

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

This is the study entitled **Essay Writing Ability of Grade Ten Students**. This research consists of background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definitions of the key terms.

### 1.1 Background

Language is a means of communication. Human beings, animals as well as birds can communicate with each other within their group by using sounds or signs. Human beings are different from and superior to animals and birds because of language. Through the medium of language, our ideas, feelings and thoughts are revealed. It is specially a human possession. Chomsky (1965, p.15) claimed the existence of innate properties of language to explain the child's mastery of his native language in such a short period of time despite the highly abstract nature of rules of language. It is possible with the help of the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) which is in human mind. Lennaberg (1967, p.21) says, "Language is species specific behavior and certain mode of perception categorizing abilities and other language related mechanisms are biologically determined." Language is generally considered to be the standard variety of linguistic code because it differs from other varieties of linguistic code, such as dialect, register and idiolect. For Jespersen (1992, p.4) Language is not an end itself it is a way of connecting souls a means of communication." Crystal (2003, p.212) also defines language as "the systematic conventional use of sound, signs or written symbols in the human society for communication and self expression." This is a broad definition, which includes different forms of language like written language and sign language including the proper language speech. Following Wardhaugh (1998, p.1), "A language is what the members of a particular society speaks." Thus language has been defined

variously by various linguists. No single definition is perfect in itself because none of the definition covers all aspects of language. But it is widely accepted that language is a complex phenomenon due to its abstract nature.

Skills mean ability to do something well and expertly. Language learning means learning skills of language. Language has four different skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among them listening and reading are receptive skills and speaking and writing are productive skills.

Writing is an activity by which the visual representation of our thoughts, feelings, emotions and ideas are expressed. It is one of the language skills. The things that we speak is temporary but the things imprinted as a written work can be kept for further and coming generation that they can experience the flavor of that material. So to keep it as memorandum or say the long term document written work or the writing is needed.

If we go back to the history of writing it has its long history. Harmer (2004, p.49) says:

The history of writing is as ancient as Indus Civilization. Some of the earliest writing found so far dates from about 5500 years ago. It was found at a place called Harappa in the region where the target Harappan or Indus civilization once flourished. There is incomplete agreement about the meaning of the symbols that were discovered. However, when the discovery was made the archaeologist Richard Meadow stated that the inscriptions had similarities to what became of the Indus Script, the first recognize language. Since then many different writing systems have involved around the world.

Writing started with our civilization. Human being started representing their thoughts and feeling day by day and that became a trend. We have such evident for such writing which is dated about 5500 years ago. It has been so long that writing became the part of our life and started keeping something for future. In such a way the writing originated in the world and became the part of our life. Harmer (1997, p.16) writes:

Our choice of language may depend upon the channel of communication. If we examine this concept more fully, we can identify language skills that native speakers and competent language user process. Literate people who use language have number of different abilities. They were able to speak on the telephone, write letters, and listen to the radio or read books. In other words, they pose the four basic language skills of writing, speaking, listening and reading. Speaking and writing involve language production so they are productive skills.

Each and every skill has its own specific significance; writing is one of the language skills necessary in both educational field and future career. One was judged in part by one's ability to put idea down in paper. Moreover, writing is thought as a medium of expression of ideas and views; it is one of the language skills equally necessary to be mastered by a language learner. It develops through various and continuous steps of progress and makes the students active in it. The main purpose of writing is to enable the learners for free composition and creativity.

An essay means a piece of composition on a topic. It is a written composition giving expression to one's own personal ideas or opinions on some topics.

Essay is a piece of writing usually short and in prose, on any subject.

Narayanswami (2000) says:

The essay is a long piece of composition on a theme or subject. It is self-contained, that is, it has a beginning, middle, and an end. The beginning usually introduces the subject in general forms. The middle of the essay develops the theme and presents the writer's thought on it. Then the essay is brought to a close in a suitable concluding passage. (p. 92).

On the basis of aforementioned definitions it can be concluded that an essay is a self-contained piece of writing in prose on a theme or subject. It is a written composition of giving expression to one's personal ideas or opinions on some topic, whether it expresses personal opinions or gives information on any given subject. Therefore, the essay must have unity, coherence, and conciseness, clear and systematic in the whole writing.

Essay is a short piece of writing on one particular subject that is written by a writer for publication. The dictionary points out two characteristics of essay (a) It can be written on any subject (science, culture, sports, politics, literatures, etc.) (b) It should be short. It is not and should not be as long a novel or an epic. Essay can be classified into several different types. According to subject matter, it can be political or literary, scientific or social, etc. according to style; it may be humorous or satirical, prosaic or poetic, and so on. According to the intention of the essayist, it can be descriptive or narrative, argumentative or explanatory, etc. Though there are different types of essays, my focus was on descriptive essay. Thus, here the study of descriptive essay writing ability was important to understand the writing ability of the students of public and government schools.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

There are four language skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among the four language skills reading and writing are highly emphasized where listening and speaking are given less attention in the Nepalese English language class of secondary level.

According to School Leaving Examination Specification Grid-2065, the secondary level compulsory English curriculum is entirely based on language skills. Unlike the grids of other core subject, language skills are considered as different areas of learning. In the S.L.C. examination 25% marks is allocated for listening and speaking. Out of these 10 % marks for listening and 15 % marks for speaking. 75% of the marks are allocated for reading and writing. Writing is the main means of assessing the students' ability. The present sets of textbooks have included some exercise for reading and writing along with listening and speaking skills. Writing skill has been given priority from the past and it still exists. Different methodologies, skills and materials have been providing by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) Sanothimi, Bhaktapur to improve writing skills. In the SLC examination students are also asked to write some compositions. These compositions are essays, letters, story, etc. Though, different opportunities and attention have been given in writing skills, students seem poor in writing. So the result of SLC has got less percentage than expectation.

It is necessary to study essay writing ability of the students to improve their essay writing performance. Therefore, this study entitled "Essay Writing Ability of Grade Ten Students" makes an attempt to analyze the situation.

## **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- I. To find out the descriptive essay writing ability of the students of public and private schools.

- II. To compare the essay writing ability of the students of grade ten public and private schools.
- III. To suggest some pedagogical implications.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

A research question is a clear, focused and concise question on the research study. It provides guidelines to the researcher. This study was oriented to find out the answer to the following questions:

- I. What is the students' essay writing ability in public and private schools?
- II. What are the differences between public and private schools students in essay writing?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study aimed to explore the essay writing ability of students who are studying public and private schools in grade ten. The findings of the study are expected to be beneficial to all those who are eagerly motivated towards language teaching and learning. Specially, teachers were benefitted by adopting the suggested pedagogical implications. In the same way, students were benefitted by getting appropriate instructions in the class room when the teachers apply suggested pedagogical implications. Similarly, this study was highly useful to the English language practitioners who want to undertake research in the field of language teaching. Moreover, this study was highly significant for school supervisors, subject experts, syllabus designers, textbook writers, materials producers and those who are directly and indirectly associated to teaching/learning language.

#### **1.6 Delimitations of the Study**

The scope of this study was limited on the following points:

- I. The study was delimited to sixty grade ten students of public and private schools.

- II. The study was based on six schools (three public and three private schools) in Letang VDC of Morang district.
- III. The study was further limited to the analysis of responses obtained from those sixty students.
- IV. The study was limited to the comparative study of descriptive essay writing ability of public and private schools' students.

### **1.7 Operational Definitions of Key Terms**

**Essay writing ability:** it refers to the students' ability in writing essay who are studying in class ten in public and private schools.

**Public school:** it refers to the schools which are supported by the aid of government of Nepal.

**Private school:** it refers to the schools which are not supported by the government.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter consists of review of theoretical literature, review related empirical literature, implication of review of the study and conceptual framework.

#### **2.1. Review of Theoretical Literature**

Review of theoretical literature provides an insight to the researcher related to a number of aspects that have a direct or indirect bearing on research topic. It serves as a basis for developing a theoretical framework which helps to investigate the problem that a researcher wishes to. So, this section includes the following theoretical reviews on language in relation to writing skills and essay writing.

##### **2.1.1 Language Skills**

Language is universally accepted as the amalgamation of four different interrelated skills. These are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among them listening and speaking are primary skills on the basis of priority, whereas reading and writing are secondary, such as listening and speaking are used more than reading and writing in daily communication. Listening and reading skills are called receptive skills and speaking and writing skills are called productive skills.

In conclusion, language is means of communication by which the world becomes narrow. Every person uses language for different purposes and most activities are done through language in the world.



### **2.1.2 Writing Skill**

Writing is one of the most important skills in learning a new language. It is a productive skill. It means to manipulate the mechanics of writing, structuring them in sensible words, sentences and paragraphs in order to make the reader understand the meaning of such complex effort. In other words, writing is the act of putting down the graphic symbols that present a language in order to convey some meaning so that the reader can grasp the information which the writer has tried to impart. Thus writing is an act of transmitting thoughts, feelings and ideas on paper.

Writing is an activity by which human beings communicate with one another and transmit their accumulated culture from one generation to another. It is through writing, we are able to share ideas, arouse feelings, persuade and convince others. Nunan (1989) says:

Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level, these include control of content, format, sentence, structure, vocabulary, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information in to cohesive and coherent paragraph and text. (p. 36).

From the above mentioned definition, we can say that writing is a very complex process and requires many composite skills, like mental, psychological, rhetorical and critical aspects. Writing is the system of written symbols which represent the sounds, syllables or words of language. Writing skill requires different mechanisms as capitalization, spelling and punctuation too. So, by using writing skill we can convey the meaning clearly.

Rivers (1968) says:

Writing refers to the expression of ideas in a consecutive way, according to the graphic conventions of the language; the ultimate aim of a writer at this stage is to be able to express himself in polished literary form which requires the utilization of a special vocabulary and certain refinement structure. (p.243)

So, writing is an activity to improve our understanding of any subject. Writing is the ability not only to put ideas from mind to paper but also to generate more meaning and clear ideas. According to Jordan (1999), “Writing is methods of human inter-communication by means of conventional visible marks.” (p.41). similarly White and Arndt (1991) include: “Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols .It is a thinking process in its own right .It is a permanent record, as a form of expression and as a means of communication.”(p, 3).

Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols. The symbols have to be arranged according to certain conventions to form a word and words have to be arranged to form sentences. Writing demands conscious intellectual effort, this usually has to be sustained over a considerable period of time.

### **2.1.3 Importance of Writing skill**

Writing is an act of transmitting thought, feelings and ideas from past to present and present to future. That is why it demands caution in using it. It is a transparent mirror which can present our knowledge and as well as experiences. It provides us with chance to acquire others 'ideas, feelings and thought. Among the four skills of language; writing is the output of listening, speaking and reading. Bacon (1987) says, “Writing attracts special importance because reading makes a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man.”(as cited in Sharma and Phyak, 2006, p.254).

The writing proficiency plays a vital role in securing good marks in the examinations. In all levels students are asked to give the answer in written form in their examinations. Secondary level students occasionally take part in writing contests like story writing, poetry writing, essay writing, letter writing, etc. If the students are not trained in writing skills, they cannot give their answer in limited time of examinations. So, the students must develop their writing skill to pass their examination. The students cannot be perfect in any language without knowledge of writing skill. Their English language competence is supposed to be better if they can write well.

Byrne (1991, p.56) highlights the importance of writing with following lines:

- Writing provides variety in classroom activities, serving as a break from oral work. At the same time, it increases the amount of language contact through work that can be set out of class.
- Writing is often needed for formal and informal testing. In some cases, of course a written test may even be appropriate for example, making note while listening.
- Exposure to the foreign language through more than one medium, especially if skills are properly integrated, appears to be more effective than relying on a single medium alone.

Writing homework exercises and other activities help the students to acquire the vocabulary and grammar of the lesson. Practically the student's minimum contact with the language in the class room must be expanded as much as possible. The overall objectives will help to help the learners to express their ideas in written text. Richards (1990, p.101) says "Written language is primarily transactional or message oriented. The goal of written language is to convey information accurately, effectively and appropriately."

In this way, the main purpose of writing is to enable the learners for free composition and creativity. Thus, writing is a transparent mirror, this can present out thoughts and experiences. Written documents can be presented for a long time. Whatever information about past is available in the preserved is the result of writing. Writing is a permanent record of human affairs, need and

accuracies. Writing has widely been used in order to transmit old experiences, knowledge of religion, philosophy, politics, sociology, literature and culture. The appointment of a job also starts with writing skill. Therefore, writing has greater importance as compared to the other skills of language.

#### **2.1.4 Writing an Essay**

An essay means a piece of composition on a topic. It is a written composition giving expression to one's own personal ideas or opinions on some topics.

Hornby (1990) defines essay as a "piece of writing usually short and in prose, on any one subject" (as cited in Subedi 2004, p, 98).

Narayanswami (2000) says:

The essay is a long piece of composition on a theme or subject. It is self-contained, that is, it has a beginning, middle and an end. The beginning usually introduces the subject in general forms. The middle of the essay develops the theme and presents the writer's thought on it. Then the essay is brought to a close in suitable concluding passage. (p. 92.)

On the basis of aforementioned definitions it can be concluded that an essay is a self contained piece of writing in prose on a theme or subject. It is a written composition of giving expression to one's own personal ideas or opinions on some topics, whether expresses personal opinions, or gives information on any given subject. Therefore, the essay must have unity, coherence, and conciseness and clear systematic in the whole writing. Descriptive essays are the accurate description of some places and things. So as the researcher I am going to focus on the descriptive essay.

#### **2.1.5 Parts of the Essay**

An essay is a piece of composition which has well-defined parts of its own. They are introduction or the beginning, body or the middle part and conclusion,

or the ending. Each of these parts plays vital roles to make an essay complete and well written. These three parts have their own role; they are completely inter-related. In other words, there must be unity, coherence, clarity and systematicity in the whole writing. According to Narayanswami (2000) these parts of essays are mentioned here (as cited in Shah 2005, p.102) below:

### **I. Introduction or the Beginning**

Introduction is the first part of an essay. It simply introduces the subject matter by giving general introduction of the topic. The introduction can consist of a definition or a proverb, or a very short paragraph or question or general statement, or leading up to the subject and so on. The main purpose of introduction is to draw the attention of the readers. It provides key notes to the readers. It is said that the introduction should be clean simple, complete and impressive to give the exact account of the subject.

### **II. Body or the Middle**

This is the second and the most important and largest part of the essay. It provides supporting ideas and details to explain and develop the main idea. Illustration, description or the supporting details of the central idea should be given after the introduction. It contains appropriate facts, anecdotes, figures, examples, logics and so on what are needed to clarify the subject matter. This is also called the discussion part. It is here that the writer convinces the reader of his point of view in this part. Coherence has to be well maintained because the description should follow the particular order to the requirement. This part of an essay is complete within itself, too because everything is clearly mentioned here.

### **III. Conclusion or the Ending**

As the introduction should arouse interest, the conclusion should satisfy it. Ending give final touches and leads the reader to a definite conclusion. An effectives and satisfying end to an essay is as important as an arresting

beginning. So, the ending should be satisfied by the conclusion. The ending may contain the writer's own opinion as the summary of the whole writing too. A good conclusion may consist of: (a) a summing up of the arguments and logics/ reasons of the essay, (b) final conclusion drawn from the subject matter, (c) a suitable quotation and (d) ending with the main point.

### **2.1.6 Types of Essays**

Essays can be classified on the basis of different criteria but the following classification is quite usual. Narayanswami (2000) has given the following types of essays. (as cited in Shah 2005, p.113).

#### **I. Descriptive Essays**

Descriptive essays are the accurate description of some places and things such as countries, islands, mountains, seas, rivers, aspects and phenomena of nature, towns, buildings and so on. So these types of essays can be said to be the accurate account of 'something' which conveys the factual pieces of information to the readers.

#### **II. Narrative Essays**

A narrative essay consists mainly of the narration of some events, or series of events. Narrative essays are average, accurate accounts of the past events. The events can be historical or legendary occurrences, stories either true or imaginary, a journey or voyage, programmed, accidents and biographies of the well known personalities.

#### **III. Expository /Argumentative Essays**

The aim of argumentative essays is to convince the readers that the position of the readers that the position of the writer has taken on a subject or saying is right. The writer has to try to give his own reflections and thoughts about the proposition concerned. Views both for and against the proposition must be considered. An expository essay consists of an exposition or explanation of

subject; e.g. Institutions for and against the proposition must be considered. Expository essays are the account of thoughts of the essayist on a proposition or saying.

#### **IV. Reflective Essays**

A reflection is a thought on some subject or idea arising in the mind. So, reflective essay is the reflections of the writer's experiences on a variety of topics. Normally the topic of the reflective essays can be abstract in nature. For example: habits or qualities, social, political, and theological topics. In fact, such compositions express the writer's original thoughts on some topics.

#### **V. Imaginative Essays**

Essays on subjects such as the feeling and experiences of the sailor wrecked on a desert island may be called imaginative essays. In such, the writer is called to place himself in imagination in a position of which he has had no actual experience. Such subjects as "if I were the king" or "the auto biography of the house" would call for imaginative essays.

##### **2.1.7 Descriptive Essay Writing**

Descriptive essays are the accurate description of some places and things; such as animals, islands, mountains, Plants, towns, countries, buildings, seas, rivers, motor-cars, aspects and phenomena of nature etc and on. So, these types of essays can be said to be accurate account of 'something' which conveys the factual pieces of information to the readers. The information to be included in these kinds of essays is seen and what is heard by the writers of the descriptive essay does not make room for their own imagination. Wren and Martin (1989) define:

- A descriptive essay consists of description of some place or thing; e.g.,
- (a) animals, plants, minerals (such as the elephant, that papal tree, coal);
- (b) towns, countries, buildings, etc, (e.g. Bombay, Italy The Tajmahal);
- (c) aspects and phenomena of nature (such as volcanoes, the monsoon,

sunlight, organic life); and (d) manufactured articles (such as motor-cars, steam-engines, Paper, silk etc.) p.380).

### **2.1.8 Characteristics of Good Essays**

A good essay should be divided into a number of paragraphs and should be followed the characteristics of a good paragraph. The qualities of a good essay, as mentioned by Narayanswami (2000) are described below:

#### **I. Unity**

An essay must have unity, developing one theme with a definite purpose. In another way, an essay must have an aim, i.e. it must have a single central idea to impart to the readers. The subject must be clearly defined in the mind and kept in view throughout. There should be only apt description, examples, and illustrations and so on. All the supporting details should directly be related to the central idea.

#### **II. Balance**

Everything mention in the essay should be balanced. All the details should be directly related to central idea. Balance refers to the balance among the parts of the essay. The introduction, the body and the conclusion should deal with the same controlling idea. The introduction should be shorter than the body. Similarly, the conclusion also should be shorter but impressive. The theme of the essay should have a balanced thought leading to the conclusion.

#### **III. Coherence**

The essay should follow a clear order and move steadily towards the goal or aim specified before we start writing. Coherence can be maintained by presenting the materials in a particular order. The common orders are chronological order, logical order, and spatial order. We have to determine which order/s should be followed depending upon the requirement. Thus, ideas



are arranged in a definite pattern. So, the important ones stand out prominently. And the relation between the ideas is clearly seen.

#### **IV. Length**

The length of the essay depends on the writer's purpose in writing. The writer should specify for whom he is writing because the length of the essay also depends on the reader's background and needs. The length of the essay should not influence the unity, coherence, balance, clarity and the parts of it. Each part should contribute to the total effort.

#### **V. Style**

The usual style of writing an essay is formal if we are writing descriptive or argumentative essays. Complete sentences are used and vocabulary is rich making use of words which sounds are high. Argumentative and reflective essays seem more literary than descriptive and narrative ones.

#### **VI. Clarity**

The language style of the essay should be clear. It is said that ambiguity should not be introduced in the sense of high soundness.

#### **VII. Grammatical correctness**

All the words and sentences used in the essays should be formal and standard or normative. Colloquialisms and slang should not be introduced. On the other hand, in the sense of literary expression, grammaticality should not be broken.

#### **VIII. Cohesion**

Grammatical and lexical connectedness should be well introduced in the language of the essay. Cohesion refers to unity. Appropriate cohesive devices keep the parts and thoughts of the text together. Any kinds of texts must have a certain structure which depends on factors quite different from those required in the structure of a single sentence. The lexical connectedness between or

among the lexical items and grammatical connectedness between/ among the grammatical kind can be termed as cohesion.

## **XI. The personal touch**

An essay is supposed to have individual feelings, ideas, thoughts and impressions. On the other hand, an essay can reveal the personal feelings and opinion of the writer. An essay is a written composition giving expressions to one's personal ideas or opinion on subject; and this personal touch should not be lost.

## **X. Climax**

If any essay contains several statements of varying importance or emphasis, it is appropriate to arrange them in an ascending scale of the importance. The thoughts as the supporting details are supposed to lead the matter to the climax.

### **2.1.9 Importance of Teaching Essay Writing**

If a language student ever needs to write anything in the second language, it will probably be an essay. Essay is one of most widespread forms of written communication. For this reason, we have to devoted classroom time to teaching essay writing. But it is not only because essays are so useful that we should do this Teaching essay writing also gives us the chance to deals with a variety of terms and functions that are essential parts of language mastery. We can write essays to express our internal ideas, felling and through language. And we can also write essays to describe something narrate some events, give logic about a topic or theme. Essay writing tasks make students consider audience as well as their accuracy. We can share our knowledge experiences through essays. Wren and Martin (1989) say:

An essay can give real image to the readers from any subject make. Each of these language functions has its own associated vocabularies, connotations,

sensitive structures and appropriate choice of words and tone to fit the audience as well as their accuracy (p. 382).

In the school level, the students should be engaged in essay writing practices to provide the students with an opportunity, using their own words and ideas to communicate. English is our target language as well as international language; our students should be competent in it. Description of some things or objects may be necessary to persuade readers to accept or particular judgment. The description should be accurate and successful to catch or touch the readers. Due to scientific discoveries, the world is being smaller day by day and we have been able to communicate each other from one side of the earth to another side. At that time, we can convey our own feelings, thoughts ideas, interests, knowledge about subject matter through writing essay. Rivers (1968) says:

Composition exercises which are not closely related to intensive reading assignments should be so designed that they do not become tests of originality and invention. Precise description of persons, places, and things provide excellent training in exact expression.

(p.254)

Essay writing encourages the students to interpret their experiences logically. They can give the excellent image to the readers through the essays; we can get originality of expression. Creative thinking and critical writing can provide insight to the laborious person.

In this way, the essay writing activity has got international value. For this reason too essay writing should be taught from the school level in each country.

## **2.2 Review of the Empirical Literature**

Any study requires the knowledge of previous background to obtain the targeted objectives and deepen the study. So, I have made an attempt to review related studies, articles and reports to accomplish my study. Writing

proficiency has been tested by different scholars. Number of researches has been carried out on writing proficiency. This research is carried out on essay writing. The related literature to the research study is as follows:

Karki (1996) carried out a study on “A comparative study in the English writing proficiency between the students of private and public schools of grade ten in Lamjung District.” The main purpose of his study was to find out English writing proficiency of grade ten students. The sample of the study comprised of twenty secondary schools of Lumjung District. The tools for the collection of data consisted of a test covering different language items related to the curriculum. He found that the students of private schools were far better in all the areas of vocabulary, grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Likewise, Poudyal (1999) carried out a research on “A comparative study of English language writing proficiency in higher secondary schools of Gulmi and Kathmandu district.” The main purpose of this study was to find out writing proficiency. The population consists of 60 higher secondary level students from four streams. (60 each from humanities, education, commerce and science, each from Gulmi and Kathmandu respectively). The instrument for data collection consisted of two guided and two free compositions. Both were open ended questions. Finally it was found that the students of Kathmandu district were better than the students of Gulmi district in writing proficiency.

Rijal (2009) carried out a research entitled “Grade eight students ability in essay writing.” The main objective of the study was to find out the proficiency level of the students in essay writing she used a test item containing questions in descriptive essay writing. She selected 8 schools from Kirtipur Municipality by using purposive (judgmental) sampling procedure. She selected 80 students out of them 40 are girls and 40 are boys. The study shows that the writing proficiency of grade eight students was satisfactory. Most of the student’s achievement was above average. It was also found that students of private

schools were better than that of the government schools and the girls were better than the boys in performance.

Sharma (2009) carried out a study on “Writing proficiency of the students of higher secondary level.” The major objective of the study was to find out the writing proficiency in terms of punctuation, articles, subject –verb agreement and preposition in the writing of twelfth graders. The study was for higher secondary level but the researcher just tested the one aspect of writing that is mechanics. So this study was not enough to find out the writing proficiency of the students because it only emphasized grammaticality. The area that was tested should have extended, so it is not as it was aimed.

Khadka (2012) carried out a research on writing proficiency of higher secondary level. His main objective was to find out the writing proficiency of the higher secondary level students. He selected 60 students (30 boys and 30 girls) of class XII from Education and Management stream in different higher secondary schools of Rautahat district. He used purposive (judgmental) non-random sampling procedure in order to select the required number of students. He designed test item to collect the required information. The test items included three different types of essay questions i.e. descriptive, narrative and argumentative for assessing their writing proficiency. It was found that most of the students lack the organization skill even if they have had the good ideas upon the problem they were unable to organize their ideas.

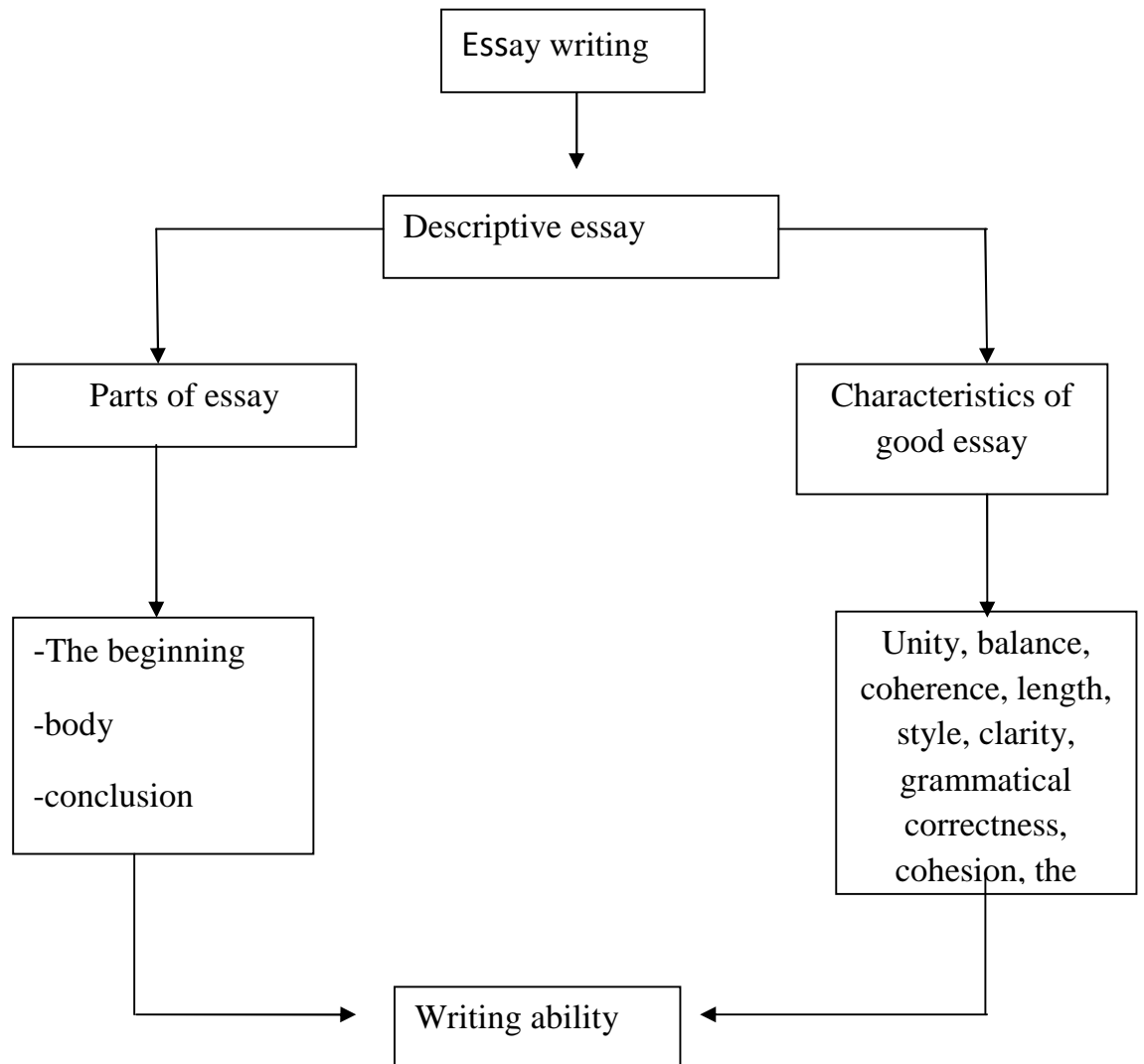
All these research works were conducted on writing and writing proficiency. Some of them are related to guided writing, some are writing free composition and some are grammatical errors committed by the different levels of students. Very few researches have been carried out on essay writing. Thus, this study was carried out to find out the essay writing ability in students of grade ten between public and private schools of Letang VDC in Morang District. This study differs from the others in its sample population, area of the study. So, the researcher hopes this study was more explicit and unique than the previous ones.

### **2.3 Implication of the Review of the Study**

In literature review, our central focus is to examine and evaluate what has been said before on a topic and establishing the relevance of this information to our own research. This review of the study may be obtained from variety of sources including books, journal articles, report etc. All these sources help to bring the clarity and focus on the research problem, improve methodology and contextualize the finding. So from the study of Karki (1996), Poudyal (1999), Rijal (2009), Sharma (2009), and Khadka (2012) the researcher got the ideas for selecting topic, improving methodology and contextualizing the finding. It is also equally important to examine and evaluate what have been said before on a topic and what not have been said for finding the new area for further research. Therefore, all those reviewed literatures have described about writing proficiency in several fields free writing, guided writing, essay writing, etc. very few researches have been carried out on essay writing ability. Therefore, the researcher selected this topic “Essay Writing Ability of Grade Ten Students” to find out the essay writing ability of the students of public and private schools.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the research was as follows:



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

To achieve the set of objectives of the study the following methodologies were adapted.

#### 3.1 Design and Method of the Study

Survey research was used to complete this study. To compare the essay writing ability of the students, the researcher followed mixed research design in general and the survey research design in particular. In this type of research, the researcher visited the determined area to find out existing data. Survey is superficial study of an issue or phenomenon. It is a general view and characterization of the circumstances and the testing of its status. It is the most commonly used method of investigation in education research. According to Nunan (1992, p.14), “The main purpose of survey research is to obtain a snapshot of conditions, attitudes and /or events at a single in point.” According to Cohen and Manion (1985), “Surveys are the most commonly used descriptive method in educational research and may vary in scope from large scale government investigation through small scale studies carried out by a single researcher.”(As cited in Nunan 1992, p.140). A survey usually addresses the large group of population, sampling is necessary to carry out investigation. The concern here is to ensure that sample should be representatives of the study population as a whole sampling is done to obtain practicability of the study.

Nunan *ibid*, (p.141) suggests the following eight step procedures of survey research:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Step 1: Define objectives             | - What do we want to find out?                      |
| Step 2: Identifying target population | - Who do we want to know about?                     |
| Step 3: Literature review             | - What have others said/discovered about the issue? |
| Step 4: Determine sample              | - How many subjects should we survey and how will   |



- we identify these?
- Step 5: Identify Survey instruments – How will the data be collected:  
questionnaire/interview?
- Step 6: Design survey procedures – How will the data collection  
actually be carried out?
- Step 7: Identify analytical procedures – How will the data be assembled  
and analyzed?
- Step 8: Determine reporting procedure – How will results be written  
up and presented?

The discussion above entails that survey is one of the important research methods used in educational investigations. It is mainly carried out to find out people's attitudes, opinions and specified behaviour on certain issues, phenomena, events or situations. The finding of survey is generalized to the whole group. That is why the researcher chose survey design in his research study.

### **3.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Strategy**

The population of study was the students of grade ten. Among them the researcher chose sixty students as sample from six different schools (three public and three private schools). The researcher chose ten students from each school in Letang VDC of Morang district as the sample of the study. The researcher selected six schools by using purposive non- random sampling procedure from Letang VDC of Morang district. By using simple random sampling procedure the researcher chose 60 students from 6 schools (3 public and 3 private schools).

### **3.3 Study Area**

The study area of my research was all the secondary level private and public schools of Morang district.

### **3.4 Data Collection Tools and Techniques**

The researcher used test as the major tool for data collection. The researcher conducted test in essay writing providing two topics which were descriptive in nature.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher prepared the test items to conduct the test. The researcher visited the selected place. At first, the researcher introduced himself to the informants and told them the objectives of his study. The researcher conducted the test to the selected students and thanked the informants.

### **3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedure**

Systematically collected data were analyzed, interpreted and presented descriptively as well as analytically using statically such as tools and tables. The data for this study were marks obtained by the students in essay writing test. To evaluate the essays written by students the marking scheme was prepared. On the basis of marking scheme the essays were marked and they were analyzed and interpreted.

## **CHAPTER – FOUR**

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data including the summary of findings.

#### **4.1 Analysis of Data and Interpretation of the Results**

In order to analyse and interpret the data, the and statistical tools such as mean (average) and percentage (%) were used on the basis of the test administered to the students studying in the private and government schools of Morang district. The test was subjective type of test. The test was comprised of two essays. The first essay was 'My Village or Town' and the second was 'My Country Nepal'. The full marks of each essay was assigned and obtained marks of each set of essay writing by each student was analyzed and interpreted on the basis of following heading.

##### **4.1.1 Holistic Analysis**

The performance of private and public school was observed, analyzed and interpreted. For this, there were two essays with the weight of 24 marks. Their holistic performance was analyzed as given below.

##### **4.1.1.1 Overall performance in Descriptive Essay Writing**

To find out the overall performance of the students, the researcher analysed and interpreted their obtained marks and found the average marks. On the basis of average marks the researcher selected them above average and below average with the percentage. The following table shows in detail:

**Table No.1**

**Overall Essay writing Ability of students**

Total No. of Students	Average Marks Secured	Above Average		Below Average	
		No. of Students	Percentage %	No. of Students	Percentage %
60	18.21	40	66.66%	20	33.33%

The above table shows that overall performance of the students in Descriptive Essay Writing. The overall average is 18.21 marks out of 24 full marks. The percentage of students scoring above is 66.66% and the below average is 33.33%. The majority of the students were above average and the proficiency of essay writing was found good.

**Table No. - 2**

**Essay writing Ability of students in Private and Public School**

Tools	Marks obtained in Essay writing		
	Private School	Public School	Difference
Mean (Average)	18.54	17.89	0.65
Percent (%)	77.25%	74.54%	2.71%

The above table shows the average marks obtained by the students in Private and public School. The average marks obtained by the students in private school is 18.54 (77.25%) whereas the total average marks in the students of public school is 17.89 (74.54) and the total average difference between the students private school and public school is 0.65 (2.71%) out of 24 full marks.

Thus, essay writing ability of the students in both public and private schools was satisfactory. There was negligible difference between the students of public and private schools.

#### 4.1.2 Gender Wise Analysis

The essay writing ability of boys and girls of private and public were observed, analyzed and interpreted. The gender wise performance in essay writing was analyzed as given below.

**Table No. – 3**

#### **Essay Writing in Private School and Public School**

Text	Tools	Marks obtained in the Writing Essay		
		Boys	Girls	Difference
Private School	Mean (Average)	18.9	18.18	0.72
	Percent (%)	78.75%	75.75%	3%
Public School	Mean (Average)	18	17.78	0.22
	Percent (%)	75	74.08	0.92%

This above table shows the Essay writing ability of both boys and girls in both Private and Public Schools. The average marks obtained by the boys in Private School is 18.9 (78.75%) and girls is 18.18 (75.75%) and the average difference between boys and girls in the same text is 0.72(3%) out of 24 full marks. It is negligible difference. The average mark of the boys in Public School is 18 (75%) and the girls is 17.78 (74.08%) and the average difference between boys and girls in the same text is 0.22 (0.92%) out of 24 full marks.

In both Private School and Public School, boys showed better performance than girls because boys were quite active than girls in their studies.

### 4.1.3 Component Wise Analysis

The component wise ability of the students of private and public schools in essay writing was observed ,interpreted and analyzed as given below.

**Table - 4**

#### **Essay writing Ability: Private School Vs Public School:**

Components	Tools	Marks obtain in Elements of Essay			Full Mark
		Private Schools	Public Schools	Difference	
Subject matter	Mean (average)	5	4.8	0.2	24
	Percent (%)	83.33	80	3.33	
Grammar	Mean (average)	5	4.9	0.1	
	Percent (%)	83.33	81.66	1.67	
Language	Mean (average)	4.40	4.3	0.1	
	Percent (%)	73.33	71.67	1.66	
Style	Mean (average)	4.14	3.89	0.25	
	Percent (%)	69	64.83	4.17	

This table reflects the essay writing ability of students in private and public School.

The average marks of the students of private schools in subject matter is 5 (83.33%) and that of public schools is 4.8 (80%) and the average difference between them is 0.2 (3.3%) out of 6 full marks. The students of Private school obtain 5 (83.33%) in grammar and public schools students obtain 4.9 (81.66%). The average difference between them in grammar is 0.1(1.67%) out of 6 full marks.

The average marks obtained by the Students of Private School in language is 4.40 (73.33%) and the public schools 4.3 (71.67%) and the average difference

among them in language is 0.1 (1.66%) out of 6 full marks. The students of Private Schools has got 4.14 (69%) in style and Public School has got 3.89 (64.83%) and the average difference among them is 0.25 (4.17%) out of 6 full marks.

Thus, the essay writing ability on the basis of subject matter, grammar, language and style private schools students showed better performance than public schools students.

#### 4.1.4 School Wise Analysis

To find out the school wise ability of the students in essay writing, the researcher analyzed and interpreted their school wise total marks.

**Table No. -5**

**Private and Public School wise analysis and interpretation in Essay Writing**

S N	Name of the Schools	Total marks obtained by the students	average marks obtained by each student	% Obtained	Average Marks of Students	
1.	Private Schools	i) Little Flowers' Boarding school	190	19	79.16	18.54
		ii) Letang Secondary Boarding School	185	18.5	77.08	
		iii) Purbanchal Alma Mater Home	181	18.1	75.41	
2.	Public Schools	i) Shree Shanti Bhagawati Higher Secondary School	177.7	17.7	73.95	17.9
		ii) Shree Shikshya Vikash Secondary School	180	18.0	75	
		iii) Shree Mahabharat Secondary School	179	17.9	74.58	

The above table shows both private and public school wise essay writing ability of the students. The total mark obtained by the students of Little Flowers' is 190. It is 79.16% and the average mark obtained by the students is 19 which is the highest marks among the selected schools. The mark obtained by the students of this school is above average. Similarly the students of Letang Secondary Boarding school have obtained 185 marks in total. They have secured 77.08% and the average mark of the students is 18.5. The marks obtained by the students of this school is equal to average. The students of Purbanchal Alma Mater Home have obtained 181 marks. They have got 18.1 marks in an average. The students of Purbanchal Mater Home have got 75.41%. The marks obtained by the students of this school is below the average.

On the other hand, the students of Shree Shanti Bhagawati Higher Secondary School have obtained 177.7 marks. They have got 73.95% and their average mark is 17.7. The marks obtained by the students of this school is below average. The students of Shree Shikshya Vikas Secondary School have obtained 180 marks. The percentage of total mark is 75% and the average mark obtained by the students is 18 which is the highest mark among other public schools students. The marks obtained by the students of this school is above average. The students of Mahabharat Secondary School have obtained 179 marks in total and the average mark is 17.9. The percentage of the total mark is 74.58%. The marks obtained by the students of this school is above average.

From the analysis and interpretation of the above table no.5 the essay writing ability of each private school students is quite better than the essay writing ability of each public school students. There was negligible difference between each school.

## **4.2 Summary of Findings**

The major objective of this study was to find out the Essay Writing ability of the tenth graders of Morang district and to compare abilities in terms of style,



grammar, language and subject matter between private and public schools. The major tool of data collection was the subjective type test containing 24 marks.

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of the data, the following findings have been drawn:

- (a) The essay writing ability of the tenth grade students was found satisfactory in both private and public schools. Most of the students were above average. In total 66.66% students were above average and 33.33% students were below average.
- (b) In the essay writing students of private school obtained 18.5 (77.25%) and the students of public school got 17.89 (74.54) which is the negligible difference.
- (c) The Essay Writing Ability of the students was found better in private school 5 (83.33%) in subject matter, 5 (83.33%) in grammar, 4.4 (73.33%) in language and 4.14(69%) in style. Likewise students of public school got 4.8(80%) in subject matter, 4.9 (81.66%) in grammar, 4.3(71.67%) in language and 3.89 (64.83%) in style. In essay writing the students of private school obtained 18.5 (77.25%) and the students of public school got 17.89(74.54%).
- (d) The boys performed better in writing essay than the girls. The boys scored 18.9 (78.75%) and girls scored 18.18 (75.75%) in private schools. Similarly, the boys scored 18 (75%) and the girls 17.78 (74.8%) average marks in public school. Only negligible difference was found between boys and girls in both private and public schools.
- (e) The essay writing ability of each private and public school students was found satisfactory. Only two schools were below average. Other four schools were equal and above average.

## **CHAPTER – FIVE**

### **CONCUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Conclusions**

From the analysis, interpretation and comparison, it can be concluded that the essay writing ability of the tenth grade students was found satisfactory in both private and public schools. Most of the students were above average. In total 66.66% students were above average and 33.33% students were below average. The students from private schools showed quite better performance than the students of public schools in essay writing. There was no great difference between the students of public and private school. The students of private schools got 18.54(77.25%) marks in average. On the other hand, the students of public schools got 17.89(74.54%) marks. The difference between them was 0.65(2.71%). From the analysis it showed that in both public and private schools boys showed better performance than the girls. The essay writing ability of the students was compared on the basis of subject matter, grammar language and style. It showed that the students of private schools were better than the students of public schools in writing essays. The school wise analysis of essay writing ability showed that each private school students showed better performance than each public school students.

In nutshell, essay writing ability of private and public schools was found satisfactory.

#### **5.2 Recommendation and Pedagogical Implications**

On the basis of the findings of the study some recommendations are listed below along with some guidelines for improving essay writing. From this study, it was found that the essay writing ability of students is satisfactory. To improve the essay writing ability of the students better, the researcher recommends the following things:

- a) Students should be asked to write as many essays as they can which are of their interest.
- b) The students of public schools were found having quite lower writing ability than counterparts of private schools. The Students should be encouraged in the writing tasks to improve their writing ability.
- c) The teachers of both private and public schools should follow proper strategies of writing while teaching writing and students should be practiced based on different components of writing essay such as subject matter, grammar, language, style and spelling. Writing technique and practice materials should be emphasized to enhance writing comprehension.
- d) Boys and girls should be encouraged in writing activities by the teacher in the class. The teacher should follow cooperative learning to enhance writing ability in the class. Students should be asked to read out of course books such as news paper, magazines for knowledge and write some paragraphs on specific topic
- e) English language teachers of both private and public schools should emphasize writing technique and practice materials to enhance writing proficiency.
- f) Most of the teachers are untrained. Government should provide special trainings, seminars and workshops for teachers on how to teach writing skills.

### **5.2.1 Policy Level**

The recommendations of the research at policy level are as follows:

#### **Curriculum Designers**

- ) The syllabus and curriculum designer should design the syllabus and curriculum that highlights the practical aspects of writing skill.
- ) The course content should maintain the proper organization of different aspects of writing.
- ) The text book writer should write the text books by considering the students level and capacity and include the many exercises on writing essays.
- ) The subject experts and trainers should provide essential training for both novice and experienced teachers in the areas of writing and supervise.

### **5.2.2 Practice Level**

The recommendations at practice level are as follows:

- ) Students should be asked to write as many essays as they can which are of their interests.
- ) The teachers should follow the proper strategies while teaching writing skill to the students in the classroom.
- ) The teachers should focus on weak students and conduct the different types of writing activities.

- ) To improve the essay writing ability of the students, the teacher should teach written comprehension not only from the text but also from the newspaper, journal.
- ) The teachers should emphasize different types of practice materials to enhance writing ability in the classroom.

### **5.2.3 Further Research**

The present research will be very helpful for those who want to carry out further research in similar topics. The similar topics are given below:

- ) Essay writing ability of higher secondary level students.
- ) Essay writing ability of lower secondary level students.
- ) A comparative study on essay writing ability of private and public schools students.
- ) A comparative study on essay writing between the students of rural and urban areas.

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## Appendix -I

### Essay writing task for grade ten students.

Class: X

Time: 1hour

Subject: English

Full Marks: 24

Write the essays in about 150 words on the following topics:

- a) My Village or Town
- b) Our Country Nepal



## **Appendix II**

**The following marking scheme was used to evaluate the students' essays.**

- I) On the basis of parts of essay
  - i) Beginning - 3 Marks
  - ii) Body - 6 Marks
  - iii) Conclusion - 3 Marks
  
- II) On the basis of whole essay
  - i) Characteristics and subject matter - 9 marks
  - ii) Spelling -2 marks
  - iii) Punctuation marks - 1 mark

**The following schools were used to collect data.**

- 1) Shree Shanti Bhagawati Higher Secondary School, Letang -6 Morang.
- 2) Shree Shiksha Vikas Secondary School, Letang-5 Morang.
- 3) Shree Mahabharat Secondary School, Letang -9 Morang.
- 4) Little Flowers' Boarding School, Letang-4 Morang.
- 5) Letang Secondary Boarding School, Letang -4 Morang.
- 6) Purbanchal Alma Mater Home, Letang -6 Morang.