teachers laid emphasis on accuracy, and focused on the final products of writing which are received for correction without any intervention in the writing process.

In fact, students are not aware of the fact that writing can be learned. From the very beginning of their academic career they only stick to memorizing a model paragraph or essay only. When they are asked to attempt a piece of free writing without hints or guidelines, they

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are not able to come with any new and valuable ideas imaginatively. Their creativity in writing is negatively affected by this practice of blind adoption of model - based approach. They also submit their writings without revision. Even if they revise, they pay attention only to the grammatical and other language related problems. Their inability to revise their written texts renders their writing to be incoherent. They write with an aim to pass the examination only and their teachers also teach writing for the same. They do not understand the difference between writing in an examination situation and writing in general. In order to pass the examination, they only gather information about that topic and reproduce that knowledge on their examination script.

Though a number of studies have been conducted on teaching of writing in English as a second language in India, yet there is a further need to study the level of proficiency in writing skill in English of learners at primary, secondary and college level in context of Punjab specifically as the proficiency of the learners varies according to different geographical regions with varied socio-cultural-economic set-up and different school education boards which prescribe different syllabi and recommend different teaching methodologies. This research paper aims at analyzing and comparing the performance of secondary level students from the schools affiliated to PSEB and CBSE in three districts of Punjab (Sangrur, Barnala, and Mansa) with regard to writing skill in English language.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Participants**

For the present study, 200 students were selected randomly from each of the three districts, namely, Sangrur, Barnala, and Mansa of Punjab (India). In every district, 100 students of 10<sup>th</sup> grade from 5 schools (20 students per school) affiliated to each of the two boards, namely, PSEB and CBSE, were selected through random sampling procedure.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The design of the present study consists of various steps. First, the data was collected from secondary level students from schools affiliated to PSEB and CBSE with the help of especially prepared assessment tool (tests). After that, the responses were evaluated as per the assessment scale designed by Jacobs et al. The data was then analysed by using different

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statistical techniques as mean score, standard deviation and t-test techniques. The assessment tools and rubric used to assess the writing skill of English language learning have been described as following.

### 3.2.1 Tool used to assess the writing skill of English language learning

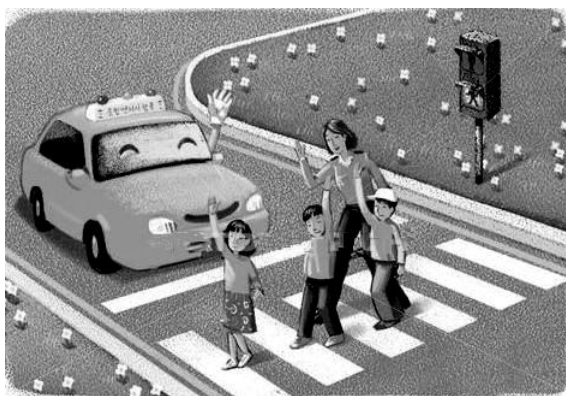
Two writing tasks were administered to the students for the purpose of assessment. One paragraph was based on a verbal stimulus and the second one was based on a visual stimulus.

#### Test-I

“Write a paragraph about a marriage party which you enjoyed the most” in 150 words approximately.

#### Test-II

Write a paragraph on “Walk safe, drive safe” with the help of Figure 1 in about 150 words.



**Figure 1** Walk safe, drive safe.

### 3.2.2 Description of the Rubric Scale Used

Among numerous analytic rating scales that have been used to assess essay writing ability in EFL academic contexts, probably the most well-known and widely used scale is ‘ESL Composition Profile’ recommended by Jacobs et al. (1981). In the present research, the

writing ability of the students was assessed on the basis of ‘ESL Composition Profile’ which is divided into five major writing components:

1. Content
2. Organization
3. Vocabulary
4. Language
5. Mechanics

Each component in a level has clear descriptors of the writing proficiency and a numerical scale as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs et al. 189)

Score	Level	Criteria
Content	30-27	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: knowledgeable • substantive • thorough development of thesis • relevant to assigned topic
	26-22	GOOD TO AVERAGE: some knowledge of subject • adequate range • limited development of thesis • mostly relevant to topic but lacks detail
	21-17	FAIR TO POOR: limited knowledge of subject • little substance • inadequate development of topic
	16-13	VERY POOR: does not show knowledge of subject • non-substantive • not pertinent • OR not enough to evaluate
Organization	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: fluent expression • ideas clearly stated/supported • succinct • well-organized • logical sequencing • cohesive
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: somewhat choppy • loosely organized but main ideas stand out • limited support • logical but incomplete sequencing
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: non-fluent • ideas confused or disconnected • lacks logical sequencing and development
	9-7	VERY POOR: does not communicate • no organization • OR not enough to evaluate
Vocabulary	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: sophisticated range • effective word/idiom choice and usage • word form mastery
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: adequate range • occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice usage but meaning not obscured
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: limited range • frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage • meaning confused or obscured
	9-7	VERY POOR: essentially translation • little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form • OR not enough to evaluate
Language Use	25-22	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex constructions • few errors of agreement, tense, number word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions

	21-18	GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple constructions • minor problems in complex constructions • several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions but meaning seldom obscured
	17-11	FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/complex constructions • frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions • meaning confused or obscured
	10-5	VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules • dominated by errors • does not communicate • or not enough to evaluate
Mechanics	5	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrate mastery of conventions • few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
	4	GOOD TO AVERAGE: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing but meaning not obscured
	3	FAIR TO POOR: frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • poor handwriting • meaning confused or obscured
	2	VERY POOR: no mastery of conventions • dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • handwriting illegible • OR not enough to evaluate

The ESL Composition Profile is described as the best-known scoring procedure for ESL writing at the present time” (Hamp-Lyons 76). According to this profile, five evaluations of the same composition are made, each from a different perspective: content (30 points), organisation (20 points), vocabulary (20 points), language use (25 points), and mechanics (5 points). The total score can range from 100 (maximum) to 34 (minimum). The individual scales and the overall summed scale are further broken down by Jacobs into numerical ranges that correspond to four mastery levels: excellent to very good (83-100 points), good to average (63-82 points), fair to poor (52-63 points), and very poor (34-52 points). As explained by Jacobs, these levels are characterised and differentiated by key words or “rubrics” representing specific criteria for excellence in composition.

### 3.2.3 Statistical techniques used for data analysis

The data was analyzed statistically by using mean score, standard deviation and t-test techniques.

#### 3.2.3.1 T-test technique

In order to observe if the difference between the average scores of two groups is statistically significant, a statistical technique named ‘t-test’ was applied to the data collected from the schools affiliated to PSEB and CBSE in the writing skill and a null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the performance of schools from two boards in the writing skill was formulated. In the present research, the independent-samples ‘t-test’ was used as a tool for analysis as the sample size from both the groups were equal, the same variable (achievement in writing skill) was used; but both the groups (from schools affiliated to two boards PSEB and CBSE) represented different populations. The two-tailed ‘t-test’ was used for not hypothesizing a direction in the relationship between two groups and the dependent variable. The following equation was used to calculate the ‘t-value’ in independent samples after applying ‘t-test’ to the responses of the two groups having equal sample sizes (n):

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\left[ \frac{SS_1 + SS_2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right]}} \quad (\text{Student t-test theory 27})$$

Where  $\bar{x}_1$  and  $\bar{x}_2$  = the mean of each sample

$n_1$  and  $n_2$  = the number of replicates for sample 1 and sample 2 respectively.

$$\sqrt{\left[ \frac{SS_1 + SS_2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2} \right] \left[ \frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right]} = \text{the standard deviation of the difference between the means}$$

In which

$$SS_1 = \sum x_1^2 - \frac{(\sum x_1)^2}{n_1} \quad \text{and}$$

$$SS_2 = \sum x_2^2 - \frac{(\sum x_2)^2}{n_2}$$

Where

$\sum x^2$  = Sum of the squares of each replicate value and

$(\sum x)^2$  = Square of the total ( $\sum x$ ). It is not the same as  $\sum x^2$

$(\sum x)$  = Total sum of each replicate value

Then the calculated t value was compared with tabulated values for higher levels of significance (e.g.  $p = 0.01$ ). If the calculated t value exceeds the tabulated value we say that

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the means are significantly different at that level of probability. By convention, we say that a difference between means at the 95% level is "significant", a difference at 99% level is "highly significant" and a difference at 99.9% level is "very highly significant". This statistical test allows us to make statements with a degree of precision.

### 3.2.3.2 Analysis on the Basis of Means

After t-test analysis, the results of the performance of the students from the two boards in the writing skill and its sub-skills were discussed in the three selected districts on the basis of their mean scores against each skill. Graphical representations of results were made through bar diagrams, and where considered pertinent, the results were invariably depicted in the form of tables.

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 T-Test Analysis

The data regarding the overall performance of the schools affiliated to two boards in writing skill in English was analysed with the help of 't-test' in each district to discover whether there are statistically significant differences between the average scores of two groups and the results are given in Tables 2, 3, and 4. For this, a null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the performance of schools affiliated to PSEB and CBSE in the writing skill was formulated. While analysing the samples, average score of total marks obtained by the students of one school against all the sub-skills of writing, were taken as one unit in each sample. In this way, the total numbers of replicates ( $n_1$  and  $n_2$ ) for each sample (sample 1 and sample 2) were five.

**Table 2** Summary of N, Mean,  $S_D$ , df, t-value got by the application of t- test on the data of overall performance of the schools affiliated to CBSE (Group A) and PSEB (Group B) in Writing skill in English in Sangrur district

Group	No. of Schools	Mean	$S_D$	df	t-value
Schools affiliated to CBSE	05	70.32	2.91	08	8.77*
Schools affiliated to PSEB	05	52.08	3.63		

\* Significant at .001 level



**Table 3** Summary of N, Mean, SD, df, t-value got by the application of t- test on the data of overall performance of the schools affiliated to CBSE (Group A) and PSEB (Group B) in Writing skill in English in Barnala district

Group	No. of Schools	Mean	SD	df	t-value
Schools affiliated to CBSE	05	63.06	1.38	08	7.77*
Schools affiliated to PSEB	05	45.97	4.72		

\* Significant at .001 level

**Table 4** Summary of N, Mean, SD, df, t-value got by the application of t- test on the data of overall performance of the schools affiliated to CBSE (Group A) and PSEB (Group B) in Writing skill in English in Mansa district

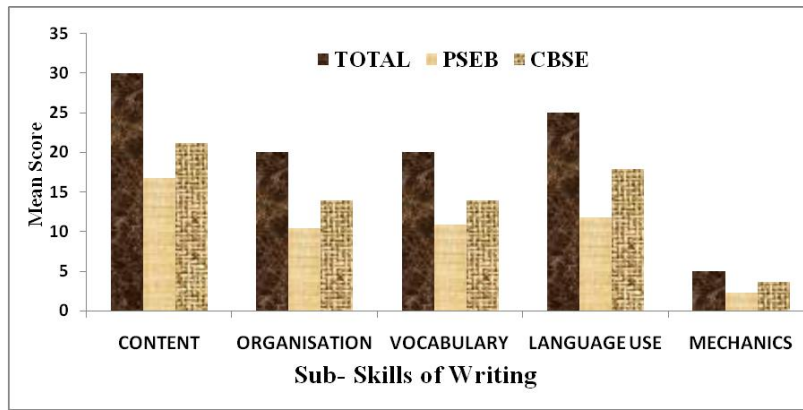
Group	No. of Schools	Mean	SD	df	t-value
Schools affiliated to CBSE	05	59.39	4.10	08	6.82*
Schools affiliated to PSEB	05	42.3	3.81		

\* Significant at .001 level

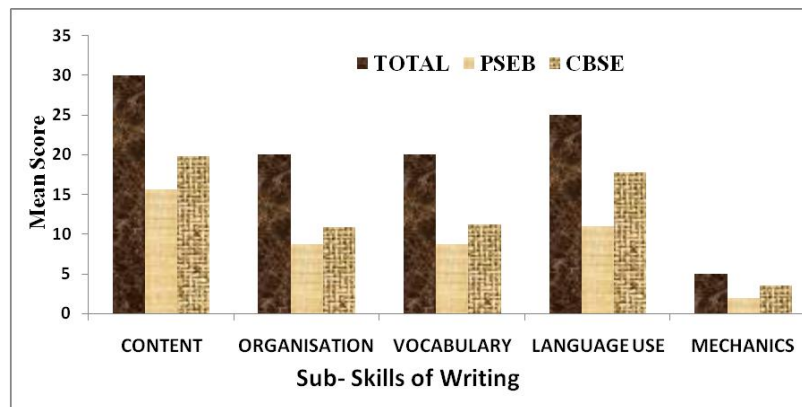
Plugging all the values into the t-test equation, the t-values based upon the results of the schools affiliated to two boards in the three selected districts- Sangrur, Barnala, and Mansa, were found to be 8.77, 7.77, and 6.82 respectively. Now, to see whether these values are significant or not, these values were compared to the table value. Entering a t-table at 8 degrees of freedom, it was found that in all the three selected districts- Sangrur, Barnala, and Mansa, the absolute values of our calculated t score 8.77, 7.77, and 6.82 exceed the table value at .001 level, hence the difference in scores between learners from the schools affiliated to two boards in three selected districts is statistically significant at the .001 probability level (confidence level = 99.9%). Hence, our null hypothesis is rejected in all the three selected districts.

#### 4.2 Results on the Basis of Mean Scores in the Three Districts

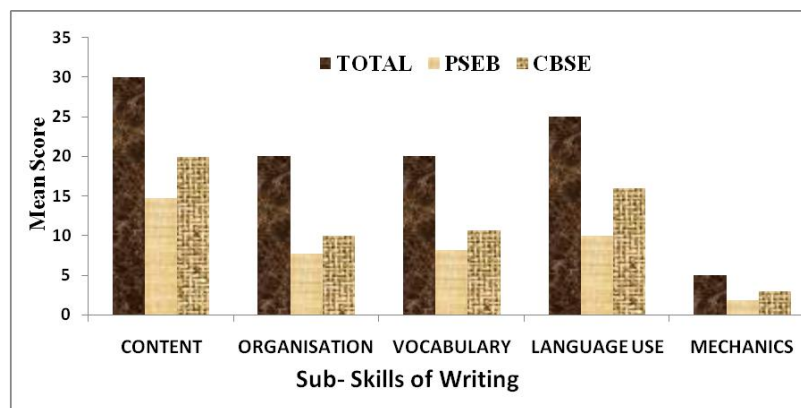
Based on the criteria in the ESL proficiency profile used to evaluate the essays, the mean scores of the components of proficiency of the two groups in writing skill (learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB and CBSE) in English in three selected districts are shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4 respectively.



**Figure 2** Bar diagram showing the performance of learners from schools affiliated to PSEB and CBSE in sub-skills of writing skill in English language in Sangrur district.



**Figure 3** Bar diagram showing the performance of learners from schools affiliated to PSEB and CBSE in sub-skills of writing skill in English language in Barnala district.



**Figure 4** Bar diagram showing the performance of learners from schools affiliated to PSEB and CBSE in sub-skills of writing skill in English language in Mansa district.

From the results as shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4, it can be observed that the mean scores of content in the essays of the learners from schools affiliated to CBSE in the districts Sangrur, Barnala, and Mansa are 21.1, 19.78, and 19.92 respectively, whereas the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB in the three districts got the average scores of 16.69, 15.65, and 14.65 respectively. In district Sangrur, it has been noticed that the evaluation of the paragraphs written by both, the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE and PSEB revealed their limited knowledge of subject, limited idea substance, and inadequate topic development (Fair to Poor). In districts Barnala and Mansa, the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE exhibited their limited knowledge of subject, limited idea substance, and inadequate topic development (Fair to Poor). On the other side, the proficiency of the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB in these districts was very poor and the paragraphs written by them did not show any knowledge of subject.

With regard to organization, the mean scores of the learners from schools affiliated to CBSE in districts Sangrur, Barnala, and Mansa are 13.88, 10.88, and 9.96 respectively; whereas the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB got the average scores of 10.46, 8.71, and 7.74 respectively. In district Sangrur, the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE were though loosely organized but main ideas stand out and logically sequenced (Good to Average), and the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB contained disconnected ideas, and lacked logical sequencing and development (Fair to Poor). In district Barnala and Mansa, the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE showed non-fluency, disconnected ideas, and lacked logical sequencing and development (Fair to Poor), whereas the proficiency of the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB in these districts was very poor and the paragraphs written by them were not organized and were not enough to evaluate.

In terms of vocabulary, the mean scores of the learners from schools affiliated to CBSE in districts Sangrur, Barnala, and Mansa are 13.94, 11.17, and 10.60 respectively; whereas the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB got the average scores of 10.86, 8.67, and 8.10 respectively. In district Sangrur, the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE contained an adequate range of vocabulary, and occasional errors of word form, choice and usage (Good to Average), and the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB contained a limited range of vocabulary and frequent errors of word form, choice and usage (Fair to Poor). In district Barnala and Mansa,

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the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE contained a limited range of vocabulary and frequent errors of word form, choice and usage (Fair to Poor), and on the other side, the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB were merely translations, and contained a little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form (very poor).

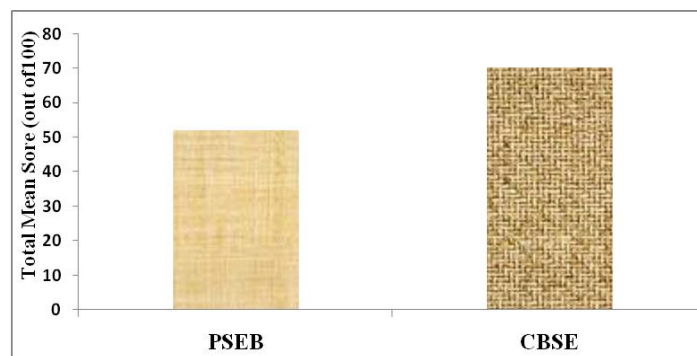
Concerning language use, the mean scores of the learners from schools affiliated to CBSE in districts Sangrur, Barnala, and Mansa are 17.82, 17.72, and 15.96 respectively, whereas the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB got the average scores of 11.77, 10.96, and 9.95 respectively. In district Sangrur and Barnala, the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE contained effective but simple constructions, minor problems in sentence constructions, several errors of tense and parts of speech but the meaning in their writings was seldom obscured (Good to Average), and the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB in these districts contained major problems in simple or complex construction, and frequent errors of tense and parts of speech (Fair to Poor). In district Mansa, the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE contained major problems in simple or complex construction, frequent errors of tense and parts of speech, and the meaning in their writings was obscured (Fair to Poor), whereas the proficiency of the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB in this district was very poor and the paragraphs written by them did not express mastery of sentence construction rules and were dominated by errors.

In terms of mechanics, the mean scores of the learners from schools affiliated to CBSE in districts Sangrur, Barnala, and Mansa are 3.58, 3.51, and 2.95 respectively, whereas the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB got the average scores of 2.3, 1.98, and 1.86 respectively. In district Sangrur and Barnala, the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE were though demonstrated occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, but the meaning was not obscured (Good to Average), and the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB in these districts were dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing and were not enough to evaluate (very poor). In district Mansa, the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE contained frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, and poor handwriting, and meaning was also

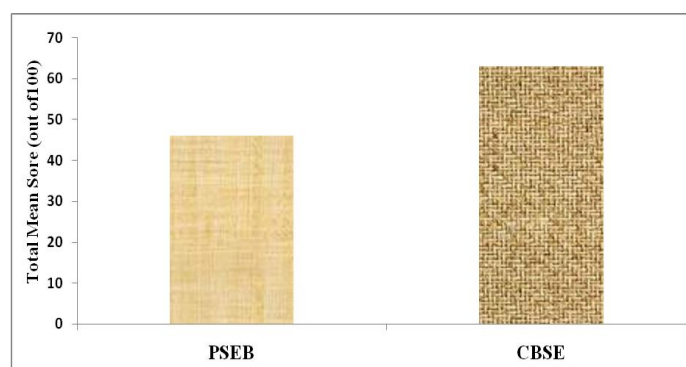
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obscured (Fair to Poor), and on the other side, the paragraphs written by the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB contained no mastery of conventions, several errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, illegible handwriting (very poor).

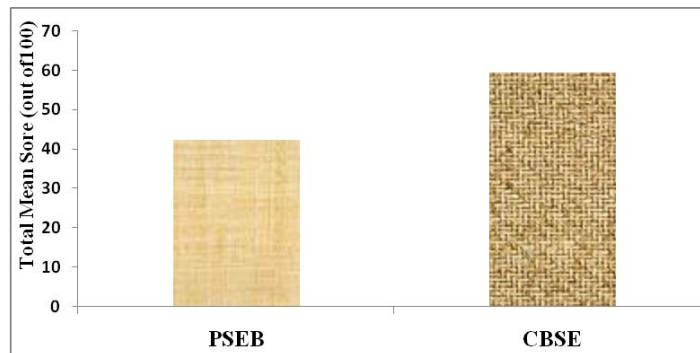
The total mean score of overall proficiency in English composition is the sum of scores of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics components. The overall performance of learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB and schools affiliated to CBSE in writing skill of English language in each selected district is shown in Figure 5, 6, and 7.



**Figure 5** Bar diagram showing the overall performance of learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB and CBSE in writing skill of English language in Sangrur district.



**Figure 6** Bar diagram showing the overall performance of learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB and CBSE in writing skill of English language in Barnala district.



**Figure 7** Bar diagram showing the overall performance of learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB and CBSE in writing skill of English language in Mansa district.

From the results as shown in Figures 5, 6, and 7, it can be concluded that in writing skill, the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE in the three selected districts- Sangrur, Barnala and Mansa scored a mean score of 70.32, 63.06, and 59.39 whereas the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB scored the average scores of 52.08, 45.97, and 42.3 respectively. According to the scale made by Jacobs representing specific criteria for excellence in composition, the mean score of 70.32 of the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE in district Sangrur correspond to the mastery level ‘good to average’ (63-82 points), whereas the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB with a mean score of 52.08 correspond to the level ‘fair to poor’ (52-63 points). In district Barnala, the mean score of 63.06 of the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE correspond to the level ‘good to average’ (63-82 points), whereas the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB with a mean score of 45.97 correspond to the level ‘very poor’ (34-52 points). In district Mansa, the mean score of 59.39 of the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE correspond to the level ‘fair to poor’ (52-63 points), whereas the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB with a mean score of 42.3 correspond to the level ‘very poor’ (34-52 points).

#### 4.3 Discussion of the Assessment

While evaluating the written compositions of the students from the schools affiliated to PSEB, it was noticed that most of learners were unable to express the ideas or feelings in English that they had in their mind. They found it difficult to use the language for communication, creating and organizing ideas and translating them into cohesive readable texts. It was also observed that some of the learners even avoided writing in English. It was

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so because they want to conceal their linguistic inadequacy in the second language. Furthermore, it was noticed from the results that though the students from the schools affiliated to CBSE got higher mean score than the students from the schools affiliated to PSEB in all of the components of proficiency in English composition, including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics, but most of their writing samples were marked by some common features such as- written in a simplified easy manner, and use of fragmented sentences. Their performance is good in a few sub-skills only, but for the majority of the sub-skills, their performance is below the expected level. The evaluation of their compositions exhibited their knowledge about vocabulary and grammatical aspects (e.g. usage of the right tenses, and prepositions) but it appears that they face problems in writing coherently.

The learners from the two boards carried out many errors while writing that affected their ability to communicate effectively and efficiently with appropriate content and vocabulary, logical organization, proper use of language and mechanics. Analysis of the collected data indicated many sources of these errors: mother tongue interference, intralingua interference, teachers' false correlation and the familiarity of the appropriate collections. Following are some pieces of texts quoted from the writings of the students showing their performance in the various sub- skills of writing.

#### **4.3.1 Discussion on Relevance of Content in the Writings of the Students with Examples**

It was observed while analysing the writing samples of the students from the two boards that only a small number of writings fulfilled the required word limit. They were asked to write on two topics in approximately 150 words; but majority of participants submitted their writings having less than 100 words. It indicates towards their little knowledge of subject. Some examples from the paragraphs written by students are as following:

- *His marriage party is very nice. She looks very preeti in her marriage. she marriage in Mumbai. His husband is the very beautiful and good nature. jaspal is the very good. I am enjoyed in marriage.*



- *We have walk safely on the road. When we go to school when going to the evening walk, go slowly and it is good for health.*

The analysis of these samples created the impression that many of the participants fail to form any clear idea and generate ideas relevant to the assigned topic. Their writings have no goals and replete with unnecessary detail or irrelevant ideas. Though they have to write about walk safe, drive safe, many of them include the description of a morning walk. The paragraphs have been written without any introduction or conclusion. It can be remarked that they write without any planning and were not aware of their intended audience while writing.

#### **4.3.2 Discussion on Organisational Flow in the Writings of the Students with Examples**

It was observed that there was no fluency of ideas in the writings of the majority of the students. The discourse of the learners was full of incomplete sentences. They committed errors in the sentence level as many of them changed the orders in the interrogative sentence. Some of the students just write the linguistic elements in an illogical fashion as shown below:

- *A marriage party which I have enjoyed the most the marriage party of my cousin brother. In jalander we celebrate the marriage party. The palace name is city park. I enjoy my cousin marriage. My cousin marriage was on 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2013. I like the arrangement of palace. At night the marriage is held. We all are enjoy the dance and the music is so loud. When we enter the palace our welcome is so beautiful...*

The above piece of writings displayed inconsistency of ideas. Little attention was given on writing with cohesion and coherence. There were obstructions in the flow of reading due to repetition of same ideas, and little use of connectors. Reason for the projection of the incomplete sentences may be the fact that from the very beginning of their academic career the learners stick only to memorize model paragraph or essay, based on the suggestions. While writing, it seems difficult to them to project completely what they have memorized. So they import the linguistic elements and write whatever comes in their mind, irrespective of the rules of English language as shown in the above sample. This type of error may be considered as an outcome of rote learning.

### 4.3.3 Discussion on Use of Vocabulary in the Writings of the Students with Examples

It was observed that the majority of the students faced difficulty in choosing correct or appropriate words to express their ideas clearly. Some of their messages were totally obscure due to incorrect word usage. For example:

- *In our house, we have a domestic cat. It is dangerous to drive with animals.*

In any language, certain linguistic elements share commonness semantically, that is to say that all languages have synonyms, but there will not be any complete synonyms in any language. So certain words can be used in certain contexts. Some students have also wrongly substituted a word for another. Many students made use of vague words in the paragraph on marriage description they enjoyed most e.g. *it is a place of taking enjoy*. Furthermore, another example exhibiting limited range of vocabulary is as following:

- *I am going a marriage party of my friend yesterday. He can come at my home same day before and inviting me his wedding ceremony. He marriage was held in dhuri. I am this marriage party is much enjoyed. This marriage party decoration is very beautiful. This marriage party from DJ and loudness of sound. fun comes from marriage party.*

The above piece of writing displayed limited range and usage of vocabulary. Vocabulary is also misplaced at some places.

### 4.3.4 Discussion on Language Use in the Writings of the Students with Examples

By analysing the writings of students, it was observed that tense error was most dominant among all error types. Some respondents made awkward errors on verb forms of the simple present and simple past, and some were very much confused about the use of auxiliaries. This error reflected the inability of students to make use of basic verb forms. For example:

- *Three children die in the accident last year. (died)*

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- *I go to the shopping market and I bought a sari. (buy)*
- *Then my father transfer to Ludhiana. (has been transferred)*
- *At the time of marriage, we were lived in Sangrur. (lived)*

It has also been observed that the respondents know the rules of tense but when they are supposed to apply the rules they just jumble it. Students basically think in mother tongue, and then translate into English and while translating into English, they get confused of which tense form they have to use; especially in present and past tense. The analysis of the writings of the students also exhibited that subjects and verbs did not match with one another in number (singular or plural). Learners were not able to identify the singularity/ plurality of the subject. Lack of competence in identifying the subject made students fail to produce the correct form of the verb. For example:

- *My family have five members. (has)*
- *My parents does not walk on zebra crossings crossing the road. (do not)*

It was observed that many learners made inaccurate use of articles in the sentences. They were not able to differentiate the use of definite article and indefinite article. For example:

- *It took us a hour to reach at marriage palace. (an)*

The following types of errors of word order committed by the students have been observed.

- *In the city are many car accidents. (In the city, there are many car accidents)*
- *The last time crossing the road. (Last time, when we were crossing the road)*

In their writings, the students used the adverbs like 'in the city', 'last time', as the subjects and ignored the actual subjects. This kind of expression may be due to the mother tongue influence. It was also observed that majority of students can construct only simple sentences. It appears that students always struggle while they use foreign language chunks

and face problems like inappropriateness, synonyms and antonyms, sentence structure pattern, SVA pattern and awkward phrasing and unconventional grammar while they write.

#### **4.3.5 Discussion on Use of Mechanics in the Writings of the Students with Examples**

It has been observed that both the interference of L<sub>1</sub> and learner's incorrect speech habits paved the way for the spelling errors. Whenever they come across harsh words in the text, they just try to get these by heart that resulted in incorrect spellings in their writings subsequently. Students' carelessness also led them to make spelling mistakes. Here are some examples of spelling errors that were found in their writing tasks:

- *My sister was studing in univercity at that time. (studying, university)*
- *Her husband was a bisnessman. (businessman).*

The writings of students also exhibited that the learners face punctuation problems in writing and always struggle in the proper use of question mark, colon/semi colon and commas.

It can be said that the writings of the students lacked fluency; exhibited innumerable errors i.e. lexical, semantic, and errors with verbs, prepositions, articles, and nouns etc. It can be said that they tried to use correct grammatical rules, struggle with vocabulary, do not make any plan or fix the goal, rarely revise, rearrange their ideas and never produce multiple drafts before they submit their finished product. In other words, they adopt, "Think- Say" (Alam 149) strategy while writing and believe that they have learnt writing.

### **5. Remedies to Improve Writing Skill**

The most important factor in writing exercises is that students need to be involved personally in order to make the learning experience of great value. To improve students' skill in writing, teachers should indulge students in various activities as brainstorming and researching to generate ideas, outlining the ideas, drafting, reviewing, editing and final writing. In addition to this, the practice sessions should be logically arranged from simple to complex, from controlled to free writing. Ample opportunities should be provided for informal feed-back, corrections and revisions. Feedback is of utmost importance to the writing process. Without individual attention and sufficient feedback on errors, improvement

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will not take place. Teachers should help learners to develop strategies for self-correction and regulation. L<sub>2</sub> writers require and expect specific overt feedback from teachers not only on content, but also on the form and structure of writing.

## 6. Conclusion

The following conclusions have been drawn from the present study:

- (a) In order to find out significance of difference between students from the schools affiliated to two boards, 't' value is computed. It is found out that there is significant difference of the performance of learners from schools affiliated to PSEB and CBSE in writing skill.
- (b) Furthermore, to analyse the proficiency of the learners from the schools affiliated to two boards in five components of writing skill in English (content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics) in each selected district, graphical representation was done on the basis of mean scores. The mean scores regarding the overall performance of learners in writing skill of English from schools affiliated to CBSE in districts Sangrur, Barnala and Mansa are 70.32, 63.06, and 59.39 respectively (out of 100), whereas the learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB got the average scores of 52.08, 45.97, and 42.3 respectively (out of 100). Thus data interpretation showed that though the mean scores of the learners from the schools affiliated to CBSE are higher than that of learners from the schools affiliated to PSEB in each district in all of the components of proficiency in English composition, still it can be inferred on the basis of the collected data that the overall performance of the learners from both boards is below the expected level in the writing skill in all the three selected districts.

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