Writing Proficiency of Secondary Level Students

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education

In Partial Fulfillment for the Master's Degree in Education

Submitted by

Sukundhara Khatri

Faculty of Education

Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur

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Declaration

I hereby, declare that to the best of my knowledge this thesis is original; no part of it was earlier submitted for the candidature of this research degree to any university.

…………………

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Date: 02/06/2022

Recommendation for Evaluation

This thesis has been recommended for evaluation by the following **Research Guidance Committee.**

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DEDICATION

Dedicated

To

My parents without whom

I would not be in the position where I am now.

ABSTRACT

The present research work entitled "Writing Proficiency of Secondary Level Students" is an attempt to find out the students' performance on English free writing in terms of content, grammar, format, spelling, vocabulary and arrangement. The researcher selected 40 students from four schools from Bhaktapur through purposive non-random sampling procedure. The test items were used as the main tool for data collection. The four test items were essay, news paper article, story writing and conversation writing. The test items were of 50 full marks. The collected data were analyzed and interpreted with the help of tables, statistical tools, percentage and average. Holistic analysis, school-wise analysis and item-wise analysis are done separately. Holistic analysis shows that the performance of students from four selected schools on the three test items. Likewise, school-wise analysis shows that Araniko Secondary School obtained high rank. The result was found good. Similarly, item-wise analysis reflects that the students obtained highest marks and lowest marks in free writing. Similarly, students were found to errors in selecting vocabulary, writing content, and arranging sentences. It was found good in using format and spelling.

This thesis has been divided into five different chapters. The first chapter deals with background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definitions of the key terms. Similarly, the second chapter consists of the review for the theoretical literature, review of the empirical literature, implications of the review of the study and conceptual framework. The third chapter deals with the methodological aspect under which design and method of the study, population, sample and sampling procedure, study area, data collection tools and techniques, data collection procedures, data analysis and interpretation procedures and ethical considerations. The fourth chapter focuses on the analysis of the data and interpretation of results. Similarly, the fifth chapter of the study consists findings, conclusions and recommendations of the whole study. References and appendices are included at the end of the study.

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations

CUP	:	Cambridge University Press
e.g.	:	For example
ELT	:	English Language Teaching
M.Ed.	:	Master of Education
NELTA	:	Nepal English Language Teachers' Association
OUP	:	Oxford University Press
SLA	:	Second Language Acquisition
UNO	:	United Nations' Organization
Viz	:	That is to say, namely
Vol.	:	Volume
%	:	Percentage

Chapter I
Introduction

This chapter consists of background of the study on cohesion, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and delimitations of the study and operational definitions of the key terms.

Background of the Study

Writing is a permanent and powerful medium of expression. It is associated with the productive skill. Simply, writing is regarded as an act of putting down the graphic symbols on paper that represents language. Rivers (1968, p.242, as cited in Zarei, Rahmany and Dodangeh, 2013) also defines writing in a similar vein thus: "Writing is the act of putting in conventional graphic form what has been spoken". However, it is more than the production of graphic symbols. It is not the juxtaposition of the words and sentences to construct a text; rather it is an art of manipulating and constructing words and sentences in the structured way and communicating through words and sentences in the comprehensible and effective way. Regarding writing, Widdowson (1978, p.62) gives the precise definition "Writing is the use of the visual medium to manifest the graphological and grammatical system of language". This definition also states that writing is more than the graphic representation of the spoken sounds.

Writing is one of the secondary language skills. Teaching and learning the writing skill is a very challenging and complex job because writing itself is an extremely complex cognitive activity, which requires many complex skills in order to produce a comprehensible, communicative, and effective piece of writing because it is a mental, psychological, rhetorical and critical skills. Westwood (2004, as cited in Zarei, Rahmany and Dodangeh, 2013) also states that writing is a complex skill that engages the writer in a physical as well as mental effort. A good piece of writing must be logical, maintaining cohesion and coherence, grammatically accurate. It shows that writing involves better organization of meaning and also more accuracy of form than speaking. In a good piece of writing, it is also necessary to provide reasons and evidence for opinion and the explanation of possible anticipated questions in order to address the absent audience (Bashyal, 2009). In such a context, Ur (2008, as cited in

Bashyal,) "Good writing must be clear, organized and made of well- crafted sentences".

To be brief, a written text uses graphic symbols to represent the sounds used in speaking and the focus is on the appropriate use of mechanics, coherence and cohesion in order to convey the information in a comprehensive and effective way. Furthermore, it makes our learning permanent as well as registered.

The main purpose of teaching writing is to enable the learner for free composition or creativity. In free writing, students are provided with a topic and they write freely on that topic that means they express their thoughts, ideas and feelings freely in their own selection of vocabulary and sentence structure. It provides them with an opportunity to express themselves in the written mode. So, free writing demands for conscious intellectual efforts, and the writer has to think deeply before writing in order to generate ideas, a mental process called brainstorming.

Because brainstorming is a key consideration in free writing, it is especially highlighted here. Brainstorming helps to generate ideas and strengthen their thinking capacity. It is a fertile means of generating ideas which involves thinking quickly without inhibition to produce as many ideas on the respective topic as possible. According to Ploeger, (1999, p. 5 as cited in Effendi, 2014) "Brainstorming provides a method for thinking of and recording ideas for writing". Similarly, Zayton (2001, as cited in Al-khatib, 2012) states "Brainstorming was developed by Alex Osborn to produce ideas without inhibition". Being based on these definitions we can conclude that brainstorming is a pre-writing activity which is used to encourage students to generate ideas and come up with the possible solutions to a certain problem or to generate lots of ideas on a particular topic. Brainstorming involves the use of the brain actively in order to generate ideas or develop the creative solutions of the problems. It is a basic and very important thing, especially in free writing, because we cannot write the intended thing without thinking about the content.

Writing is not just the matter of grammar and vocabulary but it is a thinking process. So while teaching free writing, it is necessary to involve the students in brainstorming either in groups or as individuals. In the present practice of teaching writing, only grammar exercises are highlighted rather than the creativity of the

students. However, to develop the writing skill, it is necessary to involve the students in practicing free composition with revision taking the brainstorming technique into consideration.

In conclusion the main aim of teaching writing is to train students to express their ideas effectively in the written mode. For that, they have to think deeply or sharpen their thinking ability and brainstorming helps them to strengthen their thinking skill. In short the more we think, the more we generate ideas, the more ideas the better our expression.

Statement of the Problem

If we see the scenario of the teaching writing in the Secondary ELT classroom, it is not found to be focused highly as per their level. Students are not supplied with the different strategies and innovation researches done in the field of writing. They mostly learn to write by involving in writing themselves as they used to do in their earlier classes. In fact, making students proficient in

Writing is a very   complex task for the teacher because it is affected by the numbers of factors like academic background of the learner, language competence of the teacher, interest of learners, emphasis given to the writing through text book, curriculum, syllabus, learning environment etc. HSEB syllabus didn't only focus on developing writing among the learners. In fact, it has been designed focusing all the language skill in general. It didn't have any specific text book carrying specific weight age for developing writing skill.

For developing writing proficiency; students may face various problems which cause difficulties in writing. The main problems in free writing in the case of Nepal might be the lack of writing habit in learners. A student can read more difficult passages and long sentences whereas he/she feels difficult to express him /herself through writing. It is because we hear more than we write. Writing is a proficiency that improves with practice. Teaching should provide guidance, proper practice and feedback. Otherwise problems can frequently occur in developing writing proficiency in the learners. Moreover, not all students may have the same ability of writing. So I was interested in testing the writing proficiency of the students studying specialization English.

In the context of Nepal, English is learnt as a foreign language. English is regarded as a compulsory subject as well as an optional/specialization at the Secondary level Students. It can be commonly observed that students are compelled to construct sentences and weave them into the larger units. Most of the students commit errors and mistakes in writing English. The teachers do not usually follow what to emphasize while teaching writing. Here my concern is to find out the writing proficiency of Secondary level Students in this study studying at Rainbow English Secondary School, Modern Boarding Secondary School, Araniko Secondary School and Dadikot English Secondary School.

Objectives of the Study

The study had the following objectives:

a.   To find out the free writing proficiency of the Secondary Level Students.

b.   To compare the writing proficiency in terms of schools-wise.

c.   To suggest some pedagogical implications drawn from the study.

Research Questions

To explore the writing proficiency to the researcher strived to address the following research questions.

a.   What are the main problematic areas they face within vocabulary, grammar and mechanics as they as they actually do free writing?

b.   How do the school-wise students perform free writing in English?

Significance of the Study

As stated earlier, the main purpose of this research was to identify the writing proficiency of secondary level students within the selected areas of writing. The data was collected from them on the basis of four questions given as a sample test. Therefore, the findings of the research study will be significant for those who are involved and interested in the field of English language teaching and learning, particularly the writing skill.

This study is valuable to the department itself. It will be significant for the prospective researchers to conduct further research. It will be beneficial for experts to collect the experience and use in particular fields. Curriculum designers, material developers, textbook writers and test paper writers can obtain valuable information and insights from the findings of this study.

This study will be also significant for teachers and students involved in teaching and learning English and the future researchers in a similar field. It will be useful for those students who tend to implement the different writing skills while writing in their respective fields. It will be equally fruitful for those who want to study further in this field in the future. In addition, this study will help identify needs, practice and pedagogical implementation in the English language teaching (ELT) class.

Delimitations of the Study

The study had the following limitations:

It past limited only in Secondary level students studying in grade IX. The data of the study is collected only from four Schools of Bhaktapur District. The study past limited to a test consisting of four subjective questions. The research is limited in Bhaktapur district only. It past limited on the free writing proficiency test only.

Operational Definition of the Key Terms

The key terms used in this study have been defined in following ways:

Cohesive Devises: Cohesive device is a device which holds different parts of a thing together. In terms of communication, cohesive devises are typically single words or phrases that hold and hang different parts of the text. These are basically tools of cohesion.

Coherence: Coherence refers to the semantic relationship between sentence and utterance in a text.

Cohesion: Cohesion refers to the grammatical or lexical ordering of different elements/sentences in a text.

English: Grade IX students having English as the specialization subject.

Free writing: The term 'free writing' used in this research study refers to the type of writing in which the students got freedom in the selection of vocabulary items and sentence structures for the expression of their ideas and feelings while writing the paragraphs.

Proficiency: The state or quality of being proficient and very skilled or knowledgeable.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature and Conceptual Framework

This chapter is about the theoretical and empirical bases of the research. It includes sub-sections like review of theoretical literature, review of related literature, implications of the review for the study and conceptual framework.

Review of Theoretical Literature

Literature review is fundamental stage to be carried out it certainly needs strong theoretical and empirical ground to be based on. The review of theoretical literature provides the researcher with a strong knowledge base to find out the area of problem and the need of investigating on it. Similarly, for setting the objectives of the study, appropriate methodology to conduct the study and accomplishing the study, literature review plays crucial role. In order to provide a strong theoretical base to my study, various topics have been dealt with throughout this study.

An Overview of Writing. Writing is one of the most important skills in learning a new language. It is often regarded as the visual representation of speech. In simple terms, writing is a productive skill which involves manipulating, structuring and communicating. It is a productive skill in the sense that it is related to manipulate the mechanics of writing, structuring them into sensible words, sentences and paragraphs in order to make the reader understand the meaning of such complex effort. Moreover, writing is the act of placing the graphic symbols that present language in order to convey the meaning so that the reader can grasp the information. It is the last language skill and it is also the most difficult of all the skills. It is difficult not only in generating and organizing ideas but also in translating these ideas in readable text.

In defining writing, Nunan (1989, p.36) states, Writing is conveying meaning through the use of graphic symbols that represent a language. Pictures also convey meaning in some ways, but drawing pictures is not writing as pictures do not represent language units. Similarly, merely drawing letters, which represent the units of language, is not writing. An artist might draw Chinese letters without difficulty, but it is not writing unless he understands Chinese. Thus, writing is the

partial representation of the language that the writer knows and that he uses to express his meanings to the people who can read it.

Similarly, Odell (1981, p.43) says, that its highly developed form, writing refers to the expression of ideas in consecutive way according to the graphic conventions of the language. In other words, writing involves encoding of a message of some kind or translating our thoughts into language in graphic forms.

Writing like speaking, is a productive skill. So it is more difficult than both listening and reading. Besides, writing is the secondary manifestation of language, speech being the primary one. Therefore, the teaching of writing should focus after being master on three skills. One should hear the speech sounds before he sees the graphic representation and one should see the graphic symbols before he writes them. Thus, the other three skills, viz, listening, speaking and reading, form the basis for this skill.

Similarly, Byrne (1991, p.1) mentions, "When we write, we use graphic symbols: that is letters or combinations of letters which relate to the sound we make when we speak. On one level, writing can be said to be the act of forming these symbols: making marks on a flat surface of some kind".

Rivers (1978, p.243) views it as a more complicated process when it involves putting in graphic form, according to the system accepted by the educated native speakers, combinations of words, which might be spoken in specific circumstances (that is, which convey certain elements of meaning". The Writing Skill Proficiency of Bachelor Level Students writing is a complicated form of writing. It involves different process such as appropriate combination of words, choice of appropriate words, and use of different graphic forms as well as signals.

In this way, Byrne (1991) focuses on graphic symbols. Also he said it makes easier to the students to write by using letters and sentences. Whereas Rivers (1978) against his views and said using graphic symbols are only easy for educated native speakers because writing is more complicated process.

It has been remarked that writing is the most difficult of the language abilities to acquire. It is a skill in which we produce a sequence of sentences arranged in

a particular order and linked together in certain ways. Phyak and Sharma (2006, pp. 254-255) say, "Writing is a productive skill which involves manipulating, structuring and communicating". This can be further looked at in terms of sub skills of writing.

The sub-skills include: Manipulating the script of a language, (eg. Forming the shapes of letters, using the spelling system and using punctuations), Expressing information explicitly, Expressing information implicitly through (eg. inference and figurative language), Expressing the communicative value of sentence and utterances, Expressing relations within a sentence using (eg. elements of sentence structure, Modal auxiliaries and intra-sentential connectors, Expressing relations between parts of a text through lexical cohesion devices, Expressing relations between parts of a text through grammatical cohesion devices and Using indicators in discourse for, (eg. introducing on idea, developing an idea, transition to another idea, concluding an idea, emplacing a point, explanation of point already made, anticipating and objection and reducing the text through avoiding irrelevant information).

Writing is the ability not only to put ideas from mind to paper but also to generate more meaning and makes ideas clear. Writing has many sub-skills. At first, the script of a language has manipulated in term of shape, spelling and punctuations. In a similar way, writing can express information communicative value and relation within a sentence. Then writing can express relations between parts of a text through lexical and grammatical cohesion devices. Finally, the text could be reduced.

Types of Writing. Writing skill can be categorized in different aspects like academic writing, guided writing, free writing, etc. But in this research basically we deal with the copying, controlled writing, guided writing and free writing.

Copying. Copying writing is a strategy where students should practice copying and repeat several times what he has been writing which he has already learned orally and read with the teacher.

Controlled Writing. Controlled writing is that strategy where students are given outline and asked to complete it being referenced to them. This enables the students' creativity and develops cognitive power on them by the manipulating tasks. e.g. news story, notice.

Guided Writing. Guided writing is a strategy that gives students the opportunity to review a recently taught writing skill in a small-group setting and then to apply the skill through independent writing. A guided writing lesson generally follows modeled, shared, and interactive writing lessons and comes about when a teacher determines that a group of students could benefit from further teacher support to develop a particular writing skill. The guided writing group comes together for the purpose of learning or practicing this writing skill. Once the teacher feels that the group has a good understanding of the skill, the group is disbanded. In addition, students may use writing frames or templates to scaffold their writing knowledge and application of writing skills. Guided writing lessons would also be appropriate in content area subjects such as science and technology – for example, to show students how to use precise, descriptive language when reporting on an experiment.

Free Writing. Free writing is the case where a writer writes his/her feelings freely in a paper. That means it is a writing of their opinion about the topic. Free writing includes various items among them Curriculum Development Centre has bounded free writing to the following titles in secondary level:

a. Letter writing
b. Essay writing
c. Paragraph writing

Aspects of the Writing Process. The aspects of the writing are associated with the number of the steps and duration of our writing. The duration and the number of steps vary from one kind of writing to next. Though there are several aspects of writing process, some of them are stated as below:

The Writer's Process. The writer's process precedes five different steps. They are brainstorming, outlining, writing the rough draft, revising and preparing the final copy.

Brainstorming. Brainstorming refers to the buzzing of mind on the topic and drawing out some outlines. As it is the first step of the writer's process, the main purpose of this stage is to get something on the paper. He can revise his listing after completing the outline which are irrelevant for the topic.

Outlining. Based on the listing of the phrases on the topic the writer will prepare an outline in chronological order to present on his/her writing. But the outline of writing should be flexible. Therefore, the writer reads, rereads, records, expands, drops and substitutes the outline of the text. It is done as the requirement.

Writing Draft. The third step of the writing process of the writer is to prepare the rough draft. The writer prepares the draft on the basis of the outline prepared. He develops sentences, paragraphs and the whole text as well coherently. Sometimes the draft is prepared or written more than one item. As he prepares the first draft, he immediately reads and corrects the mistakes that he realizes. It is the early version of the final copy. The writer is obliged to maintain coherence and cohesion while preparing the draft although he checks them in the next step of revising.

Revising. After the rough draft is prepared, the writer goes through the text several times in order to remove mistakes and irrelevancies. Mistakes are corrected and irrelevancies are removed. He checks coherence and cohesion of the text. He, furthermore, checks whether the information included in the text is adequate. If the information to be included has been left/ missed, it is added in the proper place of the text. All the mistakes are corrected at this stage. In fact, it is the stage of revising and editing. At this stage, the following aspects are checked and corrected:

Grammatical mistakes (structural mistakes), Spelling and capitalization, Punctuation, Coherence, Cohesion, Paragraphing, Irrelevancies, Inadequacy of the subject-matter and Formatting

Preparing the final copy. It is the final stage of the writing process. The final copy is prepared on the basis of revising and editing. It is the final version to send to the target readers. At this stage, the writer checks whether the changes he has made have been included.

Audience. The term 'audience' refers to the target readers. The writer has to be confirmed and concerned about the reader for whom he is writing. Writing depends with the background information, knowledge and experience of the audience.

Purpose. The writer generally writes with a purpose. The writer should know why and for whom he is writing. After having the thorough study about target reader a writer can be purposeful towards the writing he/she writes to.

Word-choice. Enrichment of the vocabularies makes writing worth. Hence, words play a vital and determining role in making a writing appropriate in order to convey the information desired because the basic units of writing is clearly and overtly identified. Selection of the words determine the standard of the writing. It even makes the writing interesting to the reader while they read.

Organization. The information to be included in an effective writing must be coherently and cohesively organized. Organization involves coherence, cohesion and unity.

Coherence. The thought in writing should be connected and developed in the proper order to maintain coherence. The writing should be so constructed that one sentence leads on naturally to the next, and there should be a regular logical progression of thought. In short, the logical sense relation between lexical items in a writing is referred to as coherence. The material of writing can be ordered in many ways. Some of them are chronological order, spatial order, logical order, climax, comparison and contrast.

- Chronological order: It refers to the arrangement of the time. The material is ordered/ presented according to the order of time. For example, if the writer is writing someone's life-story, he should organize the material from the past to present.

- Spatial order: The word 'spatial' refers to space. Here the materials are presented according to the placement of them.The arrangement should be arranged from near to far or from far to near, outside to inside or from inside to outside and from more prominent to less prominent or from less prominent to more prominent.

- Logical order: The central idea expressed is supported by means of supporting details and examples. All the expressions are led to the conclusion reasons are given leading to the conclusion. In this order, the central/ controlling idea is developed by means of supporting details leading to a conclusion. In order to maintain logical order, logical devices are used. They are addition, comparison, contrast and concession, enumeration, exemplification, inference, summary, time adverbials, cause and effect relation, classification, definition, reformulation, replacement and transposition.

Cohesion. Cohesion refers to the intra-textual relation of the grammatical and lexical items that make the part of the text together as a whole to convey the complete meaning as the text. Cohesion refers to intra-textual relations of a grammatical and lexical kind which knit the parts of a text together into a complete unit of discourse and which, therefore, convey the meaning of the text as whole. Thus, the lexical connectedness between/among the lexical items and grammatical connectedness between/ among grammatical items can be termed as cohesion. Therefore, we can classify cohesion under two headings. They are grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion.

- Grammatical Cohesion: The connectedness of the grammaticality of a text refers to the grammatical cohesion. This can be obtained or introduced in a text device is substitution, reference, determiners, sentence conjunctions or connectives and sentence adjuncts.

- Lexical Cohesion: The semantic connectedness of the lexical items or units in a text is referred to as lexical cohesion. It can be introduced by using some connectives and by repeating key words and sentences.

Unity. A writing should always have a central idea. The central idea should be placed appropriately. The supporting details should be directly and overtly related to the central idea. The sentence/ sentences having the central idea can be placed either at the beginning or at the middle or at the end of the writing, or a paragraph. The central idea and the supporting details should be properly organized. All the supporting details should be directly related to the central idea.

Grammar. Grammar is considered as a boon of a language writing. The writer will not be able to express the appropriate feelings unless he/she does not have sound knowledge of grammar. Grammatically correct and appropriate expressions are viewed to be important to convey the information to the readers properly. The appropriate uses of correct grammatical expressions are used to express the thought of the writer. Particular grammatical structures are used to write particular kind of texts. For example, while writing a newspaper report of a bus accident, 'past passive and indirect speech' structures are used. The wise user of grammar can write any text desired properly.

The grammar/syntax of writing is also influenced with the target readers and their condition. The writer considers the need and level of the readers. For instance, a writer preparing writing something for primary school children should use grammatically very simple sentences. The academic and cognitive development of them should be cared. The writer should be conscious in semantic and grammar since the same grammatical structure can give the different meaning and same meaning can be presented through different grammatical structure.

Content. The most important factor of writing a text is content. The content of writing should be properly ordered. The content should be presented so orderly that the reader can enjoy reading. The content of writing should fit the target reader's academic and cognitive levels. Furthermore, it should be interesting to them.

While writing a language text, the content should be easy or familiar to the readers. If the content of a language text is difficult, the readers have to face with two types of difficulties at the same time. The difficulties related to the content and grammar may discourage the learners to read the text repeatedly.

The content of writing should be properly organized. For a complete and appropriately organized writing unity, coherence and cohesion are essential.

Importance of Writing. Writing is superior to other language skills because of its quality of being permanent and accurate. There is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for language learners to master. A skill means doing something expertly and well. Writing is one of the most important skills in learning a new language. It is a productive skill. It means to manipulate its mechanism, structuring

them into sensible words or units in order to make the reader understand the meaning of such complex effort. Through writing, we are able to share ideas, arouse feelings, persuade and convince people. It further helps to transmit human beings accumulated culture from one generation to another. Phyak and Sharma (2006, p.254) say, "Writing attracts special importance because reading make it a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man".

The main purpose of writing is to enable the learners for free composition and creativity. Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols. It is a thinking process in its own right. It demands conscious, intellectual effort, which usually has to be sustained over considerable period of time. Writing is a very complex process requiring many composite skills viz. mental, psychological, theoretical and critical aspects. Describing its complexity, Nunan (1989, p.36)says, "Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number 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 into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts". In the same way, Verghes (1990, p.16) says, "Learning a second language is an effective learning, the four skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing is the most demanding language skill." According to Richards, (1990, p.101), "Written language is primarily transactional or message-oriented. The goal of written language is to convey infuriation accurately, effectively and appropriately."

Speech and writing are the two means through which one can linguistically express one's ideas. Between these two, writing is more important as it is a permanent record of one's thoughts. Other language skills like speaking and reading are measured through writing in connection with teaching. Harmer (2004, p.53) says, "For the point of view of language teaching, there is often for greater pressure for written accuracy than there is for accuracy speaking." Thus, writing, a permanent record of every human affair, needs accuracy. While writing a paper the writer should be aware of the errors in sentence structure, spelling, punctuation and grammar. No

matter how good the content of the paper is the readers will have problems if they have to go through mistakes.

The writing proficiency plays a vital role in securing good marks in the examinations and it can spread our knowledge and experience to others. The goal of written language is to convey information accurately, effectively and appropriately. We come to know that students who learn the English language cannot be perfect without writing skill. They can express their ideas correctly and appropriately when they are efficiently in writing. In Nepalese context, for the development of general proficiency in the English language reading and writing skills should be given emphasis. The best way to develop writing is to get the learners to write.

In conclusion, we can say that the students who learn the English language cannot be perfect without knowledge of writing skill. Their English language competence is better if they can write we.

The Characteristics of Good Writing. Writing is an art of using language. But, it is a very complex task to write clearly and explicitly. In this context, Richards (1990, p.100) says, "Learning to write in either a first or second language is one of the most difficult tasks. Learning to write is a difficult and lengthy process, that one induces anxiety and frustration in many learners. Yet good writing skills are essential to academic success and a requirement for many occupations and professions."

Correct and effective writing is the most desirable thing to be called a effective writer. Similarly, Simplicity and directness are the most useful properties of good writing. In fact, making a simple and clear writing is difficult from the syntactic and semantic point of views. It requires good imagination and logical sequence of thoughts. Richards, (1990, p.100), mentions the following is a short account about the main elements of good writing.

Simplicity. The main quality of a good writing is that it reduces the complexities and expresses the ideas or thoughts in a natural way. Simplicity refers artlessness of mind; freedom from cunning or duplicity. It avoids the extra stylistic words, genres, jargons, flourishing and ambiguous words. Simplicity and smoothness make writing understandable and readable which never disturb the readers to understand the gist of the writing

Clarity. Good writing must be absolutely free from ambiguity and should be crystal-clear. There should not be different interpretations or misinterpretation in the writing. Ideas should be presented in clear, orderly, readable, understandable and informative style. Clarity refers clearness or lucidity as to perception or understanding. The writer must always be conscious of the reader and information style. The writer should have the idea of what to say, in which sequence, what is said and how to express something. Good writing should avoid exaggeration as well as contradictory statements.

Continuity. Continuity of thought and natural link of ideas are important features in writing. Continuity means the immixture of descent, persistence, humor and deliberation. There must be continuity of thought from one word to the following word, from one phrase to another, from one sentence to another, from the first paragraph to the second paragraph and first chapter to the second chapter.

Economy. A shorter statement or analysis employing fewer terms is preferred to the one that is longer, other things being equal. The greatness of a writer lies in his/her capacity to express his/her ideas briefly and effectively. Economical writing is efficient and esthetically satisfying. While it makes a minimum demand on the energy and patience of readers; it returns to them a maximum of sharply compressed meaning. Good writing is like a gold coin, small in compass but great in value. Economy of words without sacrificing the meaning is the secret of good writing,

Coherence. Good writing deals with one topic, at a time. According to Swami (1987, p.13), in a good piece of writing, all the sentences are closely related to the central idea."

Completeness. Having all parts or lacking nothing refers to completeness. A good writing must be complete. It completes the topic it deals with. Good writing should avoid exaggeration and hyperbolically and self-contradictory statements.

Free from Error. As writing is the permanent record of one's thoughts or ideas. It must be accurate. Every written piece has to be free from orthographic, semantic, grammatical, idiomatic, punctuation and other errors. Moreover, good writing must have example and illustrations to explain abstract and difficult ideas and new information. There should be appropriate direction, adequate facts and figures,

depth of knowledge, and specificity and maximum objectivity in every piece of effective writing.

In this regard, White and Arndt (1991, p.4) mention, "Writing involves thinking, planning, assembling, classifying and organizing processes". Thus, ability to write good or effective English is not a god given gift to a few people. The art of writing is based upon one's own mental capability it is very important for specific subject matter.

The above characteristics of good writing play a vital role in the writing proficiency of the grade ten students. The secondary school students should have the ability to write clear, economic, simple, and continuous and error free sentences.

Components of Writing. Writing is not merely an activity of encoding verbal thought in printed symbols. It consists of a number of other components which have been discussed on the following pages;

Mechanics. Mechanics refers to those aspects of writing such as spelling, use of punctuation marks (e.g. apostrophes, hyphens) capitals, abbreviations and numbers which are often dealt within the revision or editing stage of writing. Regarding this, Heaton (1975, p.145) says, "... the ability to use correctly, those conventions peculiar to the written language". Although incorrect spelling does not often prevent the understanding of a written message, it can adversely affect the readers' judgment.

However, at times slight change in spelling of words can bring drastic change in the meaning they express. Overuse or under use of punctuation is often formed on by many writers or editors of English. Though punctuation is frequently a matter of personal style, violation of well-established customs makes a piece of writing look awkward to many readers. The mechanics of writing is a very basic concept in writing process

Coherence. Coherence refers to the relationship between an utterance and the meaning it conveys. It is the semantic relationship of different sense units between and among the utterances. These links may be based on the shared knowledge between the writer and the readers. Generally, a paragraph has coherence, if it is a series of sentences that develop a main idea (i.e. with a topic sentence and supporting

details which relate to it), Ideas and thoughts should be connected logically in a piece of writing.

Harmer (2004, pp. 24-25) says, Text to have coherence it needs to have some kinds of internal logic which the reader can follow with or without the use of the prominent cohesive devices where a text is coherent the reader can understand at least two things:

The writer's purpose the reader should be able to understand what the writer's purpose is. Is it to give information, suggest a course of action make a judgment on a book or a play, or express an opinion about old events, or example? A coherent text will not mask the writer's purpose.

The writer's line of thought, the reader able to follow the writer's line of reasoning if the text is discursive piece. If on the other hand, it is a narrative the reader should be able to follow the story and not get confused by the time jumps and too many characters.

Mechanics of Writing. Mechanics refers to the punctuation and spelling. Mechanics of writing is known as graph logical system which mainly includes capitalization, spelling and punctuation. Learners must have the knowledge of mechanics of writing. Heaton, (1975, p.145) says, "Mechanics of writing is the ability to use correctly those conventions peculiar to the written language". Mastery over the mechanics of writing and practice on the basic skills are necessary in the first step for child. Under mechanics of writing, the learner should learn the letters, capitalization, spelling patterns and sentence punctuation.

Punctuation. Punctuation is system of inserting marks on symbols in order to make the meaning clear. According to Wchneir (2005, p. 60), "The correct use of punctuation mark such as full stop [.], hyphen [-], dots [...], slash [/] dash [-], quotation marks [', or ""], brackets (),[),), italics, help the writer to organize written language and clarity relation between words and clauses".

Capitalization. Capitalization refers to the proper use of capital letters. Wehneir (2005, p.60) says, "Appropriate capitalization is a matter of convention". That is to say, it involves capitalization the first letter of the first word of a sentence,

the pronoun I, the first letter in the first word of the quotation and so on. But, some capitalizations are matter of style rather than convention certain rules are determined for using capital letters.

Spelling. Writing is achieved by correct spelling of individual words spelling errors are nuisance to the reader. Robert (1985, p.148) says, "Spelling rules are frequently more concluding than the memorization of individual words". The phonological and orthographical form of the English language is different. So the listener cannot write properly what the speaker says. It is a great problem for learners. Spelling is mainly a mastery of convention

Review of Empirical Literature

Various research studies have been carried out in writing proficiency. The review of empirical literature informs the researcher how to conduct a research and what the areas to be addressed are. This study has brought added new findings to the field of writing proficiency. I have reviewed some research works related to my study in this section.

Kafle, (2008) carried out research entitled "Proficiency of Students in Free Writing Composition". The main aim of this study was to find out and compare students' proficiency in writing. He used test items including skeleton for writing stories, parallel writing, paragraph writing, newspaper articles and letter writing of 60 students from 4 public and 4 private schools in Kathmandu valley. He used the purposive sampling procedure. The analysis and interpretation of the data have been made in holistically, item-wise, school-wise and gender-wise. He found that the girls were better than the boys and private school students were better than public school students.

Shah, (2009) carried out a study on, "Writing Proficiency of Grade Nine Students". This study aimed to find out proficiency in writing skills item-wise, school-wise and sex-wise. He administered five questions including story writing, report writing, parallel writing, letter writing and dialogue writing to 80 students of grade 10 students of 4 public secondary schools of Rukum district. He used purposive sampling. The analysis and interpretation of the data were made in item-wise, holistically and gender-wise. He found that the students committed errors in the use of

punctuation marks, and also that the girls were better than the boys and students got highest marks in parallel writing. He found very low proficiency in letter writing.

Khanal, (2011) carried out a study on, "Free Writing Proficiency of Grade Ten Students". The main aim of this study was to find out the free writing proficiency of grade 10 students of Bardiya district. He used five varieties of free writing activities of 100 students from 10 schools. He used the fish-bowl draw method to select the sample from the whole class. The analysis and interpretation of the data were conducted item-wise, school-wise and total item-wise. The finding showed that students were poor in free writing, average in dialogue writing and least proficient in essay writing

Mishra, (2011) conducted a research study on "Effectiveness of Strip Story in Developing Writing Skill" in order to find out the effectiveness of the strip story as a technique in developing writing skills. Thirty two students of grade seven studying at Shree Mitrata Higher Secondary School at Tanahu district made the sample of this study and they were selected using the non-random purposive sampling procedure. It was an explanatory study. Subjective types of test item were the tools of the research. The effectiveness was found out by comparing the result of pre-test and post-test. He found that the strip story was an effective way of enhancing students' writing skill.

Khadka, (2012) carried out a study on, "Writing Proficiency of Higher Secondary Level Students". This study aimed to find out the writing proficiency of the higher secondary level students in terms of stream and sex. He used test items which included three different types of essay questions i.e. descriptive, narrative and argumentative to 60 students of grade XII from Rautahat district. He used statistical tools college-wise, sex-wise and stream-wise for assessing their proficiency in free writing. By using the purposive sampling technique, 60 students from Education and Management were selected as the sample. He found that the boys were more proficient than the girls and the students from Management stream were more proficient than those from Education

Similarly, Yadav, (2012). Carried out research on "The Effectiveness of Process Approach in Developing Writing Skill". The main objective of the study was to find out the effectiveness of teaching writing through the process approach in terms

of the subject matter, coherence, cohesion and grammatical correctness in writing. He conducted action research on twenty students of bachelor level studying in Janakpurdham. He selected a sample using the non-random purposive sampling procedure and test items were the main tools of this research. The findings of this research was that after the application of the process approach students improved their performance by 50% in the subject matter, 11.50% in coherence, 9% in cohesion and 5% in grammatical correctness. On the average, the students increased their performance by 40%.

Neupane, (2015) carried out research entitled "Free writing proficiency of grade XI students before and after feedback" with an objective of finding out free writing proficiency of grade XI students before and after feedback. The sample size of the study comprised 20 students of grade XI of Siddhartha Gautam Campus, Rupandehi district. It was a quasi-explanatory study. He selected 20 students from the campus. He used a set of test items to collect the data. The test item included three questions connected with paragraph writing, essay writing and letter writing. The data were analyzed using the descriptive method and simple statistical tools. The mark obtained before feedback was 41.25% while after feedback it was 45.13%. This study differs from the present study mainly in terms of the design of research.

Though a number of research studies have been carried out into the area of the writing skill, this study was different from the other studies in terms of the objectives, methodology and its context.

Implications of the Review for the Study

As the researcher, I reviewed different studies, more or less similar and relevant to this study. Therefore, these studies helped me in various ways in identifying the research problem, developing the methodology and carrying the analysis. To be more specific, Mishra (2011), and Khanal (2011) helped me to identify and define research the problem and the research questions. Similarly, Khadka (2012) and Neupane (2015) helped me to develop insights in framing the methodology and tool for data collection.

In the same way, Shah (2009), Kafle (2008) and Yadav's (2012) studies helped me in analyzing the data. However, this study was different from their studies because

it mainly investigated the writing proficiency of the college students of English. Although I got help from the above mentioned study in framing tools for data collection, I used different variables in developing the tool. The variables have been mentioned in the section of the objectives.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the review of theoretical and empirical literature and research problem and questions stated above, the study had the following conceptual framework which was subject to modification in course of study.

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              ┌─────────────────────────────┐
              │ Writing Proficiency of Secondary │
              │        Level Students        │
              └─────────────────────────────┘
                   ╱                    ╲
    ┌──────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────────┐
    │ Review of theoretical and │  │ Decision on the sample to collect the │
    │   empirical literature.   │  │  data considering the objectives │
    └──────────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────────────┘
              │                              │
    ┌──────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────────┐
    │ Free writing activities for │  │ Data analysis and interpretation of │
    │  Secondary Level Students │  │ the result and drawing conclusion. │
    └──────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────────────┘
                   ╲                    ╱
                 ┌─────────────────┐
                 │     Output      │
                 └─────────────────┘
                         │
                 ┌─────────────────────┐
                 │ Developing the report │
                 └─────────────────────┘
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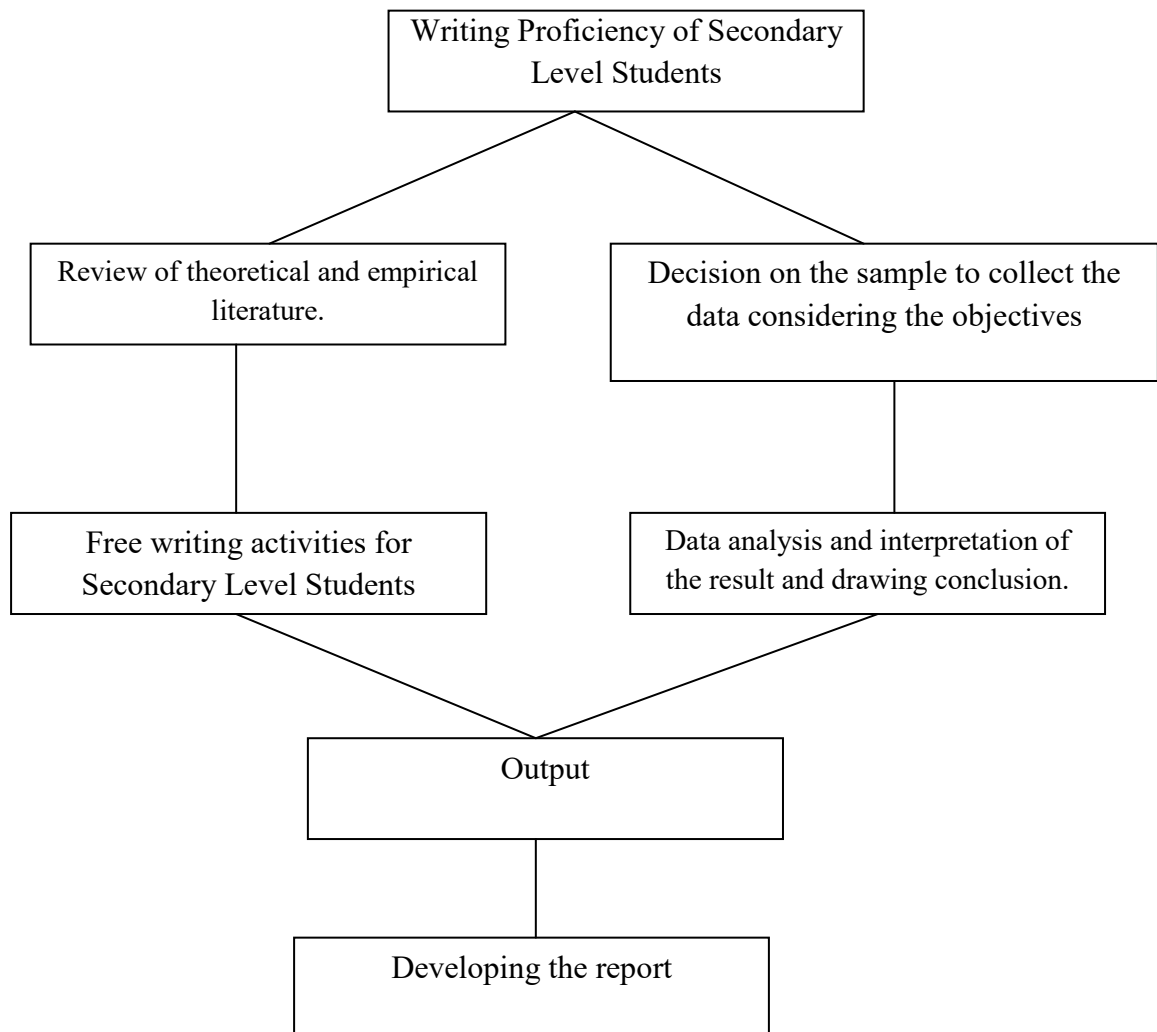
Figure 1: Conceptual framework.

Chapter III

Methods and Procedures of the Study

In order to fulfill the objectives of the study and to lead it towards the conclusive findings the researcher adopted the following methodology of research.

Design and Method of the Study

Research design refers to the model that nay researchers apply in course of his/her work. Research is always based on the investigation and enquiry of knowledge and information. Research can be conducted by following in different methods and procedures. It depends upon the area of investigation. According to Kumar (2009) "A research design is a plan for structure and strategy of investigating so convinced as to obtain answer to research question or problem." This study is based on the survey research design according to the procedure of the data collection and analysis.

Survey research design is a superficial and more important research design to study and obtain opinion, attitudes and beliefs. Therefore, I selected survey research design for my research study which has provided and directed me to complete my research easily. I examined writing proficiency of secondary level Students at secondary level by taking a survey of their free writing practices in the given test.

Population, sample and sampling strategy

The present research included secondary level specially Secondary level students of grade IX learners. So all students of secondary level were the population of the study. In order to accomplish the research objectives, the researcher selected 40 students of Secondary level students of grade IX studying in Dadhikot English Secondary School, Modern Boarding Secondary School, Araniko Secondary School and Rainbow English Secondary School were the sample of the study.

The researcher was selected the purposive non-random sampling procedure to select the Dadhikot English Secondary School, Modern Boarding Secondary School, Araniko Secondary School and Rainbow English Secondary School in order to complete the research work. Then the researcher was selected 40 students from Dadhikot English Secondary School, Modern Boarding Secondary School, Araniko

Secondary School and Rainbow English Secondary School as a sample of the study using simple random sampling procedure.

Research Tools

The researcher administered a set of test item consisting of four subjective questions to collect data from the students. The tasks consisted of writing story, essay, and letter, presenting views, opinions and arguments. Each question carried ten and fifteen marks. The total mark of the test was fifty. Students had to answer all the questions within one and half hours. The informants were free to use their own vocabularies and structures.

Source of Data

The study was based on both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources of data were four private schools. And secondary sources of data were different books, articles, journals,, thesis and other written documents.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher selected forty students from four different Secondary schools of Bhaktapur. The researcher adopted purposive non-random sampling strategy for this study. It is one of the non- probability types of sampling. Nunan (1993, p.27) defines purposive sampling as "The samples taken as a subset of individuals from a given population that can be reached". It means the sample was taken according to the convenience of the researcher. The researcher asked four different questions like essays, story, letter, dialogue and news article.

Ethical Considerations

I assured the participants of full confidentiality of the information about themselves and that they would provide. I did not compel them to take part in my research. Therefore, their participation was fully voluntary. I took permission from the authority and the participants as appropriate and necessary.

Chapter IV

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Analysis of Data and Interpretation of Results

This is the focal part of the study. It deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data which are collected by the researcher from the four selected Secondary Schools of Bhaktapur. There were test items (guided and free composition) which were based on the prescribed text-book and non-textbook materials. The researcher first studied and interpreted the data for findings and errors in different areas such as punctuation, article, preposition and subject-verb agreement to find out actual proficiency of the English language writing of the ninth graders of Bhaktapur.

The analysis and interpretation of the data were done under the following headings:

- Holistic analysis

- School-wise analysis

- School-wise evaluation of writing

Holistic Analysis of Proficiency

The major areas of proficiency of writing were number of sentences, numbers of errors committed in the sentences they wrote and the evaluation of writing.

The table shows the holistic analysis of the proficiency of the students of four different Schools of Bhaktapur in the use of punctuation, article, subject-verb agreement and preposition.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of the overall Activities

Name of Schools	No. of Sentences	% of total sentences	No. of errors	% of total errors	Average marks
Rainbow English Secondary School	604	30.61	498	28.75	22
Modern Boarding Secondary School	278	14.09	396	22.86	11.4
Araniko Secondary School	636	32.23	413	23.84	29.6
Dadhikot English Secondary School	455	23.06	425	24.53	15.1
Total	1973	100.00	1732	100.00	78.1
Average	493.25	25.00	433	25.00	19.52

The above table shows the proficiency of the total sample students from the four different Schools on the test. Out of the total sentences the students of Araniko Secondary School wrote 32.23%, the students of Rainbow English School wrote 30.61% sentences, Dadhikot English Secondary School wrote 23.06% and the students of Modern Boarding School wrote 14.09%. The students of Rainbow English and Araniko Secondary Schools have greater proficiency than the students of other two Schools in terms of the highest percentage of sentences they wrote. Likewise the students of Rainbow English School committed 28.75%, Dadhikot School 24.53%, Araniko Secondary School 23.84%, and Modern Boarding School committed 22.86% of errors in their sentences. By this, the students of Rainbow English Boarding School

were above the average level of errors and students of other three Schools were below the average errors (i.e.25%).

In the area of marking of their writing, the students of Araniko and Rainbow English Boarding Schools secured 59.2% and 44% respectively out of 50% full marks. Their overall proficiency was found satisfactory. The students of Dadhikot and Modern Boarding School obtained 30.2% and 22.8% respectively. They got less marks than the average marks, their overall proficiency was not found satisfactory. Hence total sample students got 78.1% out of total marks. Thus their overall proficiency was found satisfactory.

School -wise Analysis of Proficiency in the use of Punctuation

School- wise analysis of proficiency in the use of punctuation is as follows:

Rainbow English Secondary School

The analysis of proficiency of the students of Rainbow English Secondary School in punctuation is as follows:

Table 2

Total Proficiency of the Students of Rainbow English School in Punctuation

Areas	No. of errors	Total no. of sentences	% of errors in total sentences
Full Stop	51	604	8.44
Capital Letters	91	604	15.06
Comma	71	604	11.75
Others	12	604	1.98
Total	225	604	37.25

In the use of full stop, the students of Rainbow English Secondary School committed 8.44% errors in the sentences they wrote. In the use of capital letters they committed 15.06% of errors. Likewise they committed 37.25% of errors when comparing with the total number of sentences they wrote. Their total proficiency was found to be satisfactory as they committed less errors in numbers sentences.

Modern Boarding Secondary School

The analysis of proficiency of the students of Modern Boarding Secondary School in punctuation is as follows:

Table 3

Total Proficiency of the Students of Modern Boarding School in Punctuation

Areas	No. of errors	Total no. of Sentences	% of error in total sentences
Full Stop	33	278	11.87
Capital Letters	106	278	38.12
Comma	13	278	4.67
Others	33	278	11.87
Total	185	278	66.54

The data reveal the errors committed in the areas of punctuation by the students of the Modern Boarding School in Bhaktapur. Accordingly, the students committed 11.87% of errors in the use of full stop. Whereas they committed 38.12% of errors in the use of capital letters in their sentences. In the use of comma, they committed 4.67% of errors. Similarly they committed 11.87% of errors in the use of other punctuation marks. Thus, their total proficiency was not found to be satisfactory as they 66.54% of errors in total sentences.

Araniko Secondary School

The analysis of proficiency of the students of Araniko Secondary School in punctuation is as follows:

Table 4

Total Proficiency of the Students of Araniko Secondary School in Punctuation

Areas	No. of errors	Total no. of Sentences	% of error in total sentences
Full Stop	34	636	5.34
Capital Letters	111	636	17.45
Comma	46	636	7.23
Others	19	636	2.98
Total	210	636	33.00

The data above shows that the students from Araniko Secondary School wrote 636 sentences. In the use of full stop they committed 5.34% of errors in their sentences. They committed 17.45% of errors in the use of capital letters. Similarly in the use of comma, they committed 7.23% of errors. In the use of other punctuation marks, they committed 2.98% of errors in the sentences they wrote. Thus, they committed 33.00% of errors in total sentences and their total proficiency was found satisfactory.

Dadhikot School

The analysis of proficiency of Dadhikot School in punctuation is as follows:

Table 5

Total Proficiency of the Students of Dadhikot School in Punctuation

Areas	No. of errors	Total no. of Sentences	% of error in total sentences
Full Stop	62	455	13.62
Capital Letters	127	455	27.91
Comma	25	455	5.49
Others	24	455	5.27
Total	238	455	52.30

The table above represents the errors committed in the areas of Punctuation marks by the Students of Dadhikot School. Accordingly, they committed 13.62% of

errors in the use of full stop. In the use of capital letters, they committed 27.91% of errors in their sentences. Similarly, they committed 5.49% of errors in the use of comma. In the use of 'others' they committed 5.27% of errors. Thus, they committed 52.30% of errors in total sentences and their total proficiency was not found to be satisfactory.

School- wise Analysis of Proficiency in the use of Grammatical Items: Article, Subject-Verb agreement and Preposition

School- wise analysis of writing proficiency in the use of grammatical items (article, sub- verb agreement and preposition) is as follows:

Rainbow English Secondary School

The analysis of proficiency of the students of Rainbow English Secondary School in the use of article, sub- verb agreement and preposition is as follows:

Table 6

Total Proficiency of Students of Rainbow English School in Grammatical Items

Areas	No. of errors	Total no. of sentences	% of errors in total sentences
Article	41	604	6.78
Subject-verb agreement	201	604	33.27
Preposition	31	604	5.13
Total	273	604	45.19

The data above reveals that the students from Rainbow English Secondary School committed 6.78% of errors in the area of article. They committed 33.27% errors in the area of subject - verb agreement. Likewise, they committed 5.13% of errors in the use of preposition in their own writing. In the total area of grammatical items, they committed 45.19% of errors. Their total proficiency was not found to be satisfactory.

Modern Boarding School

The analysis of proficiency of the students of Modern Boarding Secondary School in the use of grammatical items (article, sub-verb agreement and preposition) is as follows:

Table 7

Total Proficiency of students of Modern Boarding School in Grammatical Items

Areas	No. of errors	Total no. of sentences	% of in total sentences
Article	24	278	8.63
Subject-verb agreement	166	278	59.71
Preposition	21	278	7.55
Total	211	278	75.89

The table above shows that the students from Modern Boarding School committed 8.63% of errors in article. They committed 59.71% of errors in subject verb agreement. In the area of preposition they committed 7.55% of errors in their writing. In the total area of grammatical items they committed 75.89% of errors and their total proficiency was not found to be satisfactory.

Araniko Secondary School

The analysis of proficiency of the students of Araniko Secondary School in the use of grammatical items (article, sub-verb agreement and preposition) is as follows:

Table 8

Total Proficiency of students of Araniko Secondary School in Grammatical Items

Areas	No. of errors	Total no. of sentences	% of in total sentences
Article	24	636	3.77
Subject-verb agreement	144	636	22.64
Preposition	35	636	5.50
Total	203	636	31.91

According to the sentence wise errors, the students of Araniko Secondary School committed 3.77% of errors in the use of article. They committed 22.64% errors in the area of subject - verb agreement. Similarly, they committed 5.50% of errors in preposition. In the total errors of grammatical items, they committed 31.91% of errors. They were total proficiency was not found to be satisfactory.

Dadhikot School

The analysis of proficiency of the students of Dadhikot English Secondary School in the use of grammatical items (article, sub-verb agreement and preposition) is as follows:

Table 9

Total Proficiency of students of Dadhikot School in Grammatical Items

Areas	No. of errors	Total no. of sentences	% of in total sentences
Article	28	455	6.15
Subject-verb agreement	144	455	31.64
Preposition	15	455	3.29
Total	177	455	38.90

The data above reveal that the students from Dadhikot English Secondary School committed 6.15% errors in the use of article. In the area of subject - verb agreement, they committed 31.64% of errors. Likewise, in the use of preposition, they committed 3.29 of errors. In the total areas of grammatical items, they committed 38.90% of errors. They committed less errors in preposition while comparing to others. Their proficiency was not found to be as the committed more errors in fewer number of sentences.

Evaluation of Writing

The term "Evaluation of writing" means scoring or finding out the standard and range of English language writing proficiency of the students. Evaluation helps to find out the actual position or standard of the students. Marks were given on the basis of the students' writing proficiency. Actually marking is the medium of grading or

ranking. It is a kind of tool for the measurement of students' writing proficiency in this study. The students' writing was evaluated in terms of punctuation, article, subject - verb agreement, preposition, cohesion and organization.

Every student was allotted 50 full marks for his/ her writing materials. The researcher marked the writing to see the student's actual individual performance in terms of economy, clarity, continuity and free from errors. Ten students were selected from each School.

The table below shows the comparative study of the marking done in the writing of the students from four different Schools.

Table 10

School-wise Comparative Study on Marking

Name of Schools	No. of Students	Average Marks	Percentages
Rainbow English Secondary School	10	22	28.16
Modern Boarding Secondary School	10	11.4	14.60
Araniko Secondary School	10	29.6	37.9
Dadhikot English Secondary School	10	15.1	19.34
Total	40	78.1	100

The table above shows the table average marks of the students and total percentage of the marks gained by all the students. It shows that students of Araniko Secondary School have highest proficiency as they secured 37.9%. Then the students of Rainbow English School are in the second position scoring 28.16% out of fifty full marks. After that students of Dadhikot English Secondary School come on third position with 19.34% marks and the students of Modern Boarding School have got 14.60% out of fifty full marks.

Thus, comparing their marks the students of Araniko and Rainbow English have the better proficiency than the students of Modern Boarding and Dadhikot English Secondary School in their writing.

Chapter V
Findings, Conclusions And Recommendations

Findings

This is the final chapter of the study which consists of the findings based on the analysis of data, some recommendations based on findings. The main concern of this study was to find out the actual proficiency of Secondary level students of Bhaktapur in English language writing. The researcher investigated their writing proficiency in vocabulary, grammar and mechanics. The researcher realized that the students of Secondary Level are the middle level manpower of the nation. Especially the students of secondary level are directly related with the language teaching and learning activities. Therefore, they should have required proficiency in the English language writing so that they can study at the Higher Level and be able to guide their junior level students in the proper way. Their proficiency and effective skills help the other students in their academic knowledge and activities.

The data were tabulated for convenience and analyzed using simple statistical tools. The major findings of this study based on the analysis and interpretation of results are as given below:

Holistic Analysis of Proficiency

- In the area of marking of their writing, the students of Araniko and Rainbow English Boarding Schools secured 59.2% and 44% respectively out of 50% full marks. Their overall proficiency was found satisfactory. The students of Dadhikot and Modern Boarding School obtained 30.2% and 22.8% respectively. They got less marks than the average marks, their overall proficiency was not found satisfactory. Hence total sample students got 78.1% out of total marks. Thus their overall proficiency was found satisfactory.

School -wise Analysis of Proficiency in the use of Punctuation

- In the use of full stop, the students of Rainbow English Secondary School they committed 37.25% of errors when comparing with the total number of sentences

they wrote. Their total proficiency was found to be satisfactory as they committed less errors in numbers sentences.

- Errors committed in the areas of punctuation by the students of the Modern Boarding School in Bhaktapur. Thus, their total proficiency was not found to be satisfactory as they 66.54% of errors in total sentences.

- Araniko Secondary School wrote 636 sentences. They committed 33.00% of errors in total sentences and their total proficiency was found satisfactory.

- Students of Dadhikot School they committed 52.30% of errors in total sentences and their total proficiency was not found to be satisfactory.

School- wise Analysis of Proficiency in the use of Grammatical Items: Article, Subject-Verb agreement and Preposition

- Rainbow English Secondary School total area of grammatical items, they committed 45.19% of errors. Their total proficiency was not found to be satisfactory.

- In the total area of grammatical items from Modern Boarding School committed 75.89% of errors and their total proficiency was not found to be satisfactory.

- According to the sentence wise errors, the students of Araniko Secondary School committed total errors of grammatical items, they committed 31.91% of errors. They were total proficiency was not found to be satisfactory.

- Dadhikot English Secondary School total areas of grammatical items, they committed 38.90% of errors. They committed less errors in preposition while comparing to others. Their proficiency was not found to be as the committed more errors in fewer number of sentences.

Evaluation of Writing

- The table above shows the table average marks of the students and total percentage of the marks gained by all the students. It shows that students of Araniko Secondary School have highest proficiency as they secured 37.9%. Then the students of Rainbow English School are in the second position scoring 28.16% out of fifty full marks. After that students of Dadhikot English Secondary School come on third position with 19.34% marks and the students of Modern Boarding School have got 14.60% out of fifty full marks.

Conclusions

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation the researcher came up with the following conclusions.

The total errors on punctuation, article, subject-verb agreement and preposition (mechanics) committed by the students from four different Schools were one thousand seven hundred thirty two. They committed eight hundred fifty eight errors in punctuation and eight hundred and seventy four errors in grammatical items (i.e. articles, subject- verb agreement and preposition). The students were found better in the use of punctuation than in the use of article, subject verb agreement and preposition. The overall proficiency of the students of Araniko and Rainbow English School was found better in the use of punctuation by committing less numbers of errors than others. The overall proficiency of the students of Modern Boarding and Dadhikot School was not found to be satisfactory as they committed errors in the use of punctuation. The students of Rainbow English and Araniko was found more proficient than the students of Modern Boarding and Dadhikot English Secondary School in constructing highest numbers of sentences. The students committed mistakes in the use of comma than in the use of other specific punctuation marks, i.e capital, full stop and so on. Most of the students have committed errors in the use of grammatical items than in punctuation. In conclusion, due to the lack of very demanding properties of good writing -punctuation, article, preposition and subject-verb agreement, many sentences often become totally meaningless.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the current study the following recommendations have been made to the concerned authority.

- The students should be given more practice of using punctuation, article and preposition in proper places.

- Students should be motivated towards learning by using effective teaching materials such as flash cards, drawings, etc. in the classroom as far as possible for better performance.

- The students should be offered adequate knowledge of singular and plural form of verbs. Subject-Verb agreement should be taught relating verbs with the subjects.

- To avoid the errors of agreement, special attention should be paid in Subject-verb agreement and constant practice is offered in classroom.

- The writing activities should be given to the students with regular correction (self- correction, peer correction and teacher correction).

- Students are poor in English because most of the courses are taught in Nepali. So language of instruction should be English.

- Teaching of writing skill should be started on the basis of the student's previous knowledge and capacity in writing.

- Every School should provide the visual aids which help the students to develop their writing skill.

- All the subject-teachers should be provided training programs, seminars and workshops at times.

- The examination should also be systematic so that the learners can have a good intention of improving language skills.

- The students should be encouraged for writing practice

Policy Related

On the basis of the findings from the analysis and interpretations of the data, some recommendations have been extracted. These are discussed in the following sub-headings. The policy related recommendation is mentioned as follow:

- Curriculum planners, syllabus designer and course designer should include the related text which helps the students' writing proficiency.

- The majority of the students feel difficulty in paragraph and essay writing so, the course designer should focus on such types of activities which help to develop students' free writing proficiency.

- The school administration should utilize it to formulate the policies at school level.

- Writing Proficiency of students were weak. Hence school should make a plan to provide some sort of facilities for their learning.

Practice Related

The following recommendations can be made in practice level on the basis of findings.

- The teacher should use appropriate teaching material as far as possible.

- In the schools, there should be organization of various programs which help to promote the students writing proficiency.

- More exercises of free writing should be included in the text book and out of text book which improve their writing proficiency level perfectly.

- Paragraph and essay writing were very difficult for many students. So these writing activities should practice with regular correction.

- Teacher can change their strategies and roles to develop the proficiency of writing.

- School supervisors should visit schools frequently and help them with teaching problems.

Further Research Related

On the basis of the present study, the researcher has attempted to present some recommendations related to further research. The current study has been limited to the grade nine students. This work can serve as a reference for those who are interested in and want to carry out further research in this area of free writing composition in writing skill. Writing is broad discipline and thousands of studies can be conducted in this field. Most of the studies in the departments are conducted on comparisons. This study can work as a step of a ladder. By stepping on it, others researchers can reach in their destination. Therefore, I hope this study will be highly beneficial and fruitful for the researchers who are interested in conducting further studies in this broad field. The following three potential further research topics based on my research are as:

- A study on writing proficiency: A study of secondary level students who are studying in grade IX.

- This study is delimited to the proficiency of the grade IX students in the writing process. There needs to be the further researches carried on other ethnicity too.

- This study covers writing proficiency of secondary level students Bhaktapur district.

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Appendix
Questions for the Students

Dear informants,

This test item is prepared to collected the data for the purpose of a research work on the writing proficiency of Secondary level students of Bhaktapur to fulfill the Master's Degree in Education. I promise that your creation will be confidential. Please, answer the questions in the following format.

Time: 1: 30 hrs   Full marks: 50

                                                                                         Pass marks: 16

Q.No. 1. Suppose your best friend get the title 'students of the year 2078'. Prepare a message of congratulations to appear in a newspaper.   15

Q. No. 2 Write a short readable story with the help of the following outlines and given a suitable title to it: 10

A school boy.......has bas company........ learns to smoke .... teachers and parents advise him to give up smoking .... doesn't listen to them .... hides and smokes .... goes to a doctor .... knows that he's suffered from TB .... becomes up set .... regrets badly .... promises to given up smoking.

Q. No. 3. Construct a dialogue between two friends, talking about their plans after final examination at least in six changes.   10

Q.No. 4 Write an essay on 'Travelling in Nepal' in using clues given below: 15

Introduction .... Advantages .... Conclusion.