

**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**

**MD. NURULLAH PATWARY**

**UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF  
PROF. DR. DIL AFROZE QUADER**

**INSTITUTE OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA  
DHAKA, BANGLADESH  
2005**

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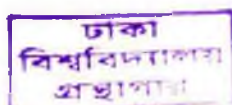
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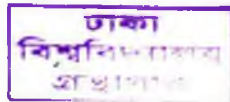
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DHAKA, BANGLADESH  
2005**



This thesis is dedicated  
to  
My beloved parents  
Late Mohammad Kalimullah Patwary  
404146  
&  
Late Mrs. Hosne Ara Kalim,  
My brothers and sister  
Millat, Sayem, Javed and Zohra  
&  
My loving wife  
Mahsina Momtaz Maria



## **PREFACE**

The widest range of English language teaching programme is conducted in the school level which ends in the secondary level of education through the S.S.C. exam. But in reality the students of the secondary level are showing a far below standard performance from the expectation specially in creative or independent writing. Though there was a change in the status of English after 1971, this change in the status could bring about very little change in the teaching methodology. As a result, though there has always been a goal to flourish the creative writing faculty of the students, it remains a dream.

This work puts the above problem areas and the 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 Professor 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 aspects of my research. It was her painstaking and continuous guidance that enabled me to write and complete this thesis.

I wish to express my sincere indebtedness to Prof. Waliul Islam of IML, Prof. Nazmeen Haque, of the dept. of English, who helped me a lot encouraging me and providing me their valuable suggestions during the preparation of the thesis.

I am thankful to Mr. Al Imran, library incharge, Mr. Abdul Hannan, library assistant, the other officials and staff of IML library, D.U. who helped me in all the possible ways. I would like to acknowledge my gratefulness to Prof. Dr. Mir Md. Akramuzzaman, dept. of Physics, Jahangirnagar University whose encouragement was my continuous source of inspiration.

I would like to acknowledge my gratefulness to the librarians of BANBEIS and IER of Dhaka University who rendered me valuable help with supplying me all sorts of necessary papers related to my research work.

I consider it is my pleasant duty to thank Mr. Kamrul Hasan and Mr. Zakir Hossain Pintu who helped and encouraged me a lot to carry out my research work.

I wish to express my deep regard and profound love to my mother, parents in law, brothers and sisters who always motivated me to go ahead with my research work. I am specially grateful to my grand father in-law Prof. Abdul Awal who was a constant watch of the progress of my work.

I must extend my gratefulness to the principals; headmasters and concerned English teachers and students of the schools I visited, who contributed greatly to carryout my research.

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 opportunity 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 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 randomly selected from seven high schools of Dhaka Board and two English medium schools of Dhaka city. The data was also gathered from the teachers of the same schools visited. In order to get the data the English writing classes 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 teachers to collect data relevant to the study.

The data resulting are then analyzed in the light of qualitative research method. 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 also show that most of the teachers in the study do not possess ~~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 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 EFL study in Bangladesh are made. The investigator particularly recommends that English language teaching programmes for Bangladeshi high school students should focus on the modern approaches to teaching of writing independently, ~~writing~~ with the up-to-date and compulsory teacher training programme and the regular monitoring of the teachers' role and teaching techniques in the classroom.



## List of Tables and Figures

Figure / Table No.	Subject Matter	Page No.
Figure - 2.1	Tribble's out line of the process of writing	18
Table - 6.1	Groups of schools on the basis of the students' overall performance in learning writing English	36
Table - 6.2	Time spent for written English classes every week by the teachers of group A	37
Table - 6.3	Activities liked by the students of group A in English classes	38
Table - 6.4	Types of difficulties the students of group A faced in improving their free writing ability	38
Table - 6.5	Types of assistance the students of group A sought from their teachers to improve their free writing ability	39
Table - 6.6	Time spent a week by English teachers for written English classes	40
Table - 6.7	Activities liked by the students in the English classes of group B	40
Table - 6.8	Types of difficulties the students of group B faced in improving their free writing ability	41
Table - 6.9	Types of assistance the student samples of group B sought from their teachers to improve their free writing ability	42
Table - 6.10	Nature of work done in the schools of group A	47

Table – 6.11	Guidelines given by the English teachers of group A to improve writing	48
Table – 6.12	Difficulties the teachers of group A faced in the classroom to teach writing	50
Table – 6.13	Nature of work done in the schools of group B	51
Table – 6.14	Guidelines given by the English teachers of group B to improve writing	52
Table – 6.15	Difficulties the teachers of group B faced in the classroom in teaching writing	54
Table – 6.16	Groups of schools done on the basis of the students' productions in the writing proficiency test	60
Table – 6.17	Performance of the students of the schools of two groups- group A and group B	64
Table – 6.18	Brief comparison between different aspects of group A and group B	86

## List of Symbols and Abbreviations

<b>Symbols / Abbreviation</b>	<b>Expressions</b>
C C	Communicative Competence
C L T	Communicative Language Teaching
G T M	Grammar-Translation Method
N C T B	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
E F L	English as a Foreign Language
E S L	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 entitled "**Creative Writing in English: How Far <sup>The</sup> 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.

*Dil Afroze Quader* 18.4.2005

---

**Prof. Dr. Dil Afroze Quader**

<b>Chapters</b>		<b>Page No</b>
Preface		I
Abstract		III
List of tables and figures		V
List of symbols and abbreviations		VII
Contents		
<b>Chapter - 1 Introduction</b>		
1.1	Importance, history and status of English in Bangladesh	1
1.2	Aims of education in the S.S.C. level	3
1.3	Problem areas of education system of Bangladesh	4
1.3.1	Introduction	4
1.3.2	Inadequate budget	4
1.3.3	Teachers	5
1.3.4	Text books	5
1.3.5	Teaching method	6
1.3.6	Examination and testing system	6
1.3.7	Teacher student ratio	7
1.3.8	Poor turnout in the secondary level schools	7
1.3.9	Administration and management	7
1.3.10	Educational environment	8
1.3.11	Mismatch between learners' needs and teachers' teaching methods.	9
1.4	Desired ELT environment	9
1.5	Experiences of the writer in learning writing independently in class VIII, IX & X	10
1.5.1	Texts	10
1.5.2	Essays and letters	11
1.5.3	Grammar	11
1.6	Steps taken by the government to improve the E L T programmes	12
1.7	Aim and significance of the study	13
1.8	Definition of terms	14

<b>Chapters</b>		<b>Page No</b>
<b>Chapter - 2 Ways of teaching writing and what the process of writing should be : Theories</b>		
2.1	Introduction	16
2.2	Approaches to developing writing skills	16
2.3	Process of writing: Different models	17
2.3.1	Pre-writing	18
2.3.2	Composing and drafting	18
2.3.3	Preparing the final copy	19
2.4	Factors important in teaching writing	20
2.4.1	Modes of instruction	20
2.4.2	Focus of instruction	20
2.4.3	Time of instruction	22
2.4.4	Atmosphere of the writing classrooms	22
2.5	Summary of the opinions of different writers on different aspects of writing	23
2.5.1	Focus of instruction	23
2.5.2	Class size	23
2.5.3	Atmosphere of the classroom	24
2.5.4	Process of writing	24
2.6	Comparison between the writer's experience of writing independently and the theory	24
2.6.1	Dealing with the text and answering questions	24
2.6.2	Essays and letters	26
<b>Chapter - 3 Research Questions</b>		
3.1	Introduction	28
3.2	What methods are the English teachers following to teach students writing independently?	28
3.3	What difficulties do the teachers face in teaching independent writing in English classes?	28
3.4	What is the relationship between teachers' assistance to and 'monitoring of students' work and the improvement of students' writing ability?	28

<b>Chapters</b>		<b>Page No</b>
<b>Chapter - 4 Research Hypotheses</b>		
4.1	Introduction	29
4.2	The hypotheses	29
4.2.1.a	Hypothesis - 1a	29
4.2.1.b	Hypothesis - 1b	29
4.2.2	Hypothesis - 2	30
4.2.3	Hypothesis - 3	30
<b>Chapter - 5 Research method</b>		
5.1	Introduction	32
5.2	The sample	32
5.3	The schools	32
5.4	The data	33
5.5	The process	33
5.6	Problems	35
<b>Chapter - 6 Analysis of Data</b>		
6.1	Introduction	36
6.2	Analysis of students' statement	37
6.2.1	Introduction	37
6.2.2	Analysis of the statements of the students of the schools of group-A	37
6.2.2.1	Time spent for written English classes	37
6.2.2.2	What the students liked to do best in English classes	38
6.2.2.3	Difficulties the students faced in improving free writing ability	38
6.2.2.4	What the students expected from their teachers to get rid of the difficulties.	39
6.2.3	Analysis of the statements of the students of the Schools of Group B	40
6.2.3.1	Time spent for written English classes	40



<b>Chapters</b>		<b>Page No</b>
6.2.3.2	What the students liked to do best in English classes	40
6.2.3.3	Difficulties the students faced in improving free writing ability	41
6.2.3.4	What the students expected from their teachers to get rid of the difficulties.	42
6.2.4	Conclusion	43
6.2.5	Comparison and contrast between the statement of the students of group A and group B	44
6.2.5.1	Time spent for written English classes	44
6.2.5.2	What the students liked to do best in English classes	44
6.2.5.3	Difficulties the students faced in improving free writing ability.	45
6.2.5.4	What the students expected from their teachers to get rid of the difficulties	45
6.3	Analysis of teachers' statement	46
6.3.1	Introduction	46
6.3.2	Analysis of the teachers' statement of the schools of group A	46
6.3.2.1	Nature of the writing work done in the class	47
6.3.2.2	Guidelines given by the teachers to improve writing	47
6.3.2.3	Which should be emphasized in the writing class-fluency or accuracy?	49
6.3.2.4	Method of correction the teachers followed while checking students' writing.	49
6.3.2.5	Difficulties teachers faced in the classroom	50
6.3.3	Analysis of the statement of the teachers of the schools of group - B	51
6.3.3.1	Nature of the writing work done in the class	51
6.3.3.2	Guidelines given by the English teachers to improve writing	52
6.3.3.3	What should be emphasized in the writing classes-fluency or accuracy?	53
6.3.3.4	Method of correction	54
6.3.3.5	Difficulties the teachers faced in the classroom	54

<b>Chapters</b>		<b>Page No</b>
6.3.4	Comparison and contrast between the statement of the teachers of group A and group B.	55
6.3.4.1	Nature of the writing work the teachers arranged in the previous three classes.	55
6.3.4.2	Guidelines given by the English teachers to improve students' writing ability.	56
6.3.4.3	What should be emphasized in the writing classes fluency or accuracy?	57
6.3.4.4	Method of correction the teachers followed while checking students' writings.	57
6.3.4.5	Difficulties the teachers faced in the classroom	58
6.4	Analysis of students' productions	59
6.4.1	Introduction	59
6.4.2	Analysis of the scripts of the students of group A	60
6.4.3	Analysis of the scripts of the students of group B	61
6.5	Analysis of the performance of the students in writing proficiency tests based on the scores given by the researcher	63
6.5.1	Introduction	63
6.5.2	Analysis of the performance of the students in the writing proficiency tests	65
6.6	Comparison and contrast between students' production of the institutions of two groups.	65
6.6.1	Structure	65
6.6.2	Use of students' own ideas	66
6.6.3	Length / Fluency	67
6.6.4	Vocabulary range / content words	68
6.6.5	Grammar / Grammar Words	69
6.7	Analysis of the classroom observation reports	72
6.7.1	Introduction	72
6.7.2	Analysis of the classroom observation reports of the schools of group A	72
6.7.2.1	Class size	72
6.7.2.2	The language the teacher used	73
6.7.2.3	Utilization of the class time	73

<b>Chapters</b>		<b>Page No</b>
6.7.2.4	Teaching skills and strategies adopted by the teachers	73
6.7.2.5	Atmosphere of the classroom	75
6.7.3	Summary of the analysis of classroom observation reports of the schools of group A	76
6.7.4	Analysis of the classroom observation reports of the schools of group B	77
6.7.4.1	Class size	77
6.7.4.2	The language the teacher used of the six teachers of the schools of this group 3 teachers	77
6.7.4.3	Utilization of the class time	76
6.7.4.4	Teaching skills and strategies adopted by the teachers	77
6.7.4.5	Atmosphere of the classroom	78
6.7.5	Summary of the analysis of the classroom observation reports of the schools of group B	79
6.7.6	Comparison and contrast between the classroom observation reports of the schools of two groups	79
6.7.6.1	Class size	79
6.7.6.2	The language the teacher used	80
6.7.6.3	Utilization of class time	80
6.7.6.4	Teaching skills and strategies adopted by the teachers	80
6.7.6.5	Atmosphere of the classroom	81
6.8	Brief Comparison Of different aspects of group A with those of group B	83
6.9	Conclusion	85
6.10	Presentation of the findings	92
6.10.1	Introduction	92
6.10.2	Hypothesis - 1.a	92
6.10.3	Hypothesis - 1.b	93
6.10.4	Hypothesis - 2	93
6.10.5	Hypothesis - 3	94
<b>Chapter - 7 Conclusions and Recommendations</b>		
7.1	Conclusions	96
7.2	Pedagogical suggestions	100
	Appendix A: Classroom Observation Reports	I
	Appendix B: Questionnaires	XIV
	Appendix C: Names of the Schools Surveyed	XVI
	Bibliography	XVII

# ***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 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. After the Englishmen had formed their own company, English became the language of communication of the elite people of the both sides (Dil, S. Anwar). That socio-historical context for the dominance of English was gradually taking shape at least by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> 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 in Agnihotri and Khanna (eds.) 1995: 18)

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 as 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. In 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 good number of schools, English has been 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 has been taken as an important academic programme in almost all the educational levels.

Now in all educational levels English is a compulsory subject. English is the medium of instruction in most of the higher educational institutions. Good proficiency in English speaking and writing is one of the most important preconditions to get a good job in, many sectors of our country. In many cases English is the only medium of communication in the trade and commerce world at home and abroad. Considering this the reality 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 clearly understood from the comment 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 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 fixed in the curriculum of the S.S.C and equivalent level, this target is hardly achieved because of some drawbacks of our education system.

Let's see what goals are targeted in the S.S.C level of education and what the educationists say about the problems of our educational environment.

### 1.2 Aims of education in 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 also has been named in the following manner.

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 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 fixed in ELT in the Secondary level, it is hardly achieved because of some longstanding problems in our education system, educational institutions and ELT area. Let us have a look at the problem areas.

#### **1.3.2 Inadequate 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 growth in national income. But he observes that in Bangladesh we tend to allocate an inadequate 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 progressive and productive form. 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. This drawback is affecting not only the English language programmes of our schools but also the education system that has been crippled 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. In almost all schools, students are solely dependent upon their teachers and they learn as much as their 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 overcoming all these limitations a good amount of monetary assistance is needed but Bangladesh cannot afford as much as is required to make the education programme satisfactorily successful.

### **1.3.3 Teachers**

Scarcity of qualified teachers and lack of congenial atmosphere in our educational 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 lack proper academic environment because of the lack of enough materialistic 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 contributing. 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 Textbooks**

Shaha (1981) comments that the textbooks of the primary and secondary levels are of poor standard. He observes that these neither possess intelligent and time befitting lessons nor attempts to provoke interest in life and the world.

### **1.3.5 Teaching method**

Haque (1981) observes that the method of teaching is archaic. 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 their own way. 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 archaic. 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 E L T, the modern trend is to follow communicative approach in all the aspects. But in case of class tests and examinations this is hardly considered. While teaching writing teachers choose some easy and frequently used topics and ask their students to write compositions on those areas. Students can find out those compositions written in different guidebooks. They learn those compositions and reproduce them in the exams. Teachers also select some common topics for the class tests and exams. 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 skill. 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 what is required for getting high marks in education.

### **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 young 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 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 remain 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 almost all 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 conduct these institutions are not updated and properly assembled. In this regard the publication, which is followed, is **Bengal Education Code**. This was, in the latest, published in 1931. In the mean time many of the social aspects have changed a lot. 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 with all of these changes and to make our language activities successful a radical 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 education 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, blackboards 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 much 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 are greatly hampered.

### **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 that tends to hinder learners' achievement in language learning. (Rahman, 1996).

### **1.4 Desired ELT environment**

Most of the schools of our country lack the desired E L T environment offering all the necessary language skills- listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill and writing skill- are taught with proper attention.

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 to be taught integratively. But this type of arrangement is hardly found in our educational institutions because most of the teachers don't 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 integratively. 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. The productive skills are dependent 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 notion of linking reading with writing. But this modern concept usually doesn't 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. I myself bear the testimony to this situation. To have a clear idea about the ELT environment in the schools my own experience in learning writing independently is given below:

### **1.5 Experiences of the writer in learning writing independently in class VIII, IX & X**

I was a student of Tejgaon Govt. High School, Dhaka. I completed my S.S.C. from the same school. In the S.S.C. exam. I scored 58 in English first paper and 64 in English second 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 from our text books. Sometimes they read out the part and tried to make us understand that 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 something new outside the fixed questions in the exercise. As a result we could know very little about independent writing ability and the process of improving it. 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. About the development of the essay and letter writing skills teachers discussed very little. 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 given in the examination question papers many times. We were happy to get some known essay topics or letter subjects because we could memorize them and we were confident that anyone of them would be found in the exam question paper. Through these classes though we could memorize some essays and letters, our memorization skill, flourished but our creative writing skill that is the ability to write on our own, did not develop.

### **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 greater writing texts or in 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" (Hoque and Maniruzzaman 2000), it doesn't provide the learners with all the necessary components to improve their communicative competence.

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 development of 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 and attainment of the majority of the high school students is unsatisfactorily? and disproportionately low. "In spite of our association with English for about two hundred years the average level of performance in the language is deplorably low." (Huq 1986:2)

The overall weakness in English language skills, specially in 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 that were available at Secondary, Higher Secondary and teacher training levels. It was also asked to make an assessment of the English language proficiency of students at these levels.

The Task Force conducted necessary search 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 as the biggest single obstacle to English teaching in the country. The teaching methods observed were not suitable to 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 raining. "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 activities. 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 teaching writing independently in the Secondary Level schools, in my opinion, is heavily dependent upon the development of a well-organized and comprehensive plan that embraces all aspects of the learning process.

Despite fixing some clear goals and adopting different steps to improve the ELT scenario of the Secondary Level schools, no systematic investigation into students' problems regarding the development of creative writing or independent writing ability has been made yet. I believe that an understanding of students' problems in improving their creative writing ability and teachers' main responsibilities in teaching creative writing skill that means writing independently 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**

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 is to relate the findings of the study to English language teaching programmes at the Secondary Level schools of Bangladesh.

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 the improvement of English language teaching 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 students' improvement of 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, page 26)

**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 broadcasts, reading books or newspapers, commerce or travel (e.g. students learning English in Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, China Germany etc.)". (Haque 1989, Page-26)

**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 either a paragraph or an essay or a letter selected for them. Later on the writings were examined and scores were given on each papers.

## ***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

Now let us discuss 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) 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 process approach the primary focus is on quantity rather than quality. The proponents of this process 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 their own ability to write. 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 the 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 writing one should have a good knowledge of process of writing. For the ESL learners this knowledge is a must. 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 papers 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 the final product and the 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 must change and he might make necessary modifications in the text. Let us now turn to the process of writing itself.

About teaching writing Mussay suggests Just write - hard, fast, make mistakes, lose control. As Guy de Maupassant says, "Get black on white.

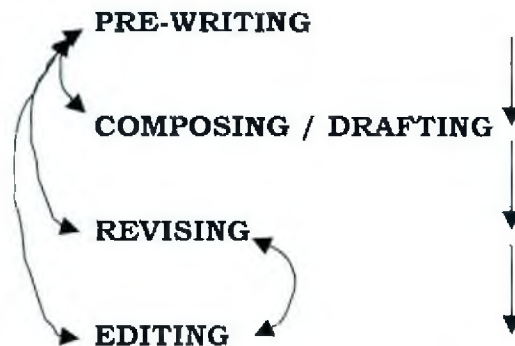
See what happens. Let it run. Stand back. Plunge in again. Steal a phrase or a line of an idea or a feeling from what you've just written and try it again."

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 as who? where ? when? what ? why ? etc." In this way teachers provide the 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. He should also try to get someone else to read the draft. A reader can help him see the strengths and weakness as 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 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 part of the process of writing. So they require a checklist of guidelines that will make it possible for them to edit their work. Hedge (1988) suggests that the writers 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 or not. Following this checklist the writer can make necessary modifications and prepare the final copy.



## **2.4 Factors important in teaching writing**

### **2.4.1 Modes of instruction**

Hillock (1984, 86) 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 help the 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 (1984) identifies is the individualized mode where the teacher lecture is minimized as much of the class time is spent in small group on individual task completion.

But the situation of most of the Secondary School 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 (1984, 86) 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 grammar.

In a review of research on writing Zamel (1982) 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 does not encourage but also is likely to actually 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 the learners to compose sentences as an integral part of the development of the writing ability."

Widdowson (1996) 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 he suggests 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).

Candlin (1986:40) describes communicative competence as :

The ability to create meanings by exploring the potential 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.
- (c) Knowing how to use and respond to different types of language acts.

#### **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. So 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 classrooms**

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. 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 (1982, 1987), Nunan (1991), Hillock (1984), E.V. Gatesby (1950) and Mussay, 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 the students' writing standard and writing skills can develop rapidly when they are given enormous opportunities to write and when their interests 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 learning. 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 adversely the writing English programmes. Large class size means little assistance to the students, poor supervision of students' progress and little individual care by the teacher.

### **2.5.3 Atmosphere of the classroom**

Hedge (1988), Hillock (1984), Hemp Lyons and Heasley (1987) suggest that the writing classroom should have a warm and supportive atmosphere where the students can be engaged in group work and group editing.

### **2.5.4 Process of writing**

Regarding the process of writing we see that Zamel (1982), Hemp-Lyons and Leasley (1987), Tribble (1986) and Mussay suggest almost the same framework of prewriting, writing and rewriting. They want the writer to be more busy and caring planning, correcting and improving his own writing than simply writing the first draft and submitting it to the teacher. But in the secondary schools of our country the practice is different. The writer's own experience of his school life and the classroom observation report say that the English teachers here do not think of planning, correcting and improving students' writing. They simply ask the 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 experience of writing independently and the theory.**

### **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 an aim to enable the students to use the language in the real life situation. The teachers 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 of 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 will 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 behavioural 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 behaviour, 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 suggestions and the main focus of the language classroom suggested in section 2.4.2, we will see that the language classes were far behind the goal of CC where only simple reading, understanding the text meanings and learning some word meanings were the total language activities. And on the part of the students, our main aim was just to pass the exam and teachers' aim was to complete the syllabus. They did not bother much about the students' achieving 'Communicative Competence'. The classes were not 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. 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 at all parallel to the activities suggested by different applied linguists to improve students' writing skills. According to Nunan (1992) there are two types of approaches to developing writing skills: Product oriented approaches and process approaches. Product oriented approaches mainly emphasize classroom activities in which learner is engaged in initiating, copying and transforming models of correct language. The proponents of this approach suggest that students must master the language at the level of the sentence and then they should devote themselves to write coherent paragraphs.

In the process approach the focus is in the first instance on quantity rather than on quality and the beginning writers are encouraged to write independently not fearing the grammatical correctness of their writing. This approach also encourages collaborative group work between learners. An interesting classroom technique emerged from the process approach of writing and that is conferencing. The aim of conferencing is to encourage young writers to talk about their initial drafts with the teacher or with fellow students. Though these classroom techniques are very difficult to be adopted in our classrooms, there is no alternative to these activities to be incorporated in our classrooms in order to make our ELT programmes more effective and successful. Zamel (1987) opines writing skills can develop rapidly when students' concerns and interests are acknowledged and when they are given numerous opportunities to write.

So in comparison to the activities suggested by the famous applied linguists to improve writing the activities of the our classrooms were less productive and less practical. As a result the students including me were deprived of the most essential writing skill-writing independently or creatively that means learning to write on our own to express our feelings and opinions.



***Chapter - 3***  
***Research Questions***

## Chapter - 3

# Research Questions

### 3.1 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.

### 3.2 What methods are the English teachers following to teach students writing independently?

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.

### 3.3 What difficulties do the teachers face in teaching independent writing in English classes?

Generally English teachers are blamed for the poor performance of the students in writing skill. But in a developing country like Bangladesh a lot of other causes are there which are hindering students' language learning activities. All the parties - the educators, the policy makers and the students - should know what are those difficulties and problems the teachers are facing in carrying out their E L T programmes. Unless the problems are identified and the shortcomings are known and necessary steps are taken to overcome those, the writing classes will not be successful in the Secondary Level schools.

### 3.4 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 so easy a matter. It requires some interaction between the teacher and the students, teachers' right assistance in the right time and teachers' proper monitoring of the students' works. In this research work it will be examined how much teachers' assistance to and good monitoring of the students' work affect students' writing ability.

# ***Chapter - 4***

## ***Research Hypotheses***

## Chapter - 4

# Research Hypotheses

### 4.1 Introduction

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

### 4.2 The hypotheses

#### 4.2.1.a Hypothesis 1.a

In most cases English teachers of the Secondary Level Schools of Bangladesh don't 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 on they testify the students on those selected compositions. As a result, students remain weak in writing and when they face a new area of writing, they don't feel confident to write on that area.

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, in their educational life they feel comfortable in teaching 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.

#### 4.2.1.b Hypothesis 1.b

Most of the teachers don't possess enough knowledge of the process of writing. As a result they go their own ways to teach their students writing independently which hardly help 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 are not qualified enough to teach the students writing independently. I observed it when I was a school student. I also came to know about this problem from articles written by different language scholars and researchers.

#### **4.2.2 Hypothesis 2**

Though inefficiency of teachers is mainly blamed for the poor performance of the students in writing independently, there may be some practical difficulties that the teachers face in carrying out their jobs. Students' weakness in framing ideas, lack of the knowledge of the process of writing, weakness in grammar, poor vocabulary and bad spelling may be some of the weaknesses of most of the students which the teachers may consider hindrances to the development of their writing ability.

I think the teachers may find these shortcomings in the students because most of the students lack the standard which their teachers expect from them as they passed a long time with English language learning programmes before coming to the secondary level. These weaknesses of the students might be the result of the ineffective teaching method adopted by the teachers and the lack of the proper English language learning environment.

#### **4.2.3 Hypothesis 3**

Teachers' assistance to the students in framing ideas and their close monitoring of students' activities help them write better. The more the teachers help the 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 in students' free writing ability. As teachers deal with the students for quite a long time and regularly, they know what their students' shortcomings

are. On the other hand most of the Bangladeshi students, to my opinion, are very much teacher-dependent. So they feel encouraged when the teachers give them personal care and monitor their activities. They usually follow their teachers' command in learning lessons. So if the teachers give sufficient assistance to the students and if they monitor their students' work properly, the students will be able to achieve desirable improvement in free writing ability.

# ***Chapter - 5***

## ***Research Method***

## Chapter - 5

### Research Method

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with different aspects of the research method. It will discuss the kinds 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, the process which was followed to collect the data and observe the classrooms and finally the problems faced by the researcher in collecting the data.

#### 5.2 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 in English is 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 the 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.

#### 5.3 The schools

For collecting necessary data for my research work I visited nine educational institutions. It took me in total 11 months starting from October 2001 to August 2002 to complete the visits of the institutions. For visiting the institutions I had to take prior permission from 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 Secondary Level schools of Bangladesh. English medium schools were selected to see the differences between the teaching writing



activities of 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 Khalid Institute, Dhaka, Tejgaon Govt. High School, Dhaka. Govt. Science College, Dhaka, Badsha Faisal Institute (Boys') and Badsha Faisal Institute (Girls'). The English medium Schools I visited are Manarat Dhaka Int'l College and New Horizon Int'l Academy.

#### **5.4 The data**

For answering my research questions I decided to examine the average standard of students' creative writing ability. 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 E L T activities specially writing English activities I collected data and opinions of English teachers of the classrooms I visited. I also decided to collect students' opinions about the problems they faced in developing writing ability. I also decided to collect 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.

#### **5.5 The process**

I visited the writing English classes on the appointed times and discussed with the teachers about the process of data collection. The process consisted of five steps-observing different activities of the writing class, collecting students' writings, getting the questionnaire filled by the students, getting the questionnaire filled by the teachers and interviewing English teachers of the visited classes about the ways they usually conducted their classes and asked them to arrange a class test on free writing on an extempore topic.

At the start of the class the teachers introduced me to the students and briefed them about the purpose of my visit. When the teacher started the class, I began writing observation reports. 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 focussed activity to work on while observing a lesson in progress. It focuses on or 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 collecting data of the activities and grouping 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 suggested by the same author. While observing the classes I filled up the coding sheets and collected necessary data. Some teachers had some discussion before the test begun but some teachers started conducting the test without having any pre writing discussion.

Before starting the test some of the teachers themselves selected the topics and some of asked me to select a topic for the test. Some of the tests were on paragraph writing and some of them were essay and letter writing. During the class test both the teacher present in the class and I monitored their work and I made a classroom observation report of each class. After the test had been over, the teacher collected all the test papers of written test. Then the teacher marked the papers and handed them over to me.

After the class had been over I selected some of the students indiscriminately and got them filled a questionnaire each to collect different information related to their experience of learning writing independently.

Then I had some time with the concerned English teachers of the schools. I interviewed them as well as got them filled up a questionnaire each in order to collect different information related to their teaching writing experiences of the classroom. We had talks in a friendly manner though some of them seemed to be very cautious while talking

## **5.6 Problems**

I faced some difficulties in getting permission to visit some schools. Sometimes it was very difficult for me to convince the teachers to visit their classes. Some of the teachers seemed very frightened about my observing of their classes. Some of the teachers did not conduct the class the way I wanted.

They might have done so either to hide their weakness in English or that might have been their way of teaching writing, conducting the writing classes without any fruitful prewriting activities.

Though I asked them to select an extempore topic in order to examine the students' independent writing ability, some of the teachers selected some very common topics that 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 and as they selected such topics that were known to them earlier. Most of them had the compositions memorized and they simply reproduced them in their test depriving me of getting their own creative writings.

# ***Chapter - 6***

## ***Analysis of Data***

## Chapter - 6

### Analysis of Data

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis of data collected for the research. It will discuss the analysis of students' statement, teachers' statement, students' productions, the classroom observation reports and the comparison between the students' statement, teachers' statement and the classroom observation reports and the students' productions of the institutions of the two groups. Analysis of all sorts of data has been divided into two groups - group A and group B. The grouping was done on the basis of the students' performance in the writing performance test conducted by the researcher and on the scores given by the researcher in each paper. The researcher marked the papers on the basis of the following criteria:

- structure of the composition (organization of ideas)
- use of students' own ideas
- use of content words (appropriate vocabulary)
- use of grammar words (grammatical features and morphology)
- Length

10 marks was allocated for each criterion and the total marks 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.	3	Govt. Science College School.
		4	Badshah Faisal Institute (Boys')
		5	Badshah Faisal Institute (Girls')
		6	Bindubashini Govt. High School.

**Table 6.1 Groups of schools done on the basis of the students' overall performance in learning writing in English.**

## 6.2 Analysis of the students' statement

### 6.2.1 Introduction

In order to get a clear idea about the students' own feelings and the problems regarding the improvement of their creative writing ability I chose a group of students numbering 4 or 5 indiscriminately from each class I visited. In total 38 students were interviewed and they were administered a questionnaire given in Appendix B. Their statements are 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.

### 6.2.2 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 doing the selection. The students were selected indiscriminately. Their statements were analyzed as follows:

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

Sl. 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	3	3 hours

**Table-6.2: 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 schools of the other group.

### 6.2.2.2. 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 – 6.3 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 the Krashens' Monitor Model 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.

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

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

Table – 6.4: 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 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 form 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.

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

Types of Assistance the student samples suggested	Number of student samples proposed the type of assistance	Total number of student samples replied the question
<input type="checkbox"/> More help in enriching grammatical knowledge	5	10
<input type="checkbox"/> Giving proper guideline to improve their writing	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching better in the class so that the students could understand the teachers' lecture better.	1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Giving more individual care	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Helping enrich vocabulary	6	
<input type="checkbox"/> Correcting mistakes well	1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Helping students do well in spelling	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Giving interesting topics	1	

**Table- 6.5 Types of assistance the 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 to improve their writing.

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. 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 from their teachers and the better will be their writing skill.



### 6.2.3 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.

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

Sl. 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- 6.6 : Time spent a week by the English Teachers for written English classes.

About the instructional period it is seen that the students 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.

#### 6.2.3.2. 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- 6.7: 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 some other 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 the writing skill. Unless he students

know why they have to acquire a particular skill of a language, it is very difficult for them to develop that skill. So it might have affected their endeavour to improve writing in English.

### 6.2.3.3. Difficulties the students faced in improving free writing ability :

The difficulties the students of group B faced in improving free writing ability have been 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
<input type="checkbox"/> Weakness in grammar	23	28
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of vocabulary	23	
<input type="checkbox"/> Weakness in framing ideas	11	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bad spelling	17	
<input type="checkbox"/> Weakness in reading and understanding	1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty to cope with the new teaching method - communicative language teaching	1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of confidence	2	

Table- 6.8 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. So writing classes should therefore 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 that 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 the 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 seen 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 the students should be encouraged to go on with writing caring little about grammatical accuracy at the primary stage.

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

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

Types of assistance the student samples expected	No. of the student samples proposed the type of assistance	Total number of student samples replied the question
<input type="checkbox"/> Helping more in enriching knowledge of grammar	14	28
<input type="checkbox"/> Giving proper guidelines to improve writing	16	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching in a better way so that they could have a clear idea of how to improve writing	5	
<input type="checkbox"/> Giving more individual care	4	
<input type="checkbox"/> Helping enrich vocabulary	5	
<input type="checkbox"/> Correcting mistakes well	3	
<input type="checkbox"/> Helping speak fluently	4	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicating with students in English	2	
<input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging students to write more	2	
<input type="checkbox"/> Taking more free writing classes	2	
<input type="checkbox"/> Giving much homework	1	

Table- 6.9: Types of assistance the student samples of group B expected from their teachers.

Regarding their expectation from their teachers sixteen students out of twenty eight said that they wanted more assistance and guidelines from the teachers as, they said, they did not know how to frame ideas and what they should have done 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, correct their writing well, communicate with them in English and help them improve their spoken English. All these points imply that the teachers should have been much more active and caring in the classroom to improve their students' independent writing ability.

#### **6.2.4 Conclusion**

On analyzing the statement of the students of group B it is clear that students' writing ability is partly dependent upon the time spent by the teachers for the writing classes.

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 regards 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 form ideas while writing.

The necessity of more assistance and proper monitoring of the teachers is also reflected from the answers to the question, "What do you expect from

your teachers to help you write better?" In answer to this question most of the students of both the groups- group A and group B expected their teachers to give 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.

### **6.2.5 Comparison and contrast between the statement of the students of group A and group B**

#### **6.2.5.1 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. According to their statement the students of group A got about 3 hours every week for writing English classes while the students of group B got about 2 hours 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 benefited from their teachers more than the students of group B did.

#### **6.2.5.2 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. So it seemed that the students of group A were motivated to write in English by their teachers more than the students of group B. According to 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 supposed to do better in writing than the students of group B.

### **6.2.5.3 Difficulties the 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 faced 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.

### **6.2.5.4 What the 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 types of common assistance the students of both the groups expected from their teachers are given below:

- More assistance in enriching grammatical knowledge
- Giving proper guidelines to improve writing ability
- Teaching better in the class so that the students could understand the teachers' lecture well
- Helping enrich vocabulary
- Giving more individual care
- Correcting mistakes well

The other types of assistance the students suggested are

- Giving them interesting topics to write compositions
- Helping them do well in spelling
- Communicating with the students in English
- Encouraging the students to write more

## **6.3 Analysis of teachers' statement**

### **6.3.1 Introduction**

As part of data collection programme to carry out the study the teachers who taught English in the classes selected for the classroom observation were given a questionnaire each to give their opinions about different aspects of teaching writing English and students' learning of writing English. They filled up the questionnaires and their statement is analyzed below. The analysis has been done in two sections as the schools were divided into two groups - group A and group B on the basis of the students' performance in their written proficiency tests. 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 work done in the class.
- Guidelines given by the teacher to improve writing.
- Which should be emphasized in the writing class-fluency or accuracy?
- Method of correction the teacher followed while checking students' writings.
- Difficulties the teachers faced in the classroom.

### **6.3.2. Analysis of the teachers' statement of the schools of group A**

#### **6.3.2.1 Nature of the writing work done in the class**

In order to get an idea of the nature and area of the writing work the English teachers were dealing 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	Topics done
1.	Rajuk Uttara Model School	1. Essay - My favorite writer 2. „ - My favorite foreign diet 3. Application-for opening a centre
2.	New Horizon Academy	1. Essay - Problems of Dhaka 2. „ - Importance of games and sports in our life 3. „ - Money is the basis of a pleasant life.
3.	Manarat Dhaka	1. Essay- Transport system of our country. 2. Summary writing 3. Project work on publishing a magazine

**Table- 6.10 : 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 the life of the students and related to the context the students were in. So the topics seem to be practical and interest providing to the students. The other activities the teachers were dealing are application writing, summary writing and conducting a project work on publishing an English magazine containing different types of writing.

#### **6.3.2.2. Guidelines given by the teachers to improve writing**

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



Sl. No.	Name of the school	Guidelines given by the teacher
1	Rajuk Uttara Model School and College	I. The teacher asked the students to practice writing. II. He asked them to submit the homework regularly. III. He also supplied relevant information about the topic dealt with in the writing class.
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. 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. II. He also gave them tips to achieve grammatical accuracy.

**Table - 6.11 : 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 writing and how to develop the main body. They also helped the students 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 keep on writing and express their ideas and feelings, which seemed to have helped the students to be free from anxiety of committing grammatical mistakes. The guidelines the teachers gave to improve the students' writing ability are quite parallel to the guidelines given by the proponents of the process approach discussed in chapter 2. All the scholars-Hedge (1988), Tribble (1986) and Mussay 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 theory of writing Zamel (1982) Mussay, Hollock

(1984, 86), E. V. Gatesby (1950) suggest that the study of traditional grammar has little effect on the improvement of independent writing ability.

#### **6.3.2.3. 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?" teachers of School 1 and School 2 suggested that both fluency and accuracy are to be emphasized in the classroom while the teacher of Schools 3 suggested that only accuracy should be emphasized while teaching writing.

#### **6.3.2.4. 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 can utilize most of the time of their writing class having the direct contact of their teacher. This seems to be helpful for the students 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. So it is clear from the above suggestions that the more the instructional period and the more teachers' assistance the students get, the better is students' writing standard.

With regards to the method of correction teachers of all the three schools said that they corrected the students' 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 that might have led them to get rid of the mistakes gradually.

### 6.3.2.5. Difficulties teachers faced in the classroom

In reply to the question, "What difficulties do you face in teaching writing?" the teachers of group A talked about different types of difficulties. A picture of the difficulties has been given in the following table :

Total No. of teachers samples answered the question	Type of difficulties the teachers samples mentioned	No. of teacher samples mentioned the difficulty
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 - 6.12: 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 weren't creative because they weren't confident enough to form their own ideas for extempore topics and they were dependent upon the teachers for forming ideas, which hindered their independent writing ability. 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.

### 6.3.3. Analysis of the statement of the teachers of the schools of group B

#### 6.3.3.1. 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 done
4.	King Khalid Institute	1. Letter- to a friend describing a picnic 2. Paragraph - A railway station 3. Essay- A journey by train
5.	Tejgaon Govt. High School	1. Essay - Birds of Bangladesh 2. Paragraph- A Street Hawker 3. Application- for a transfer certificate
6.	Govt. Science College School	1. Story writing-The Fox and the crow 2. Making dialogues- 3. Paragraph- Organizing a birthday party
7.	Badshah Faisal Institute (Boys')	1. Paragraph- The house I live in 2. Essay - Fruits of Bangladesh 3. Comprehension- Model Q/A practice
8.	Badsha Faisal Institute (Girls')	1. Paragraph- A railway station 2. „ - Travelling as a part of education
9.	Bindubashini Govt. High School Tangail	1. Letter writing 2. Paragraph writing 3. Writing question answers

**Table - 6.13 : 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 such topics which are well known to all the students. These topics are so well known that most of the essays and compositions are found written in the grammar and composition books available in the market. So the students could collect the compositions from the books and memorize them. 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. So 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 their

ideas, most of the topics might not have been very much helpful to the flourishing of students' creative faculty.

### 6.3.3.2. Guidelines given by the English teachers to improve writing

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

Sl. No	Name of the School	Guidelines given by the teacher samples
4.	King Khalid Institute	1. to increase vocabulary 2. to strengthen grammatical knowledge 3. to practice writing
5.	Tejgaon Govt. High School	1. tips to improve vocabulary 2. discussed different grammatical features 3. guidelines to organize their ideas
6.	Govt. Science College School	1. tips to enrich vocabulary 2. supplied the students with model writings 3. guided the students to develop ideas through giving some hints about the topic
7.	Badshah Faisal Institute (Boys')	1. asked the students to read English newspapers, magazines and story books. 2. asked the students to enjoy TV and Radio programmes. 3. asked the students to write letters to friends and relatives.
8.	Badsha Faisal Institute (Girls')	asked the students to take care of reading, spelling and listening.
9.	Bindubashini Govt. High School Tangail	(did not write anything.)

**Table – 6.14: 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 was seen that no one had a clear idea of the ways of teaching writing. This might have happened because of their lack of training.

#### **6.3.3.3. What should be emphasized in the writing classes-fluency or accuracy ?**

In case of development of students' writing ability three teachers emphasized both fluency and accuracy, two teachers emphasized only fluency and one teacher emphasized only accuracy. But according to the modern approach of the process theory of writing fluency should be emphasized in order to improve the students' independent writing ability. Accuracy can be emphasized in the grammar classes but while the students are writing, they should be encouraged to keep on writing without fearing the grammatical mistakes much. From the teachers' statements it was seen that they had different opinions about their focus of teaching writing in English. The modern theories of writing focus on fluency rather than on accuracy. Zamel (1987), Hillock's (1989), and Mussay suggest that writing classes must be devoted to numerous opportunities to write but attention to grammar is played down. So from their suggestions it is seen that the main focus of the writing classes must be on fluency rather than on accuracy. Though Numan (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 development stage. From the teachers' statements it is seen that they don't have a common opinion about the focus of classroom teaching. Unless the teachers have a clear idea of the focus of the writing, students' writing ability will not have a clear direction and standard.

#### 6.3.3.4. Method of correction

Regarding doing correction of the students' writing products four teachers said that they corrected the students' writing products during the class and two teachers said that they made the corrections after the class. In fact teachers should spend most of the time in assisting the students to go on with their writing. If they check their work in the classroom, the students will not get enough support from their teachers to create ideas and achieve fluency in their writing. According to Burton (1973) the improvement in writing is a slow process and the shorter the instructional period, the less the improvement.

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.

#### 6.3.3.5. Difficulties the teachers 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 difficulties are given in the following table:

Total No. of teacher samples answered the question	Type of difficulties the teacher mentioned	No. of teacher samples mentioned the difficulty
7	I. Students' weakness in grammar	4
	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 power.	1

Table - 6.15: 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 developments in the students. As a result the students remained weak in all the basic elements of written English.

#### **6.3.4 Comparison and contrast between the statement of the teachers of group A and group B**

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

From the statement of the teachers of group A it is seen that the common type of work the teachers of this group was 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'. These 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 writing.

On the other hand the common areas of writing work the teachers of schools of group B were dealing with 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', 'Fruits of Bangladesh'. Most of the topics seemed to be traditionally used topics that 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 that



were not much helpful to the development of their independent writing ability. 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) areas of writings should be related to students' interests. Zamel (1987) 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.

#### **6.3.4.2 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 writing and how to expand the ideas into different paragraphs. This is also noticeable that teachers of this group put less emphasis 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 thought group like Hedge (1988), Tribble (1986) and Mussay 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 theory of writing Zamel (1982), Mussay, Hillock (1984, 86). E.V. Gatesby (1950) suggest that the study of traditional grammar has little effect on the improvement of independent 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, two emphasized learning grammatical rules and one teacher did not give any instruction. It seemed 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.

#### **6.3.4.3 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. But the proponents of the process approach to the development of writing ability suggest that in the development of the writing skill grammatical accuracy play a little role. Hillock (1984, 86) 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.

#### **6.3.4.4 Method of correction the teachers followed while checking students' writings**

Regarding the time of correcting the 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.

But most of the teachers of group B said that they corrected students' writings during the class. Four teachers out of six said that they corrected the writings during the class.

Regarding the method of correction teachers of group A said that they corrected the students' work 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 only one teacher out of six of group B 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 is clear that the teachers of this group might not have had any clear idea about the method of correction.

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. Garner and Lambert (1972) state, "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.

#### **6.3.4.5 Difficulties the 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 hardworking 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 blamed the current English language syllabus of the secondary level to be a faulty one while other two teachers reported the lack of proper

English learning environment and lack of students' creative power 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 that can be termed as the basic problems in developing writing. The difficulties the teachers of group A faced were related to the perfection of the students' ability to write. 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 hardworking and they could not plan and frame their ideas properly.

#### **6.4 Analysis of students' productions**

##### **6.4.1 Introduction**

Analyzing the 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	4. King Khalid Institute.
2. New Horizon Academy	5. Tejgaon Govt. High School.
3. Manarat Dhaka.	6. Govt. Science College School.
	7. Badshah Faisal Institute (Boys')
	8. Badshah Faisal Institute (Girls')
	9. Bindubashini Govt. High School.

**Table - 6.16: 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 is given below. The analysis was done under the following categories.

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

#### 6.4.2 Analysis of the scripts of the students of Group A

**Structure:** On analyzing the test papers of the 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 that is 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. 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 their sound grammatical knowledge and produced correct sentences though some

of the students committed some minor mistakes. The mistakes some of the students made are mainly related to the use of *have / has* and *appropriate prepositions*.

**Length:** Almost all of the students wrote quite a satisfactory length of writing. They wrote on an average 20 sentences in their papers.

#### 6.4.3 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 could not give any shape to their writings. That means they did 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 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 use 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 types of 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 that prove that the students depended on 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 words:** Grammatical mistakes were a common feature of the products of the students of group B. Most of the students committed different types of grammatical mistakes in their writings. The only exception were the students of school 9 who made very few grammatical mistakes. However, examples of common mistakes, which the students of all the other schools committed, are given below:

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

**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.*

**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.*

Students of some of the schools of group B make different types of mistakes besides the mistakes mentioned above. The types of mistakes and their examples are given below:

**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.*

**Lack of sequence of tenses :** Students of schools 5 and 6 committed mistakes related to tense. Some examples 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 was running another from another." etc.*

**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 of writing. Except some of the students of schools 4 and 8 almost all of the students produced quite a satisfactory length of writing.

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

### **6.5.1 Introduction**

In order to examine the creative writing standard 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 class test. After the test the teachers marked some of the papers. Later I marked all the papers by myself. The papers were marked out of 50 and the marking scheme I selected was as follows:

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

Out of this 50 marks I fixed the passing grade 25 (50% marks) 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.



<b>Schools of Group - A</b>					
<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Names of Schools Visited</b>	<b>Total Number of student samples participated in the test</b>	<b>Number of student samples scored less than 50% marks</b>	<b>Number of student samples scored 50%-60% marks</b>	<b>Number of student samples scored more than 60% marks</b>
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%)
<b>Schools of Group - B</b>					
<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Names of Schools Visited</b>	<b>Total number of student samples participated in the test</b>	<b>Number of student samples scored less than 50% marks</b>	<b>Number of student samples scored 50%-60% marks</b>	<b>Number of student samples scored more than 60% marks</b>
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-6.17: Performance of the students of the schools of the two groups-group - A & group - B**

## 6.5.2 Analysis of the performance of the students in the writing

### proficiency tests

The picture of 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 lie 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 Bindubashini Govt. High School, 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 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.

## 6.6 Comparison and contrast between students' production of the institutions of two groups

### 6.6.1 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.

#### **6.6.2 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 dieting 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 could not 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 paragraph writing 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 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. And 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 might have taken practical steps and motivated the students to help their students achieve the ability of writing independently. They also might have had a good knowledge of the process of writing which they tried to impart in the students. As a result the students could achieve a good standard of writing independently. On the other hand the teachers of group B might have failed to teach their students the right process of writing and this resulted in the rote learning of the compositions which might have thwarted the students' ability to express their own ideas.

### **6.6.3 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 to 300 words in their essays. Though some of the students could not complete their writings, most of them 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, a remarkable number of 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 might have 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 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 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 motivated the students to write more than the teachers of group B did to their students.

#### **6.6.4 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, stressed, 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 seem to have been exposed to a variety of language skills like - reading, writing, speaking and listening more than the students of group B did. The more the learners get exposed to different language skills the more would be their attainment in writing and learning new and appropriate words. This is understood from the comments of Widdowson (1996) who says 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 could learn to use a wider range of appropriate vocabulary in their writings.

#### **6.6.5 Grammar / Grammar Words:**

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 his own master 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 caused the students to do so many mistakes. The teachers of group B might not have linked the grammar exercises to the development of national 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, the 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 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 that they might have studied 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 did not know how to create and develop ideas and how to structure a writing. They seemed to have depended upon their rote learning. More so, the teachers failed to grow interest in learning writing in the students. It is seen that out of the 28 students of group B 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 the grammatical accuracy, their students were mostly weak in grammar. So their ways of teaching contributed little to the improvement of their writing. So it is clear that the students of these schools did not get sufficient 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.



## **6.7 Analysis of the classroom observation reports.**

### **6.7.1 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 the students' progress

### **6.7.2 Analysis of the classroom observation reports of the schools of group A**

#### **6.7.2.1 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 in an EFL classroom. 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 was quite agreeable.

#### 6.7.2.2 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, talked to the students in English. The students seemed to have understood their teachers' lecture in English.

#### 6.7.2.3 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.

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

##### □ Prewriting activities

All the 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 to the questions regarding their daily diets. The students seemed to be confident enough to write down the paragraph. When warmed up enough for the writing test, he asked the students to start their writing. The teacher of school 2 was dealing with essay writing. The topic of the day was Best Ways to Enjoy the Leisure time. 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.

- 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 decoration of the writing.

Then he divided the students 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 sometime 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 spoken English was very good and he emphasized the grammatical correctness and clear organization of ideas to produce a 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 oriented 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 memories and ideas. Finally the teacher asked the students to start their writing.

So it is seen that the teachers of this group had taken a special step, 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 can easily say

that the teachers of the schools of group A were well aware of an effective method of teaching writing.

#### **6.7.2.5 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 appreciably 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 composing their writings. 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 is parallel to the atmosphere of the classroom suggested by Hamp Lyons and Heasley (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 created such an environment in the classroom.

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

All the teachers of this group monitored the progress of the students' writing test. They checked whether any students were facing any problem in framing ideas and all of them were working independently or not.

### **6.7.3 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 the learning outcomes of the students of the schools of the group seemed to be helpful to flourish their independent writing ability. Teaching methodology of the teachers seemed to be effective. Their selection of topics, integrating the language skills, their guidelines for the students to go forward and write confidently and their monitoring of the students' writings seemed to be very productive.

### **6.7.4. Analysis of the classroom observation reports of the schools of group B**

#### **6.7.4.1 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 that 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 strengths of the classes of this group were much higher.

#### **6.7.4.2 The language the teacher used**

Of the six teachers of the schools of this group the teachers of school 6, 7 and 8 used English while conducting the class. Of 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 sometimes spoke in Bangla and sometimes in English.

#### **6.7.4.3 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 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 10 minutes, 17 minutes and 10

minutes respectively for administrative and other activities. Using such high amount of time for the administrative and other purposes seemed to be much more than necessary in the administrative and other purposes in a class of average 40 minutes.

#### **6.7.4.4 Teaching skills and strategies adopted by the teachers**

- **Prewriting activities**

Of the six teachers of this group, three 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 organized a limited scale of prewriting activities. The teacher of school 6 held a brief lecture on the probable work. She was conducting the class on a personal letter writing. The subject matter of the letter 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 questions to some of the students. 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 sometime. Some of the students seemed very nervous to write instantly and they refused to write. Some of the students took the test.

#### **6.7.4.5 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 frame 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 was moving around the class, she did not ask anything to any student.

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

None of the teachers monitored the progress of their student's 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.

#### **6.7.5 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 enough for the improvement of the students' independent writing ability. Most of the teachers of this group did not do any pre-writing activities to warm up the students for being stimulated to frame their ideas and to produce a good composition. 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 even did they monitor the progress of students' work.

#### **6.7.6 Comparison and contrast between the Classroom observation reports of the schools of two groups.**

##### **6.7.6.1 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. The applied linguists observe the class size as an important factor affecting the attainment of a language. E.V. Gatesby (1950) comments that 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 observation we see that the number of students of the classes of the schools of group A was quite nearer to the expected number of students to be taught in an EFL class. On the other hand the average 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 students' achievement in learning writing.

#### **6.7.6.2 The language the teacher used**

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

#### **6.7.6.3 Utilization of class time**

It was seen that the teachers of the schools of group A spent 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 where the teachers of group B did spent more than 10 minutes for the same purpose. As the students of group A got more time of instruction than the students of group B, the students of group A might have been benefited more in improving their writing ability than the students of group B.

#### **6.7.6.4 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 delivering lecture about the subject matters, conducting question answer session, giving some instruction about arranging ideas, organizing group discussion among the students, discussing the basic elements of writing etc.

On the other hand only three teachers of group B organized pre-writing activities in on a limited scale their classes. The other three teachers did not organize any pre-writing activities. Examples of pre-writing activities the teachers of group B undertook are delivering-lecture, writing notes on the board, supplying the students with 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 activities are an important step towards developing students' writing ability, which has been suggested by many applied linguists like Hedge (1988), Tribble (1986), the students of group A seemed to have been assisted more by their teachers than the students of group B most of whom did not get any support from their teachers. So the difference in assistance to the students might have affected the writing ability of the students of both the groups- the students of group A doing better than the students of group B.

#### **6.7.6.5 Atmosphere of the classroom**

- **Teachers' assistance to the students in developing their ideas.**

The atmosphere 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 lacked proper atmosphere where most of the teachers did not extend their assistance to the students to frame their ideas neither before their writing nor during the writing activities. It seemed that the teachers of group B did not have enough idea of establishing a supportive and self-motivating environment in the classroom. As this kind of atmosphere is seen as an essential prerequisite to develop the students' writing ability which has been suggested by many applied linguists like Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (1987: 2-3). The students of group A seemed to have had a better writing ability than the students of group B.

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

All the teachers of group A monitored the progress of the students' work. They were found 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 did not monitor 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 says 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 (1984) 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 must 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 a very little input and motivation from their teachers which might have affected their progress very much.

## 6.8 Brief comparison of different aspects of group A with those of group B.

Areas & Categories	Group A	Group B
<b>6.8.1 Students' statement</b>		
<b>a. Time spent for written English classes each week</b>	3 hours	2 hours
<b>b. What the student samples liked to do best in English classes:</b>	Writing (70% students)	Writing (57% students)
<b>c. Main difficulties the student samples faced in improving writing.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Weakness in grammar</li> <li>❖ Shortage of vocabulary</li> <li>❖ Weakness in organizing ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Weakness in grammar</li> <li>❖ Shortage of vocabulary</li> <li>❖ Bad spelling</li> <li>❖ Lack of confidence</li> </ul>
<b>d. What the student samples expected from their teachers to get rid of the difficulties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Help in learning more necessary grammatical features</li> <li>❖ More guidelines to improve writing skill</li> <li>❖ Help in enriching vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Help in enriching grammatical knowledge</li> <li>❖ Proper guideline to improve writing</li> <li>❖ Help in enriching vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>6.8.2 Teachers' statement</b>		
<b>a. Nature of the work done in the class</b>	Mainly essay writing	Mainly paragraph writing
<b>b. Common guidelines given by the majority of the teacher samples to improve students' writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers gave them clear idea about the elements of a good writing: correct grammar, appropriate vocabulary, good spelling, organization of ideas and decoration of the writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No common guidelines were found.</li> <li>• Different teacher samples gave different suggestions</li> <li>• They mainly asked the students to enrich vocabulary, grammar and practice writing.</li> </ul>
<b>c. What should be emphasized in the writing class fluency or accuracy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of the teacher samples emphasized both accuracy and fluency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of the teacher samples emphasized both accuracy and fluency.</li> </ul>
<b>d. Method of correction the teacher samples followed while checking students' writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority teacher samples said that they usually corrected the copies after the class.</li> <li>• All the teacher samples corrected the writing by marking all the mistakes and giving comments about the mistakes on their papers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority of the teacher samples said that they corrected the writings during the class time.</li> <li>• Most of the teachers could not give any clear idea about the method of correction.</li> </ul>

Aspects	Group A	Group B
<b>6.8.3 Analysis of students' production</b>		
<b>a. Structure</b>	Writings were well structured.	Most of the writings were not well structured.
<b>b. Use of students' own ideas</b>	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.
<b>c. Length/Fluency</b>	Almost all the student samples were found fluent.	Many of the students were not found fluent.
<b>d. Vocabulary range/use of content words</b>	Most of the student samples used a wide range of content words accurately.	Most of the students used a limited set of content words.
<b>e. Grammar</b>	Most of the student samples 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 : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• subject-verb disagreement,</li> <li>• improper use of articles,</li> <li>• inappropriate use of prepositions,</li> <li>• inappropriate use of singular and plural nouns,</li> <li>• lack of sequence of tenses and</li> <li>• ill-structured sentences.</li> </ul>
<b>6.8.4 Classroom observation reports</b>		
<b>a. Class size</b>	Average number of students 27	Average number of students 43
<b>b. Use of English</b>	100%	around 50%
<b>c. Utilization of class time for academic purposes</b>	90%	75%
<b>d. Teaching skills and strategies</b>	100% of the teacher samples organized prewriting activities.	50% of the teacher samples organized prewriting activities to some extent.

Aspects	Group A	Group B
<b>e. Atmosphere of the classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of the teacher samples were active in helping the students generate ideas.</li> <li>• 100% of the teacher samples monitored the progress of their students' work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17% of the teachers were to some extent active in the class</li> <li>• 0% teachers monitored the progress of their students' work.</li> </ul>
<b>6.8.5 Performance (scores) of the student samples in the writing proficiency tests (Papers were marked out of 50)</b>		
<b>a. Total student samples took the tests.</b>	66	131
<b>b. Percentage of student samples scored less than 50% marks.</b>	0	67
<b>c. Percentage of student samples scored more than 60% marks.</b>	87	5

Table-6.18 : Brief comparison of different aspects between group A and group B

## 6.9 Conclusion

From the above depicted brief comparison in between different aspects of two groups it is evident that the students of group A had a much better writing skill in both quality and quantity than the students of group B. The analysis of data and the comparison between different aspects of the data of the two groups- group A and group B reveal the difference. Let us now discuss the differences and see how they affect the writing ability of the students.

From the analysis of the students' statement it is evident that the students of group A got much more time every week for writing 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 inclined to learn writing. According to Haq (1981) achievement in English is facilitated by favorable 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 the students of group A be better in writing than the students of group B.

As regards the main difficulties the 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 their lack confidence. So it can be deduced that the students of group A were more confident than the students of group B in independent writing skill. Lack of confidence 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 a high affective filter, which prevents 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 many 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 suggested 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 greater texts than the students of group B.

As regards the guidelines given by the teachers to improve students' writing a sharp difference is seen in 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 give the students any clear guidelines. They asked the students to study grammar, enrich vocabulary and practice writing but they did not suggest how to practice or what to practise. 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 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 Numan (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 development 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 received 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' productions taken in the form of English writing proficiency test, it was found that the productions of the students of group A were better both in 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 productions of group A is students' ability to produce their own ideas independently which most of the students of group B lacked. They simply 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 variety of differences between different aspects of 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 (just double the strength of group A). 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 observation it can be said that the pace of language learning was much slower in the

students of group B than in the students of group A. In other word it can be said that the overall teaching-learning environment of group B classes was greatly affected by the too big class size.

Regarding using English in the classroom it is seen that the teachers of group A conducted the English classes completely in English while most 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 were. In other words it can be said that the students of group A received much more input than the students of group B did.

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 points of view 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 it 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 these activities. 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 teachers 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 B. 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 64, 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 where 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 where only 5% of the students of group B scored more than 60% marks.

## **6.10 Presentation of the findings**

### **6.10.1 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.

### **6.10.2. 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 testify the students on those selected compositions. As a result the 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-6.11 and on 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.

Their replies imply that they 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 skill. Based on the information obtained from table-3 it is seen that the topics teachers dealt were very common topics which are usually used by almost all the schools of Bangladesh. Most of the students knew the topics, so they could collect the compositions from the books available in the markets and they could easily reproduce the

compositions. But this way their independent writing ability can not improve.

### 6.10.3. Hypothesis - 1.b

*Most of the teachers don't 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' statement this hypothesis was largely accepted. From the reports and the analysis it was revealed that very few teachers gave the students practical guidelines and programmes to improve their writing. Their statement suggests that they knew very little of the process of improving writing skill. Although some of them gave the students some guidelines, those were not enough to give the students a clear idea of improving writing skill.

404140

### 6.10.4. 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-6.5 and 6.8 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 book dependent in giving their lectures and were found having little knowledge of modern ways of teaching writing. According to Table-4 it was also found that not only teachers' inefficiency but also different sorts of students' limitations and education system of our country are hindrances to the desirable achievement in the students' independent writing ability. The table shows that out of ten teachers, five teachers commented that their students did not show enough interest to improve their writing ability. They also observed a good number of limitations in

the students. Six teachers talked about their weakness in grammar, five teachers observed weakness of spelling in their students and two teachers commented that schools needed to provide them with more teaching materials for helping the students learn writing better.

The findings of table-6.4 and 6.8 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, 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 faced in improving writing.

#### **6.10.5. Hypothesis – 3**

*Teachers' assistance to the students in framing ideas and their close monitoring of students' activities help them write better. The more the teachers help the 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-6.17 and the findings presented in the classroom observation reports in Appendix this hypothesis was largely accepted. The results presented in table-6.17 and the findings presented in the classroom observation reports yield very positive correlations between teachers' assistance to the students in framing ideas, and students' improvement of 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-6.17 show that the performance of the students of the schools of group-A was quite satisfactory. The most remarkable matter is that none of the students of these schools scored less than 50% marks.

Vast majority 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 which was considered to be a satisfactory standard of creative writing ability.



## ***Chapter - 7***

### ***Conclusions and Recommendations***

## Chapter - 7

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1 Conclusions

In the light of the findings presented, 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 in English in Bangladesh.

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

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

In most of the secondary level schools English teachers don't follow any particular 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. According to David Nunan (1991) there are two approaches to developing writing skills: (i) Product oriented approach and (ii) Process approach. 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. In process approach the focus is primarily on quantity rather than on quality. The proponents of this approach suggest that learners should concentrate primarily 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 teachers or with fellow students. 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 must change and he might make necessary modifications in the text. Tribble (1986) suggests one of the most commonly reported outlines of the process of writing as Pre-writing  $\Rightarrow$  Composing  $\Rightarrow$  Revising  $\Rightarrow$  Editing. But 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 necessary time for the expected and real development of the students' creative writing faculty. In most cases no idea can be developed as to whether the teachers follow any practical methodology to teach writing English. Though some of the teachers seem to be applying some of the ways discussed above to develop writing, for example arranging some pre-writing activities like developing ideas, doing group work, most of the teachers seem to follow the traditional reading and writing on some common and easy topics beyond which neither the teachers seem to know anything nor are the students able to produce any work independently.

As regards the sufficient knowledge of the teachers of 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 don't 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 particular essays and compositions written in different books. As a result the students usually do not feel to do any work themselves hence they remain weak in creative writing in English. Most of the teachers are found not dedicated enough to develop the students' creative writing ability. They usually like to sit in the chair and ask the students to write whatever they can but do not give them any guideline and do not help them developing ideas.

As to the hindrances to the desirable achievement in students' independent writing ability by which students can express their ideas in correcting sentences, the present study shows that the inefficiency of the English teachers as well as some limitations of the students are the major hindrances. From their responses to the open question as to the difficulties they faced in improving free writing ability, it is clear that majority of the students were weak 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 have to read 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 collected 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, use of singular and plural nouns. All these pictures say that not only the inefficiency 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 students in framing ideas, and their close monitoring of students' activities, and the improvement of

students' writing ability. The significant positive co-relations between the teachers' assistance to the students in framing ideas, and their close monitoring of the students' activities and the improvement of students' independent writing ability suggest that the students who received better assistance and monitoring 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 teaching techniques and teachers' personalities can certainly affect the attitudes and motivation of students..." (p.g.). Besides this some other studies also reveal a strong co-relation between teachers' assistance and the improvement of the foreign or second language. Papalia and Zampogna (1972) find that the advancement of the foreign language study depend mostly on the teacher's behaviours 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 in order 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 Heasley (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 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. The important point is that in order to be successful in

independent or creative writing learners must have a reliable company and caring assistance of trained and devoted teachers.

## 7.2 Pedagogical Suggestions

To meet the English language needs of the country, to fulfil the expectation of the nation—expectation 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 investigations and modern development in the field of language teaching is needed. To cater these needs appropriate textbooks, favourable English language learning environment, availability of qualified English teachers and plenty of helpful teaching materials are a must. Again these materials should be used as they are intended to be used. That is teachers and students should know how to use them. For this to happen both teachers and students should be properly oriented.

Teachers and other parties should remember that students need English to use it in real communication in order to make it sure that students are achieving desirable improvement in all necessary skills, specially in independent writing ability, the teaching methodology must be changed.

Finally, at each level of development appropriate measures should be taken to make the learning effective. For achieving this goal evaluation should be an integral part of each of the levels.

The final part of this concluding chapter suggests certain measures for all those related to the English language development programme specially to the teaching of independent writing skills.

### **Recommendations for the policy makers**

1. The policy makers should do the need analysis not only considering the students' English language needs but also taking into account the

existing ELT condition, infrastructure of the institutions, longstanding ELT tradition of the country, teachers' and learners' attitude towards English. In order to achieve the ELT target the government should first develop the infrastructure of the institutions and convince the people working at different levels of curriculum development. For the proper actualization language programme what is wanted in the planning level should be understood and followed by the parties working in the implementation levels.

2. Development programmes like teachers' training, workshop, seminar, publishing journals and bulletins should be undertaken and implemented in the right manner.

### **Recommendations for the NCTB**

At present NCTB prepares and publishes curriculum documents as guidelines for teachers, and textbook writers and produce text books for primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. When new textbooks are introduced, the board sometimes carries out teachers training programmes in support of these books.

For the proper implementation of the curriculum, the NCTB can take the following steps.

#### **1. Textbooks and supplementary materials**

For textbook contents to be interesting and effective the following things are suggestive:

- a) Text book contents should be authentic and include original and retold work of creative writers.
- b) Language should be presented at discourse. Opportunities should be provided for integrated language skills. There should be sufficient scope of and obligation for practicing free and independent writing skill.
- c) Text books should include varieties of topics and themes. All the lessons should cover the necessary element 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 soon 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 textbooks, NCTB should arrange regular training programmes for the teachers and the training programs 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.

## **4. Recommendation for education boards**

The education boards should monitor the ELT programmes of the schools and see if they are interpreting the curriculum and if the teachers are teaching the students the way the planners 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 skill.

## **5. Recommendation for the teachers**

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

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

- a) At the beginning of the class the teacher should interpret what is intended in the planning level of the curriculum. He should be able to use communicative language materials and books effectively.
- b) 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 turn their one-way teaching method to 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.
- c) Teachers must have a sound knowledge of the process of writing and they should also enrich the students with the proper knowledge of the process of writing.
- d) Teachers should always give proper guidelines to the students to improve their writing.
- e) While teaching the teacher should evaluate how far learning is taking place. After the completion of each class, he/she must measure the students' achievement and take necessary steps to eliminate the weaknesses of the students.
- f) Teachers should be very active in the class. He should help the students in creating ideas and monitor the students' progress of

writing. He should try his best to eliminate the fear of students in writing independently.

- g) The teacher should motivate the students to read extensively and write on new and real life areas. They should never encourage students to memorize some common compositions and varieties types of composition writing tasks should be given.

Bangladesh is not an exception to those countries that have gone through a longstanding tradition of grammar translation method of language teaching. Hence, the total U- turn from the GTM, which is deep rooted in our ELT culture has frustrated many of the teachers as they could do very little to cope with the changes that had been made in the planning levels of the curriculum as they were all on a sudden presented with a communicative syllabus. As a result many of them keep aside the new syllabus and textbooks of NCTB and teach different things in their own way.

Finally, a rational curriculum should be planned to meet not only the learners' needs but also take into account all the hurdles the students face in improving writing and the teachers face in teaching independent writing skills.

**A P P E N D I X**

## APPENDIX - A

### Classroom observation reports of the visited schools

#### 1. Classroom observation report of Rajuk Uttara Model School

For visiting an English Classroom 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 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 wrote the questions on the board and asked some of the students to answer the questions. Sometimes he himself answered some questions. The teacher then asked the students to develop a paragraph on their own daily diet on the basis of these questions given above.

After writing the questions the teacher asked the students if they had anything more to know. The students didn't respond. Then he asked the students to write a paragraph on the given topic.

The students worked individually. The teacher was active in the class and he was monitoring the class properly. Sometimes he helped the students in forming their own ideas. Sometimes the students discussed some of the points with the teacher. The students wrote 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 ended the class. I thanked all the students for their cooperation in making my visit successful. Not only the students of that class, all the teachers of the English department of that school were 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 and continued up to 11.30am. The teacher entered at 10.05am. He took about 5 minutes for administrative work.

The teacher briefed the students about the purpose of my visit to the class. Then he started his lecture. The class 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 guidelines to develop an essay on the discussed topic. The guidelines 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 finally he asked them to write a composition on 300 words on the given topic. The students wrote about 1 hour. The teacher was very active in the class. Sometimes he helped the students in groups and sometimes he was helping individuals. While helping the students he was also answering students' questions. He formed three groups and asked them to have some discussion amongst themselves. After the group works the students, were worked individually. They seemed to be confident. At the end of the class he collected all the scripts 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 15.8.2002. 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 and then took my seat at the back of the class.

He took six 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 are mentioned here:

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

His English was very good and he conducted the whole class in English. He emphasized the clear organization and grammatical correctness for a good writing. He asked the students to prepare for writing an essay. He asked for the topics from me. I gave them two topics. The topics were as follows:

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

Then the teacher asked the students to write an essay on any of the topics. I expected that he would write some helpful words on the board but he didn't 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?”, “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 on any one of the topics. They worked quietly and finished the writing at about 8.40. To help the class go on writing the teacher discussed some of the students’ parts of writing and discussed the weaknesses. He also allowed the students to participate in the have group discussion for sometime. 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 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 24<sup>th</sup> June 2002. Mr. Sayedur Rahman was the English teacher to receive me on that day. I visited an English writing period 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 didn't 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 didn't 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 didn't 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 copies in the class and the rest of the copies after the class. After the class the teacher told me that as the students had already known how to write a formal letter, he didn't discuss the format.

## **5. Classroom observation report of Tejgaon Govt. High School**

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 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 for observing the class.

The teacher started his lecture on writing a paragraph on "A Hawker". Though the teacher was briefed about the nature of the work to be done in the class, he didn't follow that. I had asked him to conduct a free writing class on an extempore topic but the topic that he was doing 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 the paragraph. He started his lecture in a very plain way. Though the class was a writing class, the teacher didn't give them any guideline to start the writing or establish any framework to work confidently. He even didn't 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. After sometime the students submitted their writings with the teacher. The teacher collected the copies and ended the class. I thanked the students for their cooperation and left the classroom. The teacher checked the copies after the class and handed over them to me.

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

I made a visit to the Govt. Science College School on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2002. I had to obtain the permission from the Principal of the college prior to the 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 passed my H.S.C exam from.

The class started at 1.00pm 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:

**"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 a letter. The students didn't ask her any questions. It seemed that they were not used to asking questions in the class-and creating their own ideas.

The students wrote about 30 minutes and after they had written the letter, the teacher collected the papers from the students. During their writing she moved around but she did not look at their copies or help them. The students were working individually. After the scripts had been collected I thanked the students and left the classroom.

The teacher corrected the copies after the class.

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

I visited an English writing class of IX B of the Institute on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2002. I had talked to the Principal of the Institute to make the arrangements to visit the classroom. On the appointed day, Mr. Principal cordially received me and introduced me to the English teacher 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 period 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 on 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 shaded- brick built*
- \* *Bed rooms and drawing, dining*
- \* *Study room*
- \* *Kitchen*
- \* *Flower garden*
- \* *High road*
- \* *River*
- \* *Happy*

The teacher then explained the notes and he was asking 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 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 didn't monitor their writing. They simply finished writing and the teacher checked the scripts after the class.

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

On the same day, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2002, I visited another classroom of the same institute. That was. IX A of the girls' section. Mrs. Nazmu 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 two topics- "Food, One of the Basic Needs of Human Life" and "The house I live in" one after another. 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 didn't involve the students to find out any new points. The students simply copied the points. 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 topics.

- *Food*

- *The house I live in.*

“The House I Live in” had been discussed the class before. The students then wrote quietly for sometime. Some of the students seemed to be nervous to write instantly. Some of them wrote. The students worked individually. No group work was there. They wrote about 10 minutes.

The classroom was moderately decorated and airy. The teacher did not monitor their work. After 20 minutes she collected the papers. She ended the class and checked the scripts 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 24<sup>th</sup> June 2002. Mr. Sayedur Rahman was the English teacher to receive me on that day. I visited an English writing period 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 didn't 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 didn't 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 didn't monitor the class while they were writing. They wrote about 20 minutes and submitted their scripts to the teacher. The teacher checked some of the copies in the class and the rest after the class. After the class the teacher told me that as the students had already known how to write a formal letter, he didn't discuss the format.



## APPENDIX - B

### Questionnaire for the Teacher

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

**Topic :**

***Creative writing in English : How far Bangladeshi Education System focuses on its development ? (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 your spend on writing per week? .....
4. What were the last three topics done in class?  
a) .....  
b) .....  
c) .....  
What is the next topic? .....
5. What kinds of guidelines do you give the students to improve their writing ability? .....
6. What do you think should be emphasized -- 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 done in class?

a)

b)

c)

What is the next topic? .....

## APPENDIX - C

### Names of the Schools Surveyed

Name of the schools surveyed and the dates for the administration of the questionnaires, of the writing proficiency test and classroom observation tasks.

Sl. 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	02.07.2002	02.07.2002
2.	New Horizon Academy	21.08.2002	21.08.2002
3.	Manarat Dhaka	15.08.2002	15.08.2002
4.	King Khaled Institute	03.08.2002	03.08.2002
5.	Tejgaon Govt. High School		
6.	Govt. Science College School	03.07.2002	03.07.2002
7.	Badshah Faisal Institute (Boys)	13.07.2002	13.07.2002
8.	Badshah Faisal Institute (Girls)	13.07.2002	13.07.2002
9.	Bindubashini Govt. High School	24.06.2002	24.06.2002

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