

# CHAPTER - ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General Background

"Language is mastery of language use to mastery of language structure"  
(Brumfit, 1985, p.1).

Language is a fundamental means of communication. It is extremely complex and highly versatile code used for human communication. It is a dynamic and open system that allows human beings to communicate their thoughts, feelings, desires, emotions, experiences and ideas. Man needs language to communicate with his fellows or relatives because he can not survive without language. It is a vehicle of human thoughts. The primary function of language is to communicate.

English is taught as a foreign language in Nepal. It has played the role of the most indispensable vehicle to the transmission of modern civilization into the nation. It is the world's mirror through which we can see and enjoy the every corner of the world. We can never pluck the fruits of rapid advancement and innovations in the field of science and technology, industrial development and international relationship unless we have the knowledge of English. For these and many other reasons, much more attention has been paid on the improvement of English Education in Nepal too.

The teaching of English is seen to be initiated with the foundation of Durbar high school, the first English school in the country in 1910 B.S. The appearance of NESP (1971) seems to have brought a drastic and everlasting change in the stream of educational history in Nepal.

### **1.1.1 Language Skills**

A language is always described in terms of different skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. A skill means to do something expertly and well. There are two types of language skills which are as follows:

- a. Receptive skills: Listening and reading.
- b. Productive skills: Speaking and writing.

We can also classify language skills on the basis of priority which are as follows:

- a. Primary skills: Listening and speaking.
- b. Secondary skills: Reading and writing.

So, there are four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

#### **a. Listening**

It is one of the receptive language skills. When a child is born, he/she starts to listen to the language items. In this sense, it is input for producing language items. Though somebody is not literate, he/she can listen to the language. So, it is the basic and primary language skill.

#### **b. Speaking**

It is one of the productive skills. "Speaking involves language production and therefore, is often referred to as productive skill. On the other hand, it is primary and inevitable skill" (Harmer, 1991, p.10).

#### **c. Reading**

Reading is receptive as well as secondary language skill in the sense that we receive some information and only literate persons can read the text.

We decode meaning through intensive vs. extensive reading, skimming vs. scanning reading, etc.

#### **d. Writing skill**

Writing is a productive and expressive skill of language. It is an expressive skill of language because we encode meaning by means of certain graphic symbols unlike decoding in receiving. It is a productive skill which manipulates the mechanics, letters and structures them into sensible words, sentences and paragraphs.

Writing being secondary and dependent on speech, makes use of graphic symbols to represent spoken sounds. Richards et al. (1985) say, "Writing is a system of written symbols which represents the sounds, syllables or words of language. It means that all languages of the world which have their written form, use graphic symbols that represent the spoken sounds" (p.313).

Similarly, Byrne (1993) says, "The symbols have to be arranged, according to certain convention to form words and words have to be arranged to form a sentence" (p.113).

Writing uses not only linguistic resources but also makes use of graphological devices at the same time. Further, writing is a process and involves several elements. The writer follows a systematic approach. He thinks about the content, audience, purpose, grammar, lexis and overall organization of the text. At the same time, he also thinks and uses some graphological

devices like punctuation, spelling and rhetorical devices (Rivers, 1972, p. 241).

Likewise, Writing is an activity through which human beings communicate with the another and transmit their accumulated ideas from one generation to another generation. It equally provides us with possibilities to discover and articulate ideas in many ways (Harmer, 1991, p. 232).

Thus, writing is an act of transmitting thoughts, feelings and ideas from up here in head to down there on paper since writing is a thinking process in its own right that demands conscious intellectual efforts. The essentials of writing are the spelling and punctuation, sometimes also known as mechanics of writing or graphological resources. writing is a very complex process that requires many composite skills: mental, rhetorical and critical. It is a skill that improves with constant practice. The writer becomes more comfortable and fluent in putting his/her thoughts exactly on paper.

### **1.1.2 Mechanics of Writing**

Mechanics of writing mainly include capitalization, spelling and punctuation. The learner must have the knowledge of mechanics of writing, use of correct and appropriate words and sentences, treatment of content, stylistic skills and judgement skills. Bowen et al. (1985) say,

The mastery of mechanics of writing and practice in the basic skills are necessary first steps for children or adult learners.

Under mechanics of writing, the learners should learn the alphabet, the left to right direction of English writing system, upper and lower case letters, rules for capitalization, basic spelling patterns of English and rules for words and sentences punctuation. (p.54)

Use of capitalization refers to the correct use of capital letters. The knowledge of using capital letter is important for writing. Spelling is to name or write the letters of a word in their correct order. Spelling plays a very important role since addition, omission or replacement of one letter with another can change the entire meaning of the word or of the whole message.

Punctuation is one of the graphological devices of writing process. Speech has its suprasegmental features like pitch, stress, intonation and length which help to convey meaning. Although these suprasegmental features can not be represented in writing, devices like punctuation (capital letters, word and sentence boundaries, comma, question mark etc.) are extensively used to convey meaning or patterns of meaning.

### **1.1.3 Stages of Development of Writing**

According to Baily (2006), there are five stages in developing writing skills. They are as follows:

### **a. Copying**

In copying stage, for the purpose of recognition, new script is given to the students. Here, the students copy the original text what she/he has learnt orally and read in his/her textbooks.

### **b. Reproduction**

In this stage, the learner attempts to write without original text what she/he has learned orally and read in his/her textbooks. If the learner has learnt in habit of accuracy during the copying stage, he/she becomes able to practise reproduction stage. It helps him/her to reinforce spelling and sentence structure.

### **c. Recombination**

At recombination stage, the learners are required to reproduce learned work with minor adaptation. The writing practice may take a number of forms, e.g. using substitution table to form words, phrases, sentences and transforming sentences and so on.

### **d. Guided writing**

The learners are given some freedom in selection of lexical items and structural patterns for their written exercises. They always have some kind of guidelines or clues (words, pictures, skeletons, etc.) for their written works.

### **e. Free writing**

At this stage, students have freedom to make their own choice of words and organization to express their ideas. It involves individual selection of vocabulary and structures for the expression of personal meaning.

### **1.1.4 The Essential Characteristics of Good Writing**

The essential characteristic of good writing is a complex phenomenon. To be a good writer, students must consider the following essential elements of good writing:

#### **a. Coherence**

Good writing deals with one topic at a time. According to Narayanswami (1979), "In a good piece of writing, all the sentences are closely related to the central idea" (p.13).

#### **b. Clarity**

Good writing should be clear. It must be absolutely free from ambiguity. There should not be room for different interpretations or misinterpretations in the writing. Idea should be presented in a clear, orderly, readable, understandable and informative style. The writer should have the idea of how to sequence what is said and how to express the subject matter.

#### **c. Complete**

Good writing must be complete. A good piece of writing completes the topic it deals with. Good writing should avoid exaggeration and hyperbolic and self-contradictory statements.

#### **d. Continuity**

Continuity of thought and natural link of ideas are important features in writing. There must be continuity of thought from one word to the following word, from one phrase to the next phrase, from one sentence to

the other sentence, from first paragraph to next paragraph and from first chapter to next chapter.

#### **e. Unity**

Writing must have unity. Words make up a sentence, sentences make up a paragraph. A sentence cannot be called a good sentence if it does not contain one main thought. Likewise, paragraph cannot be called good if it is not constructed as to deal with only one main topic or theme.

#### **f. Economy**

Good writing must be brief. A writer writes something according to his/her capacity to express his/her ideas briefly and effectively. Good writing is like a gold coin, small in compass but its value is great.

#### **g. Simplicity**

Good writing must be simple. It means that reducing complexities, unnecessary expression or thought, unnatural way is the best characteristic of good writing.

#### **h. Free from error**

Good writing must be free from error. It must be accurate. Every written piece has to be free from orthographic errors, semantic errors, grammatical errors, idiomatic errors, factual errors, punctuation errors and others.

### **1.1.5 Importance of Writing in the Secondary Level**

Writing is superior to other language skills because of its quality of being permanent. In Nepal, English has been taught and learned as a foreign language. It is being taught as a compulsory subject from primary level to



bachelor level. Most answers are required to be given in the written form. The objective of English language teaching curriculum of the secondary level in Nepal focuses on the cultivation of communicative ability and proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The secondary level curriculum gives twenty percent weightage to listening and speaking and eighty percent to reading and writing. This weightage also shows that writing has been given much importance.

High school students extensively use the written form of language. They make use of written language in their day to day learning activities. They occasionally write personal or official letters and participate in many types of writing. Besides, they appear in their unit or monthly tests or final examination and they are required to answer more than eighty percent of the questions in writing. In SLC examination, answers are required in written form. Students must develop their writing skills to get through SLC.

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

### **1.1.6 Components of Teaching Writing Skills**

According to Gurey (1954), the teaching components of writing skills are as follows:

- i. Teachers must help the learners to develop their ability to write correct and appropriate sentences.
- ii. Mechanical skills: Teachers must help them to develop ability to use punctuation and spelling correctly.

- iii. Treatment of a content: Teacher must help the learners to think and express themselves correctly in writing.
- iv. Stylistics: Teachers must help the learners to manipulate sentences and paragraphs and use language effectively.
- v. Judgement skills: Teachers must help the learners to write in an appropriate manner for particular purpose. He also must help to select, organize and other relevant information.

### **1.1.7 Types of Writing Skill**

There are different types of writing skills in English. They are: writing paragraphs, dialogues, precise and summaries, preparing resumes and bibliographies, calling meeting and writing minutes, using libraries and books, interpreting para-orthographic texts, etc.

#### **1.1.7.1 Letter Writing in English**

Out of many writing skills, letter writing with its many forms and uses is another activity. Writing skill is often the most difficult skill for students of English as a foreign language to acquire. There are important differences between spoken and written form. For example, spoken form has shortened forms, contractions, omissions, and colloquial expressions but these forms are not in written form. Those differences need not intimate the learner at the lower level. However, it is advantageous for the grade nine students for the following reasons:

- ) The vocabulary and structures in the letter may be taken from the students' own learned material.
- ) The letter may be short and simple in form and style, gradually increasing in length and complexity as the students' progress.

- ) The letter writing assignments may vary according to type and style as selected by the teacher and the students.
- ) The letters may be corrected and kept in the students' notebooks for actual reference.

Letters that are well organized in the form and content generally follow what is in the basic composition writing. Well composed letter, like a good composition in English, usually has three basic components which are as follows:

1. A corresponding to the introduction,
2. A general message, corresponding to the body and
3. A closing and signature, corresponding to the conclusion of the composition.

Letter writing can be an effective means of introducing and reinforcing the principles of good composition in English, the writer in both cases must first organize his or her thoughts logically to convey the intended message.

Writing a letter is a means of communication used between a sender and a receiver who are at a distance. It is said that letter writing is one of the most important factors of keeping personal and social relation alive and friendly. Letter writing is equally important for all the people and offices or institutions. "Written message addressed to a person or an organization usually put in an envelop, and sent by post is a letter" (OALD, 2005, p. 882).

Letter writing is an art. It is the complete communication between friends, related organizations. The information imparted by the letter should be clear and natural. The language and style differ from one letter

to another. For instance, a personal letter is written in personal and informal style, and it consists of colloquialism, slang and dialects as well. On the other hand, a business or an official letter is written in a formal and impersonal style.

### **1.1.7.2 Parts of a Letter**

A letter is properly ordered combination of different parts. Each part has its own importance, but different types of letters have different parts. All the parts are not equally important and necessary for all the letters.

According to Ronald (1983), the common parts required for common personal and official letters are given below (p. 219):

#### **a. The Letter Head**

It is a common part required for official letters. It is written at the top of the page between the left and right margins. In the place of letterhead the name of the office or firm along with short address should be mentioned. For example.

<p><b>PASANG LHAMU TRAVELS AND TOURS</b> <b>Lazimpat, Kathmandu</b></p>
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So far as the style is concerned, we can make as our choice but the common style is to mention it in block letters.

#### **b. The Heading**

The address of the sender and the date when the letter is written are traditionally mentioned at the top right corner of the page. The combined form of the address of the sender and the date is called heading and is written as aforementioned. The address is not normally written fully but if we are sending the letter to the strangers, full address is better than the

short one. This part is equally important for both types of letters, i.e. formal and informal or personal and official letters. Nowadays the heading is also written at the top left corner of the page.

### **c. The Superscription**

The superscription is also called inside address. It is the full address of the receiver. It is written on the left two or three lines below the line of the date which is written on the right. Each line of the address begins from the left margin. It is not required in a personal letter but basically required in an official letter. For example,

The Principal  
Golden Rays Academic Foundation  
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

### **d. The Salutation**

It is also called the letter opening or the greeting of the sender to the receiver. The relation between the sender and the receiver is the most important factor to decide how to write and what to write. The common salutations are:

#### **In official letters:**

Dear sir  
Dear Sirs  
Dear Madam  
Dear Mr. Rai

#### **In Personal Letter:**

Dear Raju  
My dear Shubham  
My Dear Aashish  
My Dear Asmita

### **e. The Body**

This is known as the most important part of a letter. This prime part contains the actual message to be conveyed to the receiver. The language

style of the body should be clear, pleasant and courteous. While writing personal letter, colloquialisms, slangs and to some extent, dialects can be introduced. The language used in the personal letters can be informal but in the official letters the language should be formal. Whatever type the letter is the tone of the language used in the letter should be polite and civilized. The expressions that carry the sense of inferiority complex and superiority complex should not be introduced in any letter.

#### **f. The Ending**

The phrase or the sentence used at the end of the body of the letter is known as the ending. It is written for the formality to end or close the letter. It does not necessarily convey the actual message but it aims at providing happy ending of the letter. This part is optional. It can be written as:

Thanking you,  
With love,  
I look forward to hearing from you,  
Hoping so, etc.

#### **g. The Subscription**

It is also called the complementary close. It is normally written within two spaces or lines below the body of the letter in the right margin. The subscription varies from letter to letter. For example, the subscription used in the personal letter differs from that of official letters. The complementary close should match the tone of the salutation. The first letter of it is capitalized. For example:

<b>In official letters</b>	<b>In personal letters</b>
Yours sincerely	Affectionately yours

Faithfully yours	With love
Yours truly	Best regards
Yours cordially, etc.	Yours ever, etc.

Nowadays, it is also mentioned on the left margin.

#### **h. The Signature**

The full name or full signature of the sender is not required in the personal letters but it is required in official letters. In the personal letter, only the first name is mentioned. It appears just below complementary close. In the official letters, the name along with the signature of the sender is required, for example,

<b>In official letters</b>	<b>In personal letter</b>
Sincerely yours	Best Regards
Gita	Shubham
Gita Bhusal	

Nowadays, it is also written in left margin as it appears just below the complementary case.

#### **i. The Postscript (P.S.)**

After ending the letter, if something important has been left to mention in the body of the letter, it is written after the signature of the sender. It is written P.S. for short and known as the postscript. It is not always required because it is written only if something important has been left to write in the body of the letter. The extra message added at the end of the letter after the signature is referred to as the post script. Furthermore, it is written to highlight the important points previously mentioned in the body of the letter.

### **j. The Enclosures**

The enclosures refer to the additional materials included with the letter written. The enclosures should be placed just below the sender's name on the left hand margin of the paper. This system is usual in business or official letters. The main purpose of this system is to inform the receiver what has been attached as the additional documents.

e.g. Encl. I: Photocopy of academic qualification (8)

Encl. II: Photocopy of citizenship card (1)

### **k. The Typist's Initial**

In the official or business letters, the typist can mention his/her initial name at the end of the paper (on the left-hand margin). It is known as the typist's initial. It is not required in the personal letters. It informs the main person of the institution who has prepared it, and it also facilitates correction if there are mistakes. It is usual in official or business letters.

### **l. The Envelope**

The envelope is an essential part of a letter. The sender's complete name and address are written on left hand side of the envelope, and the receiver's on the right.

e.g.

Sender/from	Receiver/to	Stamp
.....	.....	
.....	.....	



### **1.1.7.3 Styles of Letter Writing**

The formats of letter are known as styles. There are various styles of letter writing but the following are the common ones:

#### **a. Indented Style**

This style is traditional. In this style, we write address, date, subscription, name and signature to the right margin of the page slanting from the left to the right.

#### **b. Block Style**

In this style, we write address, date, subscription, name and signature on left or right hand side of the page without indenting their form. Traditionally, the above parts in this style were placed on the right hand side of the paper but nowadays they are placed on left hand side. In this style, each part is straight written.

### **1.1.7.4 Types of Letters**

The letters can be classified under different categories according to the language style and purpose of writing. Some of the usual types of letters are as follows:

#### **i. Formal Letters**

Formal letters are the standard forms of letters which are used in formal situations for particular purposes. The language style is formal, i.e. colloquialism and slang cannot be introduced in the former letters. Most of the official and business letters are formal ones because these letters are written maintaining formality of the language. There must be formal relation between the sender and the receiver. Formal letters are normally short and clear. Official letters, business letters, letters of application,

letters to the editor, etc. are the examples of the formal letters. They are practised from one institution to another, from one office to another, from one organization to another, from one office to a person and from a person to an office.

## **ii. Informal Letters**

Informal letters are personal letters. They are sent from one person to another such as relatives and friends who are normally close or known to each-other. Personal letters are written in friendly and informal language but the formality of the language is not given importance. The language of the informal letters is simple, clear, conversational and familiar. The features of the conversational forms of language can be introduced. All the parts of letter aforementioned are not used in the personal letters. For example, the superscription is not written in the personal letters. The subject-matter of the personal letters cannot be easily predicted but introduction of self and surroundings, request, apology, congratulations, intuition, sympathy, condolence, thanksgiving, inquiry, etc. are the common subject-matters of the informal letters.

## **iii. The Business Letters**

The business letters are formal and official letters which are practised for particular purposes. The main aim of the business letters is to establish business relationship between two firms and companies. These are the standard letters which deal with some subjects such as ordering, request, booking, complaint, apology, inquiry, transfer of money, reference, etc. Thus, these letters are used to keep the legal records of the transactions between the firms and institutions involved.

Furthermore, the business letters are written to keep in touch with customers and business firms, and to strengthen business ties or relationship. The business letters are not only written for business deals like ordering goods, requesting credit, making claims and adjustment but also for seeking employment and conducting social business.

#### **iv. Letters of Employment**

The letters that deal with the acquisition, acceptance, rejection or confirmation of a job and so on are called the letters of employment. The following letters fall under this category:

- a. Letters of application for a job
- b. Letters of appointment
- c. Letters of acceptance
- d. Letters of refusal
- e. Letters of registration
- f. Letters of thanks giving, etc.

#### **v. Letters of Reference and Recommendation**

The letters that recommend somebody or something with some factual references and information to someone for special purpose are known as the letters of reference and recommendation. They include the information about the quality, qualification, health condition, character, honesty and devotion of the applicant. The person who recommends someone should be completely responsible for the information imparted by his letter.

## **vi. Letters to the Editor**

The letters written addressing the editor of a newspaper or magazine or any publication are called the letters to the editor but the main aim of these letters is to inform, convince or persuade the readers or concerning people. These letters contain factual information about concrete matter. These letters should be clear and to the point. Normally, these letters are official letters or formal letters.

## **vii. Letters of Condolence/ Sympathy**

Letters of condolence or informal condolences are written to give consolation (comfort or compensation) to a family on the demise of their relatives or friends. They should be brief and should convey the grief the sender feels and shares. They are written in the form of personal letter.

Letter of sympathy is written when someone, i.e. our relative or a friend, has lost something but we also can find letter of sympathy and letter of condolence used at the demise of someone.

Formal condolence or notice of condolence appears in the newspapers. It is formal and it is written in standard and high sounding language.

## **viii. Postcards, Greeting Cards, Invitations and Others**

Postcards, greeting cards, invitations are written to greet, invite and share something to others.

### **a. Postcards**

Postcards are written in many ways. They are personal letters. While writing postcards, heading is not mentioned but date is normally mentioned.

A postcard is a piece of thin card often with a picture on one side on which we can write and send to people by post without using envelope. It is very short.

### **b. Greeting Cards/Greetings**

Greeting cards are either published in the newspapers or they are sent to the people writing on the greeting cards. Greetings or greeting cards are sent to someone in special occasions like birthday, new year, festivals and so on.

### **c. Invitations**

Invitations are used for special programmes such as marriage ceremony, anniversaries, etc. They can be formal or informal depending on the occasion or the person being invited.

In formal invitations, there is usually passive voice and third person is used. They are written in attractive language. In informal invitations, active voice is used and first person pronouns are used. They are short and clear. They are personal letters.

### **1.1.8 Correction: An Overview**

Correction of students' written script is one of the best works helping students develop their writing skill. If the teacher does not correct their writing, he is worsening their language, encouraging and strengthening mistakes.

Rivers (1968) says, "Systematic training in writing requires systematic correction of individual scripts if it is to be effective"(p. 225).

In correction, fluency to style, ease of communication and relevance to the context in relation to the task demanded to the student should be taken care of. A 5-point scale has been used. If the analytic method of scoring is employed, it is essential that flexibility should be maintained.

Score	5	4	3	2	1
Grammar			X		
Vocabulary				X	
Mechanics		X			
Fluency				X	
Relevance			X		

Source: Walton (1983:234).

Total Score = 14.

It is very hard for a teacher to correct exercise books/notebooks of all students in the classroom. It is a serious problem in teaching writing skill although different methodologists have given different correction techniques. Some acceptable suggestions are as follows:

1. Teacher asks students to write a letter. Answer sheets should be collected and corrected.
2. An another device is that the teacher should put the actual symbols for correction. They are 'P<sub>1</sub>' for parts of letter, 'g' for grammar, 'w' for word order, 'n' for number, 's' for spelling and 'p' for punctuation, etc.
3. The teacher moves around the class and indicates the line that contains a mistake and students try to correct them.
4. Only answer should be written on the blackboard.
5. Correction can be done by the students themselves.
6. Exchanging exercise books. It is very difficult for lower classes. In this technique, the students exchange their exercise books among themselves and find out their friends' mistakes.

7. Use of computer: It is also very difficult for lower class students. In this techniques, the students set their written scripts on the computer's screen, and find out their mistakes (grammar, spelling, punctuation). After that, they should correct themselves with the help of computer.

## **1.2 Review of the Related Literature**

Some studies have been carried out in the past by different researchers on different fields. Some studies done in the past which are related to the area of this study are as follows:

Giri (1981) carried out a research on "A Comparative Study of the English Language Proficiency of the Students Studying in Grade Ten in Secondary Schools of Doti and Kathmandu." The objective of the research was to compare the proficiency of students in the English language between Kathmandu and Doti districts. The finding showed that the students of secondary level of Kathmandu district were better than that of the Doti district. Similarly, Adhikari (1986) carried out a research on "Difference in Written English Corrections between Private and Public School's English Teacher." The objective of the study was to compare the teachers of private and public schools in English language correction. The finding of this study was that private school teachers were found weaker than the teachers of public schools teacher because private school teachers were found weaker in situational differentiation.

In the same way, Karki (1996) carried out a research on "A Comparative Study between the Students of Public and Private Schools of Grade Ten in Lamjung District in Writing Competence." The objective was to compare the differences between students of public and private schools of grade ten in Lamjung district in writing competence. The finding was that

the writing competence of private schools was better than that of public school. Similarly, Dahal (1998) carried out a research on "The Tense and Aspects in Free Writing of the 11<sup>th</sup> Grades". This study concentrated on the problems, causes and solutions in using tenses and aspects in free writing. The finding of this study was that the students' competence was better in tense than in aspect.

Likewise, Paudyal (1999) carried out a research on "Comparative study of English language writing proficiency in Higher Secondary School of Gulmi and Kathmandu". The objective was to find out the proficiency in writing between higher secondary school of Gulmi and Kathmandu districts. The finding of this study was that the students of urban areas were better than the students of rural areas. Similarly, Bhattarai (2001) carried out a research on "The Use of Punctuation in Free Writing." The objective of the research was to find out the proficiency of punctuation in free writing. The finding of the study was that the students used altogether thirteen items of punctuation marks and eleven items of punctuation marks were found to be erroneous.

The present study is different from the above mentioned studies as no study has been done yet on "Proficiency in writing: A case of letter". So, it is a new venture in itself.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of this study were as follows:

- a. To find out the grade nine students' writing proficiency in terms of:
  - i holistic description
  - ii personal letters
  - iii condolence and sympathy letters



- b. To compare their proficiency in terms of gender.
- c. To suggest some pedagogical implications on the basis of findings of the study.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study will be significant mainly for teachers who are directly concerned with grade nine English course and students studying in grade nine. They are the people who can develop remedial classes or materials. This study will also be significant for material developers who prepare remedial courses. It will also help the course designers and textbook writers to design and write better curriculum and textbooks.

#### **1.5 Definitions of the Specific Terms**

**Average:** It is a statistical tool used in analysis and interpretation of data. It is the result of adding all amounts together and dividing the total by the number of students.

**Skills:** To do something expertly and well.

**Composition:** Things that are composed or constructed, e.g. piece of writing.

**Free writing:** Self expression of subject-matter in written form.

**Guided writing:** Expression depending upon clues and set of instructions.

**Heterogeneous class:** The class which consists of students from different backgrounds/environments.

**Achievement:** Obtained score of the students on the test.

**Mechanics:** Aspects of writing such as capitalization, spelling and punctuation.

**Proficiency:** Able to do something well because of training and practice.

**Score:** Obtained marks by the students on the test conducted by the researcher.

## **CHAPTER - TWO**

### **METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the researcher has tried to find out the proficiency of the students of grade nine in letter writing. The methodology she adopted during the study is as follows:

#### **2.1 Sources of Data**

In this study both primary and secondary sources of data were used for the collection of data.

##### **2.1.1 Primary Sources of Data**

The primary sources of data for this study were the fifty students of Parbat District of grade nine. The school was Shree Gram Prakash Higher Secondary school which is located at rural area.

##### **2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data**

The researcher used a number of secondary sources of data, i.e. the books, research reports, articles, etc. Compulsory English textbook of grade nine was the main secondary source of data. Other secondary sources were Byrne (1964), Turk (2003), Walton (1983), etc.

#### **2.2 Population of the Study**

The population of the study consisted of fifty students who were studying in grade nine in public school of Parbat district. The number of population of the study with their specification is as follows:

**Table 1: Population of the Study**

Name of school	Male	Female	Total
Shree Gram Prakash Higher Secondary School, Lekphani, Parbat	25	25	50
Percentage	50%	50%	100%

### **2.3 Sampling Procedure**

The researcher selected one public school from Parbat district using judgmental non-random sampling procedure. From the school, the researcher selected fifty students using random sampling procedure in which each student had equal and independent chance to be selected in the sample. The researcher wrote the roll numbers of the students and put them into the box and selected the sample population using fishbowl draw.

### **2.4 Tools for Data Collection**

Test items were the tools for data collection. The researcher prepared the tests on the basis of the texts given in the English textbook of grade IX. The tests were both from the textbook and related to the textbooks or out-of-textbook. In these tests, ten subjective questions were asked. The full mark of the test was fifty and the time was two hours.

### **2.5 Process of Data Collection**

The researcher visited the selected school and explained the main objective of her visit to the concerned people and asked the authority for permission to administer the test. After getting permission, the researcher selected required number of students by using random sampling procedure. Then, the sampled students were taken to a separate room to

conduct the test. The researcher gave them necessary instructions on what they were supposed to do. The researcher herself played the role of invigilator during the test tenure. After administering the test, the researcher collected the answer papers and examined them as objectively as possible. The obtained scores were analyzed and interpreted using descriptive approach and simple statistical tools, i.e. percentages, rank, etc.

## **2.6 Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study were as follows:

- The study was confined to only one public school of Parbat district.
- The number of population was fifty students of grade nine from selected school.
- The primary data were only the sources for analysis. They were collected from test items.
- The letters were confined only to personal and condolence/ sympathy letters.

## CHAPTER - THREE

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data. According to the objectives of the study the researcher marked the responses of the students very carefully and tabulated the scores systematically. Then, on the basis of the tabulated scores, the analysis and interpretation was done. The analysis and interpretation of the data were done under the following headings:

1. Holistic analysis of proficiency.
2. Analysis of the proficiency in personal letter writing.
3. Analysis of the proficiency in condolence/sympathy letter writing.
4. Item-wise analysis of total proficiency.
5. Comparison of students' performance between boys and girls in personal letter writing and sympathy/condolence letter writing.

#### 3.1 Holistic Analysis

The holistic analysis of proficiency in personal and condolence letter writing is as follows:

**Table 2 : Holistic Analysis**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
50	50	28.33	56.66%
Boys	25	90.05	60.00%
Girls	25	26.61	53.22%

The above table shows the proficiency out of the total sample students on the test. The full marks of the test was fifty. The students secured 28.33 percent marks out of total marks, i.e. 56.66% of the marks in the test.

Since the students secured over fifty percent marks, their overall proficiency in letter writing was found satisfactory.

### **3.2 Analysis of the Proficiency in Personal Letter Writing**

The analysis of the proficiency in the personal letter writing is as follows:

**Table 3: Total Proficiency of the Students in Personal Letter**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
50	50	14.23	56.92%
Boys	25	14.99	59.96%
Girls	25	13.46	53.86%

The above table shows the total proficiency of total sample students in personal letter. There were five questions of personal letter on the test carrying twenty-five marks. On an average, the sample students secured 14.32 marks, i.e. 56.92% marks out of the total marks. Since they secured more than 50% marks, their overall proficiency in personal letter was found to be satisfactory.

### **3.3 Analysis of the Proficiency in Sympathy/Condolence Letter**

The analysis of the proficiency in sympathy/condolence letter is as follows:

**Table 4: Total Proficiency of the Students in Condolence/Sympathy Letter**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
50	50	14.10	56.43%
Boys	25	15.06	60.24%
Girls	25	13.15	52.61%

The above table shows the total proficiency of fifty sample students in sympathy/condolence letter writing. There were five questions of sympathy/condolence letter on the test carrying twenty-five marks. The students secured 14.16 marks, i.e. 56.43% marks out of the total marks. Since, they secured more than 50% marks, their overall proficiency in sympathy/condolence letter could be considered satisfactory.

### **3.4 Item-wise Analysis of the Total Proficiency in Personal Letter**

The item-wise analysis of the total proficiency in personal letter is as follows:

#### **3.4.1 Analysis of the Total Proficiency in Item No. one**

The analysis of the total proficiency in item no. one is as follows:

**Table 5: Total Proficiency in Item No. one**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
50	50	2.21	44.2%
Boys	25	1.87	37.4%
Girls	25	2.56	51.2%

The above table shows the total proficiency of fifty sample students in item no. one. There was subjective question in it carrying five marks. Out of total marks, the students secured 2.21 marks, i.e. 44.2% of the marks in the test. Hence the students' performance in item no. one was not found satisfactory. It shows that the students did not perform properly.

#### **3.4.2 Analysis of the Total Proficiency in Item No. two**

The analysis of the total proficiency in item no. two is as follows:



**Table 6: Total Proficiency in Item No. two**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
50	50	3.42	68.42%
Boys	25	3.29	65.9%
Girls	25	3.54	70.95%

The above table shows the proficiency of the students in item no. two. In this item, the students were given a subjective question carrying five marks. Out of the total marks, the students secured 3.34 marks, i.e. 68.42% of the marks in the test. Hence, the students' performance in item no. two was found satisfactory. It shows that students did it well.

### **3.4.3 Analysis of the Total Proficiency in Item No. three**

The analysis of the total proficiency in item no. three is as follows:

**Table 7: Total Proficiency in Item No. three**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
50	50	3.29	65.87%
Boys	25	3.46	69.3%
Girls	25	3.12	62.45%

The above table shows the performance of the sample of fifty students in item no. three. There was one subjective question carrying five marks. Out of the total marks, the students secured 3.29 marks, i.e. 65.87% of the marks in the test. Hence, it can be said that the students performed better in this item. It shows that students wrote letter to their friend using clues properly.

### 3.4.4 Analysis of Total Proficiency in Item No. Four

**Table 8: Total Proficiency in Item No. Four**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
50	50	2.67	53.4%
Boys	25	2.88	57.6%
Girls	25	2.46	49.2%

The above table shows the fifty sample students' performance in item no. four. There were five sentences to test the students' proficiency in indicating right or wrong which carried five marks. Out of the total marks, the students secured 2.67 marks i.e. 53.47% of the marks in the test. Since they secured above 50% marks, their performance in this item was satisfactory. It shows that students were able to choose right or wrong correctly in test items.

### 3.4.5 Analysis of the Total Proficiency in Item No. five

The analysis of the total proficiency in item no four is as follows:

**Table 9: Total Proficiency in Item No. Five**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
50	50	3.55	70%
Boys	25	3.44	68.8%
Girls	25	3.67	73.4%

The above table shows the fifty sample students' performance by gender as well. Out of the total marks, the boys obtained 68.8% marks whereas the girls obtained 73.4% marks. It suggests that the girls displayed better performance than the boys in this item in test item.

### **3.5 Item-wise Analysis of Total Proficiency (Sympathy/Condolence Letter)**

The item-wise analysis of total proficiency in sympathy/condolence letter is as follows:

#### **3.5.1 Analysis of the Total Proficiency in Item No. six**

The analysis of the total proficiency in item no. six is as follows:

**Table 10: Total Proficiency in Item No. six**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
50	50	2.60	53.2%
Boys	25	2.65	53.1%
Girls	25	2.55	51.1%

The above table shows the fifty sample students' performance in item no. six. There was one condolence question which carried five marks. Out of the total marks, the students secured 2.60 marks, i.e. 52.05% of the marks in the test. Since, they secured above 50% marks, their performance in this item was satisfactory. It shows that students were quite able to write condolence letter.

#### **3.5.2 Analysis of the Total Proficiency in Item No. seven**

The analysis of the total proficiency in item no. seven is as follows:

**Table 11: Total Proficiency in Item No. seven**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
50	50	2.90	58.15%
Boys	25	2.74	54.95%
Girls	25	3.06	61.2%

The above table shows the fifty sample students' performance in item no. seven. There was question of sympathy letter which carried five marks. Out of total marks, the students secured 2.90 marks, i.e. 58.15% of the marks in the test. Hence, they secured above 50% marks. The performance in this item was satisfactory.

### **3.5.3 Analysis of the Total Proficiency in Item No. eight**

The analysis of the total proficiency in item no. eight is as follows:

**Table 12: Total Proficiency in Item No. eight**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
50	50	3.56	71.32%
Boys	25	3.56	71.32%
Girls	25	3.57	71.4%

The above table shows the fifty sample students' performance in item no. eight. There was question of condolence letter which carried five marks. Out of the total marks, the students secured 3.56 marks, i.e. 71.32% of the marks in the test. Hence, the students performance in item no. eight was found highly satisfactory. There was no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys.

### **3.5.4 Analysis of the Total Proficiency in Item No. nine**

The analysis of the total proficiency in item no. nine is as follows:

**Table 13: Total Proficiency in Item No. nine**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
50	50	2.97	59.5%
Boys	25	2.81	56.2%
Girls	25	3.14	62.8%

The above table shows the fifty sample students' performance in item no. nine. There was question of sympathy letter which carried five marks. Out of the total marks, the students secured 2.97 marks, i.e. 59.5% of the marks in the test. Since they secured above 50% marks, their performance in this item was found satisfactory.

### **3.5.5 Analysis of Total Proficiency in Item No. ten**

The analysis of total proficiency in no. ten is as follows:

**Table 14: Total Proficiency in Item No. ten**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
50	50	2.95	59.15%
Boys	25	3.24	64.95%
Girls	25	2.66	53.35%

The above table shows the fifty sample students' performance in item no. ten. There was question of condolence letter which carried five marks. Out of the total marks, the students secured 2.95 marks, i.e. 59.15% of the marks in the test. Since they scored above fifty percent marks, their performance in this item was found satisfactory. They were efficient to write a short letter using the given clues.

### 3.6 Gender-Wise Comparison of the Total Proficiency

The gender-wise comparison of the total proficiency is as follows:

**Table 15: Comparison of Proficiency between Boys and Girls**

Total sample	Sample size	Average marks	Percentage
Boys	25	30.05	60.01%
Girls	25	26.61	53.22%

The above table displays the status and the comparison of proficiency between boys and girls. The full mark of the test was fifty and the sample size of each gender was twenty-five.

Out of the total marks, the boys obtained 30.05 marks, i.e. 60.01% of the total marks. Since they obtained above 50% marks, their status of proficiency in their group was satisfactory. Similarly, the girls obtained 26.61 marks, i.e. 53.22% of the marks. They also crossed 50% marks, so girls' group was found satisfactory.

While comparing the proficiency between boys and girls, the boys were found to be more proficient than the girls. This is because the boys secured 60.01% marks whereas the girls secured 53.22% marks.

## CHAPTER - FOUR

### FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.1 Findings

The findings of this study derived from the analysis and interpretation of the data are as follows:

- i. The overall proficiency of grade nine students in letter writing was found to be satisfactory since in totality they secured 61.55% of the marks which was above 50% marks. Students were quite proficient in letter writing.
- ii. In personal letter:  
  
The overall proficiency of the students in personal letter was found to be satisfactory since they obtained 56.92% of the marks.
- iii. In condolence/sympathy letter:  
  
The overall proficiency of the students in condolence and sympathy letter was found to be satisfactory since they secured 56.43 marks out of the total marks i.e. they wrote condolence/sympathy letters properly.
- iv. In each items:
  - a. Item No. one was found to be the most difficult one. The students could secure only 44.33% of the marks in this item
  - b. Item No. three was found to be the easiest one for the students since they obtained 71.32% marks in this item.

- v. The boys (59.96%) were better than the girls (53.86%) in personal letter. Likewise, the boys (60.24%) were more proficient than the girls (58.33%) in condolence letter. The students performed better in group 'A' than group 'B'.
- vi. While comparing the students' performance between personal letter and condolence/sympathy letter:
  - a. The students showed better performance in writing personal letter than the sympathy/condolence letter.
  - b. Both the boys and girls performed better in writing personal letter than sympathy/condolence letter.

## **4.2 Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings derived from the analysis and interpretation of the data, the following recommendations have been made:

- i. Maximum exercises in the letter writing should be provided to the students in the classroom while teaching them. Letters should be taught together making differences between them to make it better.
- ii. Students should be motivated towards learning by using effective teaching materials such as charts, flash cards, drawings, etc. in the classroom as far as possible for better performance.
- iii. Classes are over crowded by keeping more than one hundred students in one section. As a result, teachers can not pay attention to individual students. So, there should be a manageable number of students in one section.



- iv. Girls should be encouraged by the teacher to be conscious in teaching-learning activities because they often make noise in the classroom and neglect their study. They should be given more practice in letter writing in comparison to boys.
- v. Different extra-curricular activities and extra-adequate reading materials should be provided in schools to increase the students language proficiency, comprehension power, vocabulary in letter writing and more emphasis should be given on student centered teaching than teacher-centered teaching so that the students would pay high attention to letter writing activities and learn by doing.
- vi. Adequate exercises should be provided to practice letter writing. There is lack of much practice in letter writing.
- vii. The remedial teaching should be done for the students in letter writing giving different contextual exercises.
- viii. Objective oriented teaching should be given more emphasis rather than examination oriented teaching.
- ix. 'Letter writing' teaching activities should be practical, use-based and inductive with sufficient materials and appropriate examples.
- x. Students should be provided with sufficient workbooks, practice books and other reference materials in the libraries, especially to the students of secondary level.
- xi. Teachers should use new approaches, methods, techniques in letter writing. They should follow the communicative approach

to language teaching and create meaningful situation in the classroom using appropriate teaching materials.

Finally, what the researcher wants to request to the concerned authority is that letter writing is one of the most important parts of writing and it should not be neglected because it is essential to maintain good social and interpersonal relationship. Teaching letter writing is very important aspect. In the curriculum of grade nine only personal and sympathy/condolence writing is included. Other types of letters should be included in secondary level curriculum so that the concept of letter writing will be developed later on.

So, the above mentioned points should be taken into consideration and similar research works should be carried out on the other types of letter in which Nepali learners of English are likely to commit errors in their performance.

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**Appendix -A**  
**Questions for the Students**

Full Marks: 50

Roll No.:

Time: 2 Hrs

Name of the school: Shree Gram Prakash H.S.S.

Name of the Student:

Students are required to give their answers in their own words as far as practicable.

*Attempt all the questions*

**Set 'A'**

**Personal Letter**

**25 marks**

1. Write a letter to your pen friend in England explaining your locality where you live.
2. Write a letter to your parents asking for some money and tell them how you are studying.
3. Write a letter to your foreign friend describing a festival of your country.
4. Write a letter to your father requesting him to bring some books and note copies.
5. Write a letter to your sister telling her about the importance of co-curricular activities.

**Set B (Sympathy/Condolence letter)**

**25 marks**

6. Write a letter of sympathy to your friend whose friend died in road accident recently.
7. Write a letter of sympathy to your friend who has had an accident and is in hospital.
8. Write a letter of sympathy to your friend's parents who have lost their son in a bus accident. Use the clues in the box (Srikant Joshi: your class friend, studied together at the

primary level, very intelligent, very helpful and cooperative, impressed both teachers and students, miss him very much, never forget)

9. Write a letter of condolence to be published in the rising Nepal about the death of your principal at road accident yesterday.
10. Write a letter of condolence to your maternal-uncle who lost his son in car accident recently.

## Appendix –B

### Statistical Formula Used in this study

) Formula of the average or mean

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Hence,  $\bar{X}$  = Average or mean

X = Students scores

$\sum$  = sign of summation

N = Total number of students

) Formula of grand average or mean

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum \bar{X}}{N}$$

Hence,  $\bar{X}$  = Grand average

$\bar{X}$  = Average

$\sum$  = Sign of summation

N = Total number of average



## Appendix - C

### List of the students' scores in letter writing

S.N.	Students Name	Set A Marks (Personal letter)	Set B Marks (Sympathy/ condolence letter)	Total Marks
1	Ganesh Subedi	13	12	25
2	Kamala Sharma	14	10	24
3	Uttam Subedi	15	8	23
4	Krishna Subedi	16	7	23
5	Shandhya Paudel	11	10	21
6	Sita Sharma	12	12	24
7	Shubham Bhushal	9	13	22
8	Kalpana Chapagain	8	14	22
9	Jaya Subedi	13	16	29
10	Yamuna Subedi	12	17	29
11	Asmita Regmi	14	8	22
12	Dilliram Acharya	17	6	23
13	Srijana Paudyal	9	7	16
14	Durga Bdr. G.C.	10	9	19
15	Mohan Regmi	11	10	21
16	Narayan Subedi	14	12	26
17	Pabitra Paudel	16	13	29
18	Puja Khatri	18	14	32
19	Subhash Regmi	16	12	28
20	Tulasi Subedi	17	13	30
21	Tulsiram Pandey	19	11	30
22	Laxmi Subedi	10	14	24
23	Srijana Subedi	8	9	17

24	Srijana Regmi	9	7	16
25	Sabita Regmi	12	13	25
26	Laxman Subedi	13	12	25
27	Nabin Paudel	15	12	17
28	Raju Subedi	14	15	29
29	Keshab Subedi	16	14	30
30	Prakash Subedi	12	14	26
31	Laxman Subedi	14	13	27
32	Ramesh Regmi	13	15	28
33	Dinesh Acharya	15	16	31
34	Dambar Pariyar	12	18	30
35	Kumar Bohara	11	11	22
36	Shanti Regmi	10	10	20
37	Bhagwati Subedi	13	12	25
38	Tanka K.C.	11	10	21
39	Rita Gurung	14	13	27
40	Binita Pun	12	11	23
41	Kala Purja	16	15	31
42	Tara Malla	18	17	35
43	Rina Sharma	16	15	31
44	Usha Sapkota	17	16	33
45	Devi Regmi	15	14	29
46	Bhagwati Acharya	13	12	25
47	Sita Acharya	18	17	35
48	Muna Pun	17	16	33
49	Neelam Thapa	19	18	37
50	Gita Sharma	20	19	39