

## **CHAPTER – ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 General Background**

Language is the unique property of human beings. It is the system of human communication which consists of the composite form of different units such as sounds, morphemes, words, phrases, sentences and so on which are related to each other in a systematic way. Language is the means of communication which enables us to establish relationship with different people in different situations. It is through the magic of language that man comes eventually to understand to an impressive degree, the environment in which he lives and, still more surprisingly, gains an insight into his nature and his own condition.

English is the most vital means for any person to become successful in local, national and international communication. As the world is getting more and more complex day by day, because of the invention of science and technology, the importance of English is crucial. Undoubtedly English is the means of international communication and major world language. Thus, we are in such a stage that we must know English if we want to know the world.

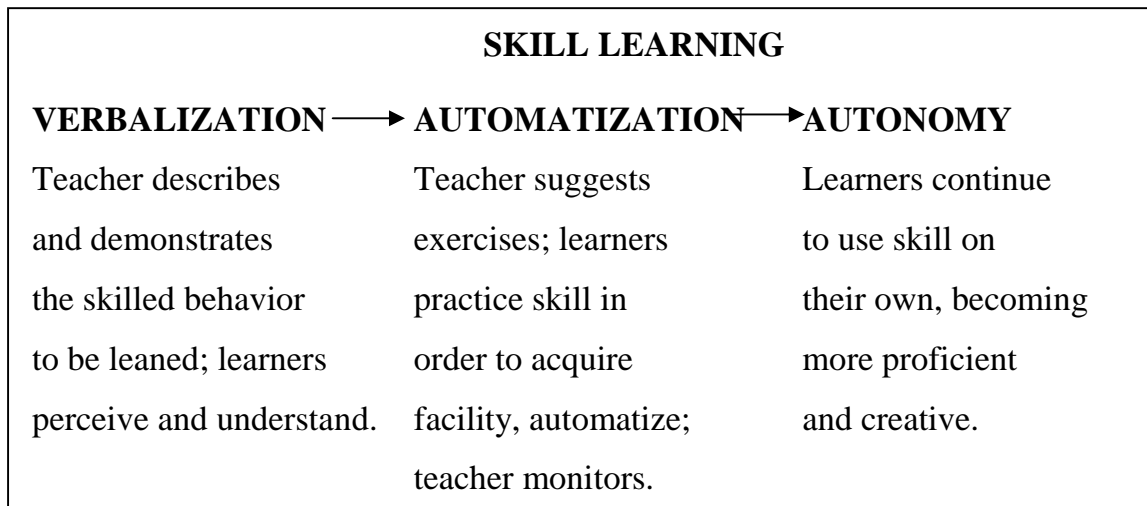
#### **1.2 Language and Communication**

Language is a means of communication. Thus, the function of language is to communicate. Language is used in a community for various communicative needs. It is through the magic of language humans are able to establish relationship with people from various backgrounds and in different circumstances.

##### **1.2.1 Learning a Language**

Learning may be defined as a change in performance that occurs under the conditions of practice. Learning of any skill depends on the practice. Practice can be defined as the rehearsal of certain behaviors with the objective of consolidating learning and improving performance. Skill means ability to do

something well. According to Ur (2005:20), the process of learning a skill by means of a course of instruction has been defined as a three stage process; verbalization, automatization and autonomy. This model of skill learning is presented in the following box:



Practice is the activity through which language skill and knowledge are consolidated and thoroughly mastered. As such, it is gradually the most important of all the stages of learning: hence the most important classroom activity of the teacher is to initiate and manage activities that provide students with opportunities for effective practice Ur (2005:20).

The learning of language has been a problem for nonnative learners. The process is a type of learning that involves the establishment of a set of habits that are both neural and muscular, and that must be well learned so that they function automatically. Thus, language learning is a highly complicated activity. It involves both neural and muscular tissues, and it has psychological, interpersonal and cultural aspects that are indispensable to its acquisition and use. Language learning does not concern problem solving, but the formation of performance of habits. It is a fact that those who already possess a mother tongue apply a very different set of physiological and mental capacities to learn a second language.

## 1.2.2 Language Skills

Learning a language means to be able to communicate through the language. To take part in any communicative activities, a language user or the participant in communication should be able to perform different language functions. The basic language skills include: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In any communicative activities there are two parties involved; receiver and producer. A producer produces messages and that are received and interpreted by the receiver. This can be presented in the following diagram:

| <i>Producer</i>                          | <i>Receiver</i>                               |
|--|---|
| Speaker / Writer (speak/write something) | Listener / Reader (listen/read and interpret) |

Speaking and writing are called productive skills because they are involved in language production. Since the language users seem active while using these two skills, they are also called active skills. Listening and reading on the other hand are called receptive skills because they involve in receiving aspect of language. These two skills are also called passive skills because the receiver seems passive while listening or reading. But mental process remains active while listening and reading are done.

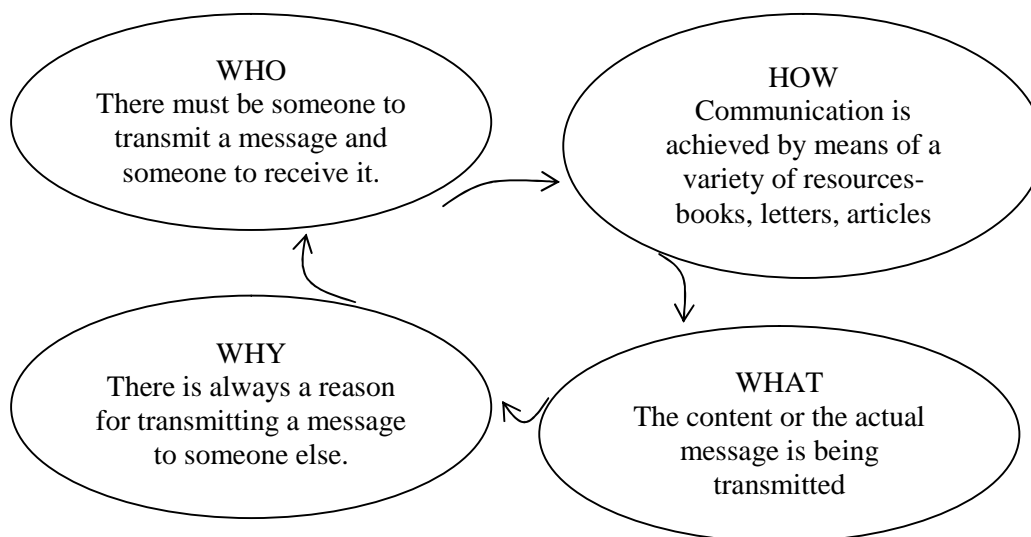
These language skills are learned in a proper order. Listening, speaking, reading and writing is the natural order of language learning. Among these four language skills, listening and speaking are acquired earlier and informally. But some sorts of training are required for learning to read and write. Thus, if we observe our communicative activities we communicate mostly by using first two language skills: listening and speaking. It is because these are the skills possessed by both the literate and illiterate people. Reading and writing are possessed by only literate people and these also are not less important in the field of daily communication, since in many organizations and institutions, message/information is interchanged through written media as well. The four language skills can be summarized in the following way:

|            |                             |                           |
|------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Used by    | Both literate & illiterate  | Literate only             |
| Skill      | Medium                      | Speech (spoken)           |
|            |                             | written word              |
| Receptive  | Listening and understanding | Reading and understanding |
| Productive | Speaking                    | Writing                   |

Any person to be able to successfully communicate must be able to manipulate all the language skills differently in different situations.

### 1.2.3 Written Communication and its Importance

Learning language means learning to communicate. Knowledge of language use is thus the knowledge of how to use language appropriately; how to get it to do what the users want to do in the right circumstances. Communication between humans is an extremely complex and ever changing phenomenon. Writing as a communicative activity includes the following components.



(Source Harmer 2001)

Thus, the writer may have some reasons to write a message for someone else and he writes the message in the paper which is then transmitted to the receiver.

“Writing is a highly personal affair in which the learner must respect all the mandatory features of the target language code as it appears when written, while at the same time being permitted and encouraged to exploit the violation and creative aspects of the new language to the extent that his ability and his experience permit”, Brooks (1964 :167). For Harmer, (1991) Writing has an interrelationship with other three language skills. It is one of the creative, complex and advanced productive skills of language. The act of writing is itself a commitment. Speech vanishes as soon as uttered but writing does not go away on its own. Writing enables one to organize experience, to structure the world one has extended control for one is not interrupted by another party.

Writing is the most complicated task of language production. It is the act of putting down the graphic symbols that represent language in order to convey some meaning so that reader can grasp the information what the writer has tried to impart. This is a powerful medium of expression. Spoken language may have dialect but written language generally demands standard forms of grammar syntax and vocabulary. A speaker uses pauses and intonation whereas a writer uses punctuation. Speech is informal and repetitive; writing on the other hand is more formal and compact.

If we observe two productive language skills, speaking and writing, the latter requires more accuracy than speaking and thus special focus is a must on teaching writing. In writing, the writer may get delayed feedback or no feedback at all. Similarly, the absence of intonation, stress, facial expression, gesture and body movements are to be compensated by greater clarity, appropriate punctuation marks and by the use of grammatical and stylistic techniques for focusing on the main points. Similarly, there is a greater need for logical organization in a piece of writing for the readers to understand what has been written. Similarly, handwriting and spellings also are not the less problematic aspects of learning writing in English.

When we learn a second language, we learn to communicate with other people, to understand them, talk to them, read what they have written and write

to them. We observe the facts that people frequently have to communicate with each other in written media as well. Visitors from another country often have to leave a note for the mailman, fill out a custom department form, give written instruction, write thank you letter, and write letters and postcards and so on.

Writing is the most important language skill in the academic world. Since the field of education is dominated by certificate oriented achievement and most of the certificates and degrees are awarded on the basis of the people's writing proficiency, the role of writing is crucial in educational and administrative field.

Writing is a means of discovering one's own uniqueness. Writing enables one to examine one's feelings. Writing is obviously a key medium for the expression of fantasy for coming to terms with experience, for its interpretation in imaginative terms. Writing is the most important skills of language learning not only because people have to communicate with each other in written form but also because writing helps students learn the language as a whole. Writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms and vocabularies. When students write, they also have the chance to be adventurous with language, to explore beyond what they have just learnt to say, to take risks. When they write, they necessarily become very involved with the new language. The effort to express new ideas and the constant use of eye, hand and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning. As writers struggle with what to put down on paper, they often discover something new to write or a new way of expressing their ideas. They discover a real need for finding the right word and the right sentence. The close relationship between writing and thinking makes writing a valuable part of any language course.

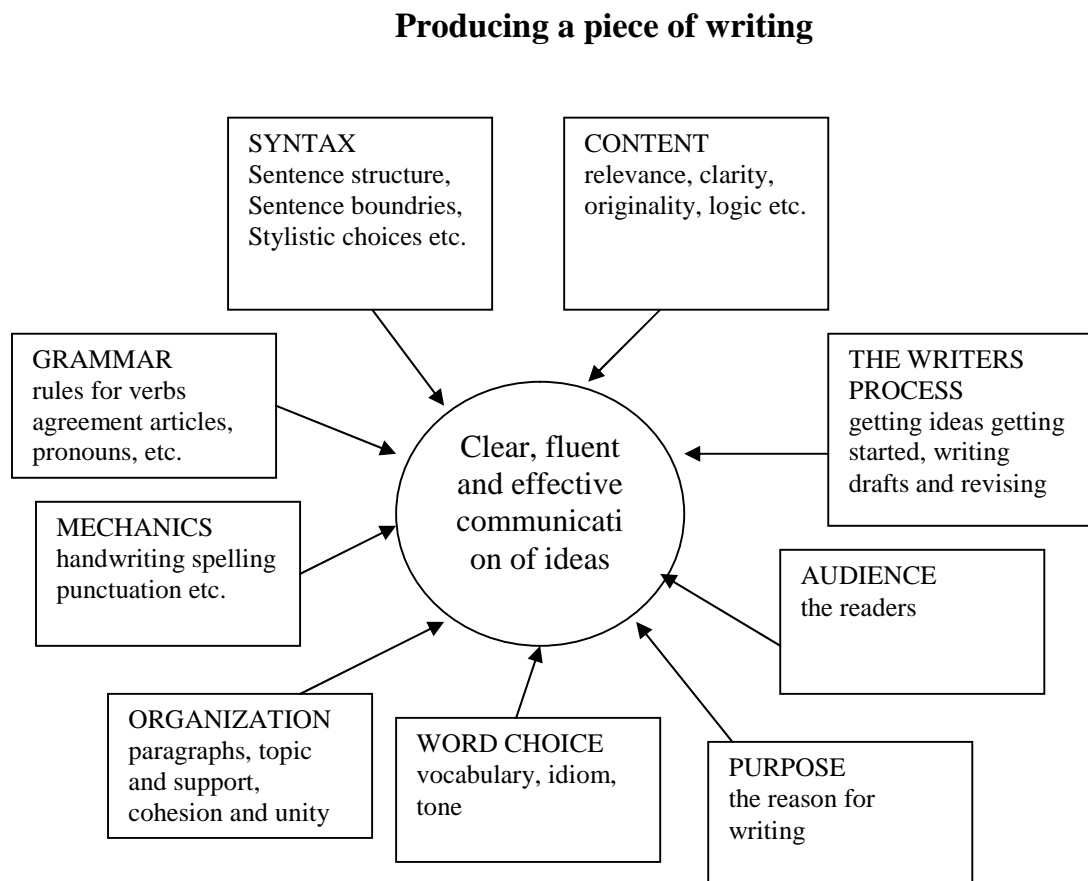
### **1.3 Teaching Writing**

Writing in its simplest form refers to the act of putting down something, which has been spoken, in conventional graphic form. It is the correct association of conventional graphic symbols. In its highly developed form, writing refers to the expression of ideas in a consecutive way according to the

graphic conventions of the language. The ultimate aim of teaching writing is to make the students able to express themselves in a polished literary form which requires the utilization of special vocabulary and certain refinement of structures.

### 1.3.1 Approaches to Teaching Writing in the ESL Classroom

We get no single answer to the question how to teach writing in the ESL classes. As there are several features of producing a piece of clear, fluent and effective communication, not a single approach or method will be enough for teachers to teach writing in the classroom. According to Raimes (1983:6) a writer has to deal with the following components to produce a piece of writing:



The approaches to the teaching of writing varies according to what feature is stressed much. According to Raimes (1983) some common approaches are as follows:

### **1. The controlled to free approach**

This approach is sequential. Students are first given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically. Learners work on given materials and perform strictly prescribed operations on it. This approach stresses 3 features of the diagram above; grammar, syntax and mechanics. It emphasizes accuracy rather than fluency or originality.

### **2. The free writing approach**

The emphasis in this approach is that students should put content and fluency first and not worry about form. Once ideas are down on the paper, grammatical accuracy, organization and the rest will gradually follow. Audience and content are seen as important in this approach.

### **3. The paragraph pattern approach**

This approach stresses the feature organization of the diagram. Here the learners put scrambled sentences into paragraph order; they identify general and specific statements; they choose or invent an appropriate topic sentence, and they insert or delete sentences.

### **4. Grammar-syntax-organization approach**

Writing, according to this approach, can not be seen as composed of separate skills which are learned one by one. So writing tasks should lead students to pay attention to organization, while they also work on the necessary grammar and syntax. This approach links the purpose of a piece of writing to the forms that are needed to convey the message.

### **5. The communicative approach**

The communicative approach stresses the purpose of writing and the audience for it. Here students are encouraged to behave like writers in real life and to ask themselves the crucial questions about why I am writing this. And who will read it?



## **6. The process approach**

Here the writers ask themselves not only questions about purpose and audience, but also the crucial questions; how do I write this? How do I get started? A student who is given the time for the process to work, along with the appropriate feedback, will discover new ideas, new sentences and new works as he plans, writes a first draft and revises what he has written for a second draft. So, in this approach students are given two crucial supports; time for the students to try out ideas and feedback on the content of what they write in their drafts.

All the approaches overlap. We will seldom find a classroom where a teacher is devoted to one approach as to exclude all others. A teacher using a communicative or process approach will still use the techniques drawn from other approaches as the students need them; model paragraphs, controlled compositions, free writing, sentence exercises, and paragraph analysis are useful in all approaches. Eclectic approach should be applied. Although the techniques are drawn from all approaches and address the various features that a writer needs to consider in producing a piece of writing, they still have something in common. They stem from the basic assumptions that writing means writing a connected text and not just single sentences, that writers write for a purpose and a reader and that the process of writing is a valuable learning tool for all of our students, Raimes (1983).

### **1.3.2 Integrating all Language Skills**

To make our language learning classes to come as close as possible to real life communicative situations we have to organize activities that let students use all the language skills integratively. The listener can then react by

writing down for a reader his version of the information he has just heard. So we can get chains of language activity in the classroom such as this:

Student 1 speaks while student 2 listens.

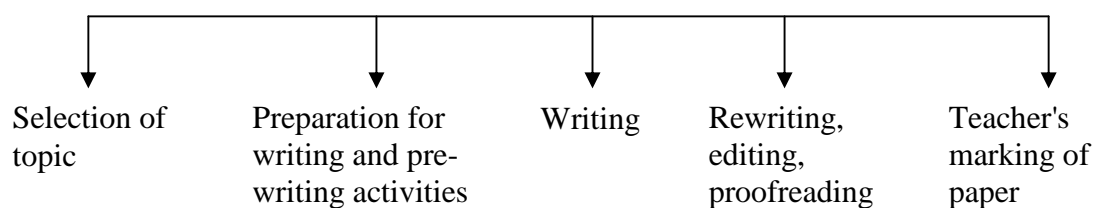
Student 2 writes.

Student 3 reads what student 2 wrote and responds.

Student 1 checks that students 2 and 3 understood.

### 1.3.3 Responding to Students' Writing

Responding to students writing is one of the important aspects of the process of teaching writing. The sequence of classroom writing follows this common pattern:



In the process above, the teachers' response is to the finished product only. The teacher can only judge and evaluate, not influence the piece of writing.

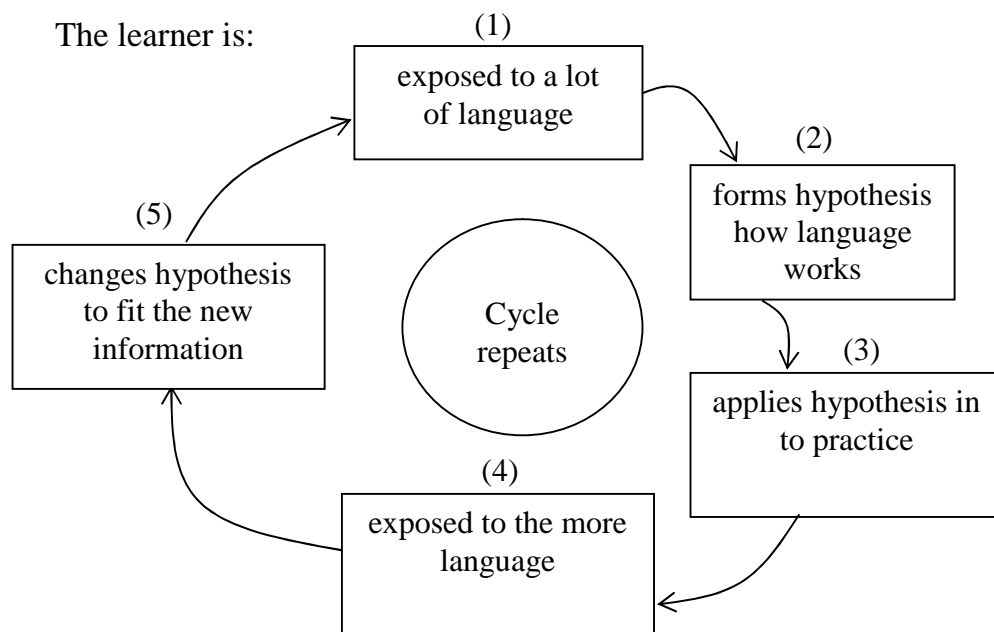
Before looking at specific techniques for intervening at various points in the writing process to respond to our students' writing, we can establish some basic principles that apply for all types of respond (Bartram and Walton, 1991).

- Read the whole piece thoroughly before you write anything.
- Look for strengths as well as weaknesses, and let the students know what the strengths are.
- Make sure that students are familiar with all the editing symbols and know what to do when they see one.
- Work out your own strategy for handling errors and explain it to your students.

There are no unique and fully satisfactory solutions towards the mistakes made by the learners. Teachers are of various opinions regarding this matter. “Teacher who set themselves up as oracles-with the answer to every question, and a correction to every mistakes- do a grave disservice. Surely it is better to make the students autonomous and independent before the teacher leaves them forever”, (Bartram and Walton, 1991).

Bartram and Walton (1991) believe that mistakes are an inescapable fact of language learning. Mistakes should be taken as the natural part of the learning process; not wrong turning on the roads towards mature language use but actually part of the road itself. Mistakes are an integral part of language learning and language use. They are inevitable. The teacher or the students may be able to eliminate them to a certain extent with possible unhelpful effects but they never be eliminated altogether. One idea that may be fruitful to pursue is this, many mistakes should not be eliminated at all; they should be encouraged instead.

It is now accepted that a very important factor in learning a new language for both L1 and L2 learner, is that of hypothesis forming. Basically the sequence of event goes like this.



(Source: Bartarm and Walton, 1991)

In the process mentioned above, we meet the situation that the mistakes are the evidences of learning.

As a learner goes through these stages: it must also be true that any behaviors on the teachers part which hinder the guesses, including wrong ones, will also hinder the process of learning. If the learners are only copying or imitating and do not make hypothesis, they will make less progress because they are unable to create and formulate new sentences of their own. Thus teachers have to allow the students room to make guesses, experiment and be creative with the language. They have to have the opportunity to make mistakes. Thus teachers must not leap on 'the mistakes' when students tryout a new piece of language that happens to be wrong. They should smile, give encouragement and react positively, (Bartarm and Walton, 1991).

#### **1.3.4 Managing Written Mistakes**

Language learners are involved in an elaborative process. Sometimes the language they produce reflects the point they have reached but often it does not. Rather than criticizing the product, it may be the teachers' job to aid the process. After all, students usually do not make mistakes deliberately. Many teachers worry about their students' communication being defective. It may be more fruitful to concentrate on ways of making it more effective. Concentrate on what is good. Encourage progress and be patient.

As mentioned above, there are many factors to consider when deciding what and how much to correct in students' work. It may be unwise to correct all the mistakes. Some common ways of mistake management which can be practised in the classroom are:

- 1) Self-correction without indication of mistakes
- 2) Peer-correction
- 3) Underlining mistakes
- 4) Mistakes underlined and coded
- 5) Search and correct
- 6) Teacher correction

Among these different ways of managing mistakes, peer-correction is regarded to be the most appropriate technique in our classroom situation where more than 50 students can not be corrected by the teacher and self correction is not as motivating as peer correction.

Pair work is very effective for the variety of exercises and activities. It maximizes the amount of time because each student is allowed to participate in the activity. It makes students aware of others' viewpoints and often requires students to argue their own viewpoints. It promotes better relationship within the classroom as students get to know each other. Peer-correction becomes more effective because the learners are motivated to check others. They enjoy finding mistakes of their partners. Before involving learners in peer-correction they are to be familiar with basic editing symbols and evaluation criteria which help them in marking their friend's writing.

The following basic editing symbols can be introduced to the learners of this level.

- |     |   |                                  |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|
| ≡   | = | Use a capital letter             |
| wt  | = | This is the wrong tense          |
| sp  | = | This is misspelled               |
| pos | = | This is the wrong part of speech |
| ^   | = | Add something here               |
| ∞   | = | Delete the item                  |
| /   | = | Change this to a small letter    |

- wo = This is a wrong word order
- () = Unnecessary words
- ? = This is not clear
- wc = This is a problem with word choice
- prep = wrong preposition
- A = wrong article
- N - P agr = This is a problem with noun pronoun agreement.
- s-v agr = This is a subject-verb agreement mistake
- p = wrong punctuation

Similarly learners can be given a checklist so that they will grade their friends' writing. A model of checklist can be as follows:

Points to check for

| (Each item carries 1 point)                               | - points scored |
|---|-----------------|
| 1 - Content   | -               |
| 2 - Is there overall improvement from the first draft?    | -               |
| 3 - Is there one main idea in the paragraph?              | -               |
| 4 - Are all the other sentences related to the main idea? | -               |
| 5 - Are the tenses correct?                               | -               |
| 6 - Are gerunds and infinitives used correctly?           | -               |
| 7 - Is the indentation correct?                           | -               |
| 8 - Is there a full stop after every sentence?            | -               |
| 9 - Is the first word of every sentence capitalized?      | -               |
| 10 - Is there a margin?                                   | -               |
| Total score-  | .....           |

(Source Palmer, 2004)

## **1.4 Components of Writing**

The purpose of writing, in principle, is the expression of ideas, the conveying of a message to the reader; so as the ideas themselves should arguably be seen as the most important aspect of the writing. On the other hand, the writer also needs to pay attention to formal aspects: neat handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation, as well as acceptable grammar and careful selection of vocabulary, Ur (1991). Some important aspects of writing are as follows:

### **1.4.1 Content**

According to Raimes, (1983) learning to write with the emphasis upon content appear to divide itself into three principal features; sub-sentence writing, sentence writing and paragraph writing. In the first, the learners' problem is simply to complete a sentence when part of it is given. This is much more than the writing of words or expressions, but on the level of propositions in which terms are linked together to produce a far higher level of meaning than is given by a dictionary. The first step then is to practise completing sentences in which certain words have been deleted.

In the second step, the learner must manipulate all the parts of proposition and himself put them together in acceptable and meaningful sequence. Thus, here the learners practise writing sentences using materials that are suggested and following a model.

In paragraph writing the learner must put propositions together in logical order and with a sense of selection and synthesis that is culturally authentic and in accordance with usage. The third step then is to learn to arrange sentences in paragraphs, again following a model for some time so that the correctness of form may be added by logic of presentation and appropriateness of expression.

Before asking learners to write the teacher should introduce and describe the topic providing them with key vocabularies.

### **1.4.2 Organization**

Readers will find easier to understand writing if ideas presented follow one another in an organized way. The typical ways of ordering ideas are chronologically, spatially and by importance.

The word chronological comes from the Greek word *chronos*, which means 'time'. Chronological order is usually used when we want to connect pieces of information according to time or the order in which events happened. Useful words that show changes in time include; first, second, next, then, after that, before, later, finally etc.

Spatial comes from the word *space*. Spatial order is used when we want to exist in relation to other items. Words and expressions that are useful in describing the placement of items include: in, on, over, under, next to, near, beside, to the left of, to the right of, in the middle of, behind, in front of, in back of etc.

Order of importance is used when we want to stress the significance of one or more pieces of information compared to the rest of the information we are discussing. We can arrange information from the most important to the least important (descending order) or from the least important to the most important (ascending order).

### **1.4.3 Grammar**

Grammar is not the less important aspect of learning a language. Since knowledge of grammar is essential for competent users of language it is clearly necessary for our students. Obviously, for example, they need to know that verbs in the third person singular have a 's' ending in the present simple (e.g. he swims). They also need to know that modal auxiliaries are followed by bare infinitives without 'to' so that they can eventually avoid making mistakes like "he must to go". The knowledge of grammar helps the student in the improvement of written work. Grammar makes him understand a number of stylistic problems such as linking one sentence to the next, unity of thought etc.



Moreover, proper grammar teaching can lead to highly concentrated practice over a wide range of available structure. It can make more practice possible rather than less.

Learners can be made aware of grammatical aspects in their writing by providing the checklist like given below:

- In what tense did you write your compositions?
- Did you use the same tense throughout your composition?
- If you changed tense, did you have a good reason for doing so? What was the reason?
- Does every verb have a subject?
- Did you put the final -s on the third person singular of each present tense verb?
- Did you use the -ed ending or the correct irregular verb form for each past tense verb?
- Did you add an -ing ending if you used a progressive tense?
- Did you use the correct form of the verb to be with each progressive tense verb?
- Did you place your adjectives before the nouns they describe?
- Did you remember that English adjectives do not have plural endings?

#### **1.4.4 Mechanics**

Mastery of mechanics of writing and practising the basic skills are necessary for learners to learn to write in any language. Mechanics mainly include; capitalization, spelling and punctuation.

### **1.4.5 Capitalization**

Capital letters are an important form of punctuation that they help to guide the eye and mind through a text. Learners should be taught simple rules such as:

- Begin every sentence with capital letter.
- First person is always capitalized.
- Proper names are always capitalized.

Appropriate capitalization is a matter of convention. Basic rules should be taught. Learners will learn gradually as they are exposed to the more language.

### **1.4.6 Spelling**

Spelling is the way of putting letters of words in the correct or acceptable manner. Spelling plays an important role in English writing. The English spelling system is full of irregularities and contradiction. Spelling is an apparent complexity of the English writing system. Nevertheless, correct spelling is essential factor of writing. Learners should be motivated to consult books and dictionaries to correct their spellings.

### **1.4.7 Punctuation**

Punctuation marks are symbol of pauses. Historically, they were developed to help speakers know when to take a breath and how long the breath should be. Punctuation makes possible the clear presentation of the written language. Punctuation in writing is a 'courtesy designed to help readers to understand the text without stumbling. It is the nuts and bolts of the language. There is the view that punctuation is more important than spelling "Now spelling is one of the decencies of life, like the proper use of knives and forks; but if we are getting our commas, semicolons and full stops wrong, it means that we are not getting our thoughts right, and our mind is muddled" Temple (1938) (in King 2004:1). Thus the role of punctuation in writing can not be underestimated.

Basic punctuation marks are:

|                      |   |                 |
|----------------------|---|-----------------|
| Full stop            | - | ( . )           |
| Comma                | - | ( , )           |
| Colon                | - | ( : )           |
| Semi-colon           | - | ( ; )           |
| Question mark        | - | ( ? )           |
| Exclamation mark     | - | ( ! )           |
| Apostrophe           | - | ( ' )           |
| Hyphen               | - | ( - )           |
| Dash                 | - | ( _ )           |
| Dots                 | - | ( ... )         |
| Slash                | - | ( / )           |
| Quotation marks      | - | ( ' ' ) ( " " ) |
| Brackets/parentheses | - | ( ( ) )         |
| Square brackets      | - | ( [ ] )         |

Basic rules should be taught to the learners. Here are some basic rules of punctuation by a Victorian schoolmistress taken from **Good Punctuation** by King (2004:4).

Sentence begins with a *capital letter*,

So as to make your writing better.

Use a *full stop* to mark the end.

It closes every sentence penned.

The *comma* is for short pauses and breaks.

And also for lists the writer makes.

**Dashes** - like these - are for thoughts by the way.

They give extra information (so do *brackets* we may say)

These two dots are *colons*: they pause to compare.

They also do this: list, explain and prepare.

The *semicolon* makes a break; followed by a clause.

It does the job of words that link; its also a short pauses.

An *apostrophe* shows the owner of anyone's things,

And it's also useful for shortenings.

I'm so glad! He's so mad! We're such a lark!

To show strong feelings use an *exclamation mark*!

A '*question mark*' follows what? Where? and How?

Do you? Can I? Shall we? Give us your answer now!

"*Quotation marks*" encloses what is said,

This is why they're sometimes called "speech marks" instead.

## **1.5 Secondary Level English Curriculum**

English is the appropriate international language for Nepal. It is the vital tool for any person to become successful in local, national and international communication. Since the world is becoming more and more complex day by day by the invention of science and technology and most of important books and informative materials are in English, the importance of English is crucial. Similarly, this is the language of the UNO, the body which has been working for monitoring the world towards peace and prosperity. Undoubtedly, English

is the means of international communication and major world language. Thus, we are in the stage we must know English if we want to know the world.

Realizing the importance of English, it is taught as a compulsory subject in all the schools of Nepal from grade 1 to 12. It is also taught as a compulsory subject up to Bachelor's level.

The purposes of English curriculum for grade 9 and 10 are to enable students to exchange ideas with people of any nationality who speak or write English and to expose them to the vast treasures of knowledge and pleasure available in written and spoken English.

The general objectives of teaching English at this level are to enable students to:

- develop an understanding of and competence in spoken English.
- communicate fluently and accurately with other speakers of English.
- develop competence in understanding a variety of reading texts.
- gain the skills necessary to write English appropriately and effectively.
- develop an ability to use simple reference materials.
- read, appreciate and enjoy literary texts.
- develop an awareness of cultural and ethical values relevant to Nepal.

Thus the learners of secondary level are aimed to integrate receptive and productive works in the four language skills. Students after the completion of 2 year's course in English are aimed to be able to;

- express ideas in clear and grammatically correct English
- use appropriate punctuation marks
- plan organize and develop an argument

- describe an object or process
- narrate a sequence of events
- transform information from diagram to prose and vice-versa
- produce a variety of text such as letters, applications, postcards
- make notes and summary on a variety of texts
- write creatively about their personal ideas and experiences.

To achieve these objectives, the following writing activities are included in the curriculum:

### **Grade 9**

- Writing an itinerary.
- Making appointments.
- Completing a diary.
- Brochure writing.
- Writing condolence letters.
- Descriptive writing about accidents/disasters.
- Letter writing (formal/informal).
- Writing a short play.
- Narrative writing with reported speech.
- Writing the minutes of the meeting.
- Replying to an invitation in writing.
- Summary writing of the story.
- Writing guided comprehension.
- Drawing from description.
- Demonstrating using relia.
- Writing question answer.
- Writing a personal diary.
- Project work.

- Chart work.
- Pictorial presentation.

### **Grade 10**

- Plan, organize and develop the advantages and disadvantages of television.
- Writing a notice giving permission or withholding permission.
- Writing a letter to the principal asking for permission.
- Writing a letter giving the principals reply.
- Discussing and expressing ideas.
- Narrating events.
- Writing formal criticism about poor conditions in a hotel, at the airport.
- Writing to friends complaining about something.
- Transferring information through chart.
- Writing about themselves.
- Story writing individually and in groups.
- Writing about or drawing an alien, a space craft or life on mars.
- Project work and its presentation.
- \* Punctuation should be included in the writing activities.

*(Source: SEC (CDC) Sanothimi Bhaktapur.)*

### **1.6 Literature Review**

There are several studies carried out on different language skills. There are also a number of researches carried out on writing skill focusing on different levels and aspects of writing. Some of them are reviewed here:

Karki (1996) carried out a research on "A Comparative study on the English language writing proficiency between the students of public and private schools of grade X in Lamjung district". He found that the students of private schools who were taught in the English medium from the very

beginning were found far better in every aspect than the students of government aided schools.

Poudyal (1999) completed his study on "A Comparative study of English writing proficiency in Higher Secondary Schools of Gulmi and Kathmandu". His finding was that the students of capital city were better than those of the rural areas. The study shows that boys of the higher secondary level were weaker in English writing proficiency than the girls.

Sah (2003) carried out a research on "writing proficiency of grade 9 students". Students were found poor in using punctuation marks in free writing than in guided writing. Most students did not attempt the questions of free writing and boys were found better than girls in writing skills.

Ghimire (2004) carried out a research on "A study on the students' proficiency in writing skills". His study was done in eleven grade students. In his findings only the lowest percent (3.33%) has excellent writing performance, 10% has good, 18% has average and the majority of the students have poor writing performance. The students from Science, Education, Humanities and Management were in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> positions respectively in their writing performance.

Neupane (2005) conducted a research on "Proficiency of students in interpreting Para orthographic texts". He found that the students' performance in interpreting paraorthographic texts was satisfactory.

Similarly several other research works have been carried out focusing on particular aspects of writing and on the effectiveness of teaching writing using different techniques.

This study is the first attempt to find out to what extent the students of secondary level, who have just completed the two-year course, achieved the goals in writing skills designed by the curriculum. Thus, the study attempted to examine overall proficiency in writing with more focus on communicative aspect.



## **1.7 Objectives of the Study**

The present study had the following objectives:

1. To find out to what extent the secondary level learners of English achieved the goals in written communication.
2. To point out the major areas of problems in students' writing.
3. To explore teachers' and students' opinion about teaching writing in the English class.
4. To suggest some pedagogical implications.

## **1.8 Significance of the Study**

The present study provides information about the written communication skills in English of the secondary level learners. The findings of the study will be significant mainly for the ELT practioners at secondary level. This research will guide the teachers upon what to focus in the classroom instruction. They will be benefited by getting some ideas on how to deal with the learners in the large classes where individual attention is not possible. The research will give reasons to the teacher why their learners are poor in written communication skills in English. This research will make aware of the learners about their ability and suggest them for the remedy of their problems. The research will be equally useful material for ELT related persons, material producers and curriculum developers as well.

## **CHAPTER - TWO**

### **METHODOLOGY**

In order to find out the objectives specified, the researcher adopted the following methodology during the research:

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

Both primary as well as secondary sources of data were consulted for the study.

##### **2.1.1 Primary Source of Data**

The primary sources of data for this research were the SLC appeared students of the year 2063 and the English teachers of secondary level. Most of the research findings are based on primary sources of data though the secondary sources were also consulted.

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

Large numbers of secondary sources were consulted to collect the required data. Secondary level English curriculum, English textbooks and teacher's guide of grade 9 and 10 were mainly used. Similarly, different books on language and language teaching, books on developing writing skills, other related books, journals, magazines, approved theses in the Department of Education and English and many other references were consulted to collect the required data.

#### **2.2 Sampling Procedure**

Sixty students from different ten schools and ten English teachers from the same schools in Bharatpur Municipality of Chitwan district were selected by random sampling procedure. The researcher tried to select the sample as representative as possible. Thus, sixty students from different schools in Bharatpur Municipality and English teachers from the same schools were the sample population of the study.

### **2.3 Tools for Data Collection**

The researcher prepared test items for the students, which were solely based on the specific objectives of teaching writing skills of secondary level English curriculum. Different sets of questionnaire for both the teachers and students were prepared to elicit different facts related to teaching learning activities. (See Appendix: A and B)

### **2.4 Process of Data Collection**

First of all, the researcher visited different institutes in Bharatpur and Narayangarh of Chitwan district. He explained the purpose of visit and asked for permission from the concerned authority to conduct the research activity. Directors and principals in different institutes allowed conducting the research. Then the students who were having computer and other bridge courses after their SLC examination were visited by the researcher. Students were explained the purpose and asked to call their friends from different schools. The researcher convinced the students about the subject of the study and he himself took the classes for four days. On the fifth day, questionnaires and test items were administered to the students in more democratic environment than what they experienced in real final examinations.

Then the English teachers from selected schools were visited and explained the purpose. Teachers were familiarized with the subject of study and they were given a questionnaire. They happily accepted it and raised different questions about the research activity. Their response was collected after two days.

### **2.5 Limitations of the Study**

The study had the following limitations:

- i) The study was limited to the written communication aspects in English at secondary level.

- ii) The informants selected were only sixty SLC appeared students and ten English teachers from different schools in Bharatpur Municipality of Chitwan district.
- iii) Data collection tools were designed on the basis of secondary level English curriculum.

## CHAPTER - THREE

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter is the central part of the study since it is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of the raw data obtained from the different sources. The main objectives of this research were to understand the approaches applied in teaching writing, actual writing activities in the secondary level learners of English and to investigate the major problematic areas in their writing.

#### 3.1 Analysis of Students' Response to the Test Items

A test is an activity whose main purpose is to convey how well the testee knows or can do something. Testing is an integral part of teaching learning activity. Besides the questionnaire, students were also administered the test items (See Appendix- C) to elicit their actual ability in written communication and to find out the major areas of problems in their writing. Test items were designed on the basis of the objectives of the curriculum. Test items were also administered in more democratic environment. They were allowed to consult their friends in problematic cases. The researcher was also facilitating considering the areas of problems. The test items were, analyzed with more focus on communication/content and with less focus on grammar, punctuation and other aspects of writing. Students' activities and teachers' oral responses with the researcher are also analyzed briefly.

Altogether five questions were asked. Both guided as well as free writing questions were included. All the questions were non-textual but designed after secondary level English curriculum. Students' answers were evaluated with the help of the following evaluation chart.

|       | Content       |              |       | Language |            |             |          |       |
|-------|---------------|--------------|-------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|-------|
|       | Communication | Organization | Style | Grammar  | Vocabulary | Punctuation | Spelling | Total |
| Score | 3             | 2            | 1     | 1        | 1          | 1           | 1        | 10    |

[This chart can be the helpful guide for students in self correction and peer-correction]

All the answer sheets were marked with the help of above evaluation chart. Mostly content was focused. Marks obtained by all the students are given in appendix.

### **Grading the Students**

Students answer was graded by the following criteria of evaluation out of 50 full marks. Students were graded on the basis of the marks obtained by them. The marks were assigned with the help of evaluation chart. This grading system is based on Teacher's writing evaluation scale (Palmer, 2004: 127).

**Table No. 1**

#### **Gradation of the students**

| <b>Test Score</b> | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Criteria</b> |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 40-50             | A            | Excellent       |
| 30-39             | B            | Good            |
| 20-29             | C            | Average         |
| 10-19             | D            | Poor            |
| 0-9               | E            | Very poor       |

The result obtained after the analysis of students answer sheet was as follows:

**Table No. 2**

#### **Result obtained from the gradation**

| <b>No. of Students</b> | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Percentage in Total</b> |
|------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| 0                      | A            | 0%                         |
| 18                     | B            | 30%                        |
| 30                     | C            | 50%                        |
| 8                      | D            | 15%                        |
| 4                      | E            | 5%                         |

From the marks scored by all the students in their test items, it can be seen that none of the students possessed excellent writing ability. 30% students were found possessing Good writing proficiency. They used the vocabularies effectively and developed the content well but majority of them were found weak in the organization of content and in applying correct grammatical structure.

Fifty percent of the students were found possessing average English writing proficiency. Majority of the students had problems in grammar and organization. They were also weak in interpreting Para orthographic texts. They were found poor even in applying appropriate style (formal, informal) in their writing. Fifteen percent students were found possessing poor English background. They had problems in putting in to paper what they knew. They lacked required content. They were poor in selecting vocabularies and applying correct grammatical structure. Five percent students were found very poor in all the aspects of writing.

Most of the students were found facing difficulty in interpreting the pie chart given. They orally replied that they did not practise such exercises. Similarly majority of the students could not apply appropriate style in their writing. Another great problem among the majority of the learners was on the organization of the content. Some students presented the content with effective vocabularies but their ideas were not organized in an effective way. Grammar was found as the greatest problem among the majority of the students. Some specimens of common grammatical mistakes made by the students were as follow:

I was planning to go Pokhara for coming Saturday.

Coming Saturday I was visit my uncle aunt.

We are visit Rupatal, Phewatal and other places.

We are used TV to listening and watching.

Television is give us enjoy.

I have not planning how to celebrate for coming Saturday.

I have therefore submitting photocopies of my certificates.

She is not come school because she will be sick.

Television see near eye is damage in future.

I will having basic computer knowledge.

Here, most of the mistakes were noticed in subject-verb agreement and in applying correct tense. (See Appendix: F)

Many students were handicapped by the lack of appropriate words to express their ideas. Similarly, students were confused in selecting vocabularies appropriate to the context. Their use of words was like this:

|          |     |            |
|----------|-----|------------|
| option   | for | optional   |
| snake    | for | snacks     |
| died     | for | killed     |
| express  | for | experience |
| medation | for | media      |
| board    | for | bored      |
| past     | for | passed     |
| eat      | for | drink      |
| region   | for | religion   |
| form     | for | from       |
| hear     | for | here       |
| then     | for | than       |
| they     | for | their      |
| here     | for | it         |



Though spelling was less focused in checking the answers, some serious mistakes were noticed. Common spelling mistakes found are as follows:

|             |     |               |
|-------------|-----|---------------|
| lise        | for | lies          |
| distikes    | for | districts     |
| their       | for | there         |
| allways     | for | always        |
| untimily    | for | untimely      |
| communation | for | communication |
| grif        | for | grief         |
| sutibal     | for | suitable      |
| incragin    | for | increasing    |
| capebal     | for | capable       |
| turist      | for | tourist       |

As mentioned earlier, punctuation marks are the nuts and bolts in writing. But students were found not using other punctuation marks except full stop (.), comma (,) and the question mark (?).

### **3.2 Analysis of Students' Responses to the Questionnaires**

Since the learners are the centre for teaching learning activity, the study has paid more attention towards the learners. Teaching is to bring about desirable changes in students' behavior. Whatever the curriculum, textbooks, teacher's guide and other supporting materials are designed; they are to facilitate students learning. Since the students are the center of teaching learning activity, it is an attempt to know and find out learners' experience in their language classroom. For this a questionnaire containing 15 different questions was prepared and administered among the students. Questionnaire administered to the students were meant to elicit response as they experienced in the classroom. Students were not kept in strict classroom management as

they attend their other exams. They were allowed to talk with their friends and they were also facilitated and motivated to respond honestly. The researcher tried to get the facts as far as possible. Students were also asked about their classroom situation orally as well. The findings drawn from the questionnaire to the students are presented in the table below:

**Table No. 3**

**Tabulation of the data drawn from students' questionnaire**

| <b>S.N.</b> | <b>Questioned Items</b>   | <b>Responses of Students</b>  | <b>No. of Students</b> |
|-------------|---|---|------------------------|
| 1.          | How do you find year English class?   | i) Interesting<br>ii) Boring  | 45<br>15               |
| 2.          | How much do you grasp from your English class?  | i) 100%<br>ii) More than 75%<br>iii) More than 50%<br>iv) Less than 50% | 0<br>24<br>21<br>15    |
| 3.          | What is the medium used in the classroom?   | i) English<br>ii) Nepali<br>iii) Both                                   | 0<br>0<br>60           |
| 4.          | Are you given any writing tasks?  | i) Always<br>ii) Sometimes<br>iii) No                                   | 22<br>38<br>0          |
| 5.          | Does your teacher check your homework?  | i) Always<br>ii) Sometimes<br>iii) No                                   | 6<br>54<br>0           |
| 6.          | Do you read advertisement condolences, vacancies, articles etc. in English newspaper? | i) Yes<br>ii) No  | 45<br>15               |
| 7.          | Does your teacher give any work to be done in group?                                  | i) Yes<br>ii) No  | 45<br>15               |
| 8.          | Are you given any project work to complete?   | i) Yes<br>ii) No  | 21<br>39               |

|     |  |   |                     |
|-----|--|---|---------------------|
| 9.  | What types of mistakes does your teacher mark in your exercise?                            | I) Spelling<br>Ii) Grammar<br>Iii) Content<br>Iv) All       | 15<br>15<br>0<br>30 |
| 10. | Do you rewrite the exercise corrected by your teacher again in your notebook?              | i) Yes<br>ii) No  | 30<br>30            |
| 11. | Does you teacher ask to write; letter, applications telephone message etc. in English?     | i) Yes<br>ii) No  | 60<br>0             |
| 12. | Do you think you need to know how to write letter, applications, massages etc. in English? | i) Yes<br>ii) No  | 60<br>0             |
| 13. | Which is the most difficult subject for you?   | i) English<br>ii) Others                                    | 30<br>30            |
| 14. | Among listening speaking reading & writing which is the most difficult for you in English? | i) Listening<br>ii) Speaking<br>iii) Reading<br>iv) Writing | 15<br>22<br>8<br>15 |
| 15. | Is there any writing competition organized?  | i) Yes<br>ii) No  | 22<br>38            |

The first item of the questionnaire to the students was 'how did you find your English period?,' 45 students replied 'interesting'. Other 15 students felt the English class boring. Here it can be generalized that majority of the learners were interested in learning English.

Since English is not our mother tongue and the learners are not getting enough exposure; it is naturally difficult for learners to comprehend everything in the classroom. Students were asked how much did they grasp in their English period. Twenty four students claimed to grasp more than 75%, 21 replied more than 50%, 15 replied less than 50% and none of them grasped 100%. Thus students were not totally benefited from English period also because it is the only period where the majority of students are exposed to the English language.

In response to the medium of instruction in the classroom all the learners replied that both Nepali and English were used in the classroom. So, not a single teacher of the selected school was using only English as the medium of instruction. It reflects that translation was applied by all the teachers to facilitate the students.

Students were asked about writing tasks assigned to them. Twenty two students replied that they were always given such written tasks other 38 students replied, they were given such tasks sometimes only and not regularly.

In response to the question whether their homework was checked or not, only 6 students claimed that their homework was regularly checked. Fifty four students claimed their works checked occasionally. This reflects that learners' works were not valued. It may demotivate the learners to do those works. Teacher correction may not be possible all the time but there are other alternative techniques which can be applied in the classroom.

The sixth question asked to the students was about their reading activities. Forty five students replied that they read advertisement, condolences, wanted, articles etc. in English newspaper whenever they get chance. Other 15 replied that they never read English newspapers and other materials in English. Those who read newspapers and other materials in English used appropriate vocabularies in their writing though their grammar was not satisfactory.

In response to the question whether they were asked to do any activities in group or not, 45 students replied in 'yes' but it was found by other queries

that they were assigned in group activities in other subjects except language. Group work activities were rarely organized in teaching English language.

In response to the question whether the students were assigned for any project work or not, only 21 students replied that they were assigned project work to complete. All others responses were 'no'. This was the similar case as in group work. Students were asked to complete some project works in science, health and social subjects. Students should be assigned such project works which help them to solve different tasks on their own and in groups which require the integration of different language skills and thus to help in developing social relationship as well.

About the exercises checked by the teacher, 15 students replied that their spelling mistakes were pointed. Other 15 claimed being checked only grammatical mistakes and all types of mistakes were marked according to the remaining 30 students. Certainly it may be difficult to point all the mistakes and the learners also may not be able to interpret the symbols used by the teachers. For this students are to be familiarized about some basic editing symbols.

Students were asked whether they re-wrote the exercises corrected by their teacher in their note book. The students were in two groups. 30 students claimed they rewrote them in their notebook and other 30 did not. It would be good technique to reduce their mistakes. So students should be motivated to re-write the corrected written text. All the students replied that they were asked to write; letters, applications, telephone messages etc. in English. All the students also replied that they need to understand how to write those things.

In response to the question, 'which is the most difficult subject for you?', half of the students replied English as the most difficult one. Other students replied in other subjects. This also indicates that majority of the learners felt English as the most difficult from examination point of view.

The last question asked to the students was whether any writing competition was organized in their school; 23 students replied positively where

as the rest replied negatively. Writing competition will also certainly motivate the learners in different writing activities. Different activities such as essay writing, story writing, letter writing etc. should be conducted in the school weekly and at least once a month.

### **3.3 Analysis of the Teachers' Response**

A questionnaire was given to each of the language teachers in order to collect the facts related with their teaching English writing. They were asked to express their teaching learning strategies applied in teaching different language skills with special focus on writing. The students' level and performance, problems faced in teaching learning activities and their suggestions to improve these problems were elicited from the teachers.

Effective learning depends on the efficiency of the teacher and his activities in the classroom. It is the teacher who is responsible to gather information from different sources in order to identify the weaknesses in teaching learning activities and to improve in learners' achievement. Altogether 25 questions about English textbooks of grade 9 and 10, school environment, students and teaching learning related activities were asked to the teachers. (See Appendix-A) Item wise analysis of a questionnaire is as follows:

#### **3.3.1 Adequacy of Exercises**

Different writing activities included in the curriculum are listed in page (22-24). The first question the teachers were asked was whether the prescribed English textbooks included enough exercise to meet the course objectives in writing skills. Out of 10 teachers 3 replied that textbooks were sufficient to meet the course objectives. Other seven replied different views lacking in the textbooks. They opined that some practical exercises were lacked in the textbooks. One teacher replied that it lacked grammatical items and another one replied that it lacked language functions.

### **3.3.2 Use of Teachers' Guide**

Regarding the teacher's guide, all the teachers replied that they used teachers guide. Out of the total, 50% of the teachers replied that teacher's guide are enough. Two teachers took it as supporting material. Three teachers replied that they are supporting materials but they lacked enough suggestions for teaching activities and rules for grammar teaching.

### **3.3.3 Use of Other Materials**

In response to the question, what other materials do you use except the textbooks?; most teachers replied newspapers, posters, flashcards, practice book, exam questions, real pictures, matchstick figures, short demonstration, audio cassettes and others as the situation demands.

### **3.3.4 Number of Students in the Class**

All the teachers responded that there were around 60 students in each classroom. So they replied that it was very difficult to manage the classroom. They also gave the same response regarding the variation in learning ability among the learners which was most challenging to deal.

### **3.3.5 Teachers Load**

To make the teachers more practical they should be motivated to work hard on their responsibility. For this, teachers should be given enough time for their preparation and to deal with learners problems. But all the teachers replied that they have to take at least 5 periods in a day and mostly 6 periods. So they replied that they did not have enough time to check students' homework.

### **3.3.6 Students Willingness to Present Homework**

Regarding students willingness to present their homework, five teachers replied that 50% students show their willingness to present their homework. Two teachers responded that all the students submit their homework and two teachers reported their 75% students submitted the homework. But one teacher replied that only 7-10 students were motivated to present their homework. This variation might be the result of teacher's strictness into the classroom.

### **3.3.7 Integration of Language Skills**

Language skills are to be presented integratively. In question about the integration of different language skills; 7 teachers replied that they tried to focus all language skills. Three teachers reported that they gave less focus on listening activities. In response to the question 'in which language skill do you find your learners poor in English?' four teachers replied that their learners were poor in writing. Three other mentioned that their learners were poor in listening and other three replied their learners were poor in speaking and writing.

### **3.3.8 Aspects of Writing**

Writing is the complex process because different aspects are to be combined to compose a piece of written text. Regarding the question 'in which aspects of writing do you find your learners poor in English', six teachers replied that they commit mostly grammatical mistakes and in sentence construction. Other four teachers reported that learners make mistakes more in free writing activities.

### **3.3.9 Writing Tests**

Regarding writing test two teachers response was negative. They never gave any written test. Five teachers claimed that they gave the test once a month. Three teachers claimed to give such written tests twice a month.

### **3.3.10 Role of Correction**

The role of correction is vital in any kind of skill learning. Mistakes are the natural parts of progress. But how to deal with students' mistakes is also a controversial issue. Because some accept mistakes as an integral parts of learning and others are against this view and claim that mistakes should be corrected at once. Five teachers replied that they do not care minor mistakes. Three teachers replied that they care minor mistakes. Other two teachers replied that they care mistakes sometimes only. One teacher claimed to care the mistakes made by the most talented students only. Those who care minor



mistakes expressed the opinion that students' mistakes should not be tolerated at all. Others opined, learners mistakes are to be eliminated gradually.

### **3.3.11 Background of the Students**

Regarding the students background in English language proficiency, five teachers replied that their students' background was poor. Three claimed their students having medium (neither good nor poor) and two teachers claimed their students having good English background.

### **3.3.12 Peer Correction**

No doubt, teacher correction to each and every student in large classroom is impossible. Peer-correction can be a good technique in large classes. Learners are also motivated when they are asked to check their partner's work. But teacher should train them on how to correct. All teachers claimed that they conduct peer correction.

### **3.3.13 Group Work**

Group work activities are not the less important activities in language classroom. They are very effective because they demand all the learners' active participation in language use. Seven teachers replied that they conduct group work activities. One teacher's response was 'to be frank 'no'. Other two teachers rarely conducted group work.

### **3.3.14 Project Work**

Project work is such an activity which demands the students' active participation and it also requires the integration of all four language skills. In addition to the use of all language skills it also helps the learners to establish good social relationship. Four teachers replied that they do not assign their students for any kind of project work. Four teachers replied 'yes' and other two teachers' response was 'sometimes'.

### **3.3.15 Motivation in Writing Activities**

The more the writing activities are motivating, stimulating and interesting the more the learners will be involved in writing. Five teachers replied that their students found the activities included in the textbook motivating, stimulating and interesting. Others five replied that the learners were not motivated in writing activities but the students were compelled to do the activities assigned.

### **3.3.16 Difficulty Level of the Writing Tasks**

Learning of any foreign language is naturally a complex process. So the materials to be learned should be designed considering the students' level and previous background. In response to the question whether the writing activities included in the curriculum are of an appropriate to the learners' level; three teachers replied they are difficult for them according to their level because their previous background was poor in English. Others opined that they are appropriate to the learners' level.

### **3.3.17 Relevance of the Writing Tasks**

Learners are motivated in those activities which are relevant to their life and the immediate situation. Regarding the question on the relevance of the kind of writings, all the teachers replied that the writing activities included are relevant to their students' needs.

### **3.3.18 Learners Achievement**

In response to the questions; 'are you satisfied in your students' achievement?'; four teachers replied that they were not satisfied in their learners achievement, two replied 'yes', two said 'partially', and one replied, 'it is tolerable'. So it seems that the majority of the teachers themselves were not satisfied in their learners' achievement.

### **3.3.19 Problems Faced in Teaching Writing**

The effectiveness of teaching writing in the classroom is affected by the number of factors. Teachers were asked about the problems faced in teaching writing in the classroom. Problems faced by the teachers in the classroom were;

Lack of vocabulary,

Large class size,

Lack of motivation in the students,

Poor background of the students,

Over loaded teachers,

Lack of grammatical knowledge in the students,

Lack of language environment,

Lack of applicability,

Lack of enough teaching materials,

Diversities in age and intelligence among the students,

Variants cultural and economic background of the students,

Traditional classroom arrangement,

Impractical exercises. (See Appendix)

### **3.3.20 Motivating the Learners**

Motivation is such an internal drive which activates in pursuing a course of action. It is one of the important factors influencing in learners' achievement. Highly motivated learners learn faster and better than those less motivated ones. Learners may be motivated either extrinsically or intrinsically. So in any teaching learning activities the more the learners are motivated to do any activities the better will be the chances of learning. Teachers were asked how they motivate students in writing. Different responses given by the teachers were as follows:

- Relevant talking
- Displaying, posters, pictures
- Providing easy topics
- Avoiding shyness
- Asking for peer correction and self correction
- Giving appropriate feedback
- Introducing the subject matter first
- Asking many oral questions as well
- Asking them to complete a project work
- Providing guiding vocabularies & structures
- Being more democratic in the classroom
- Giving more practical exercises
- Rewarding good production
- Correcting regularly
- Ignoring minor mistakes
- Encouraging in using library
- Encouraging peer correction and group correction

### **3.3.21 Improving Students' Writing**

A final item of the questionnaire was about the suggestions on how to improve student's writing skills. All the teachers gave various suggestions;

- Arranging manageable class size.
- Providing ample time for checking individual work.
- Encouraging students even if they are incorrect.
- Conducting self-correction and peer-correction.
- Eliciting points from students, add some if needed and let them write themselves.

- Training for teachers.
- Giving equal focus on all language skills.
- Giving equal emphasis should be given to primary and lower secondary level to make their base strong.
- Providing enough grammatical ideas.
- Introducing situational writing.
- Providing sufficient supplementary materials.
- Encouraging students for publishing articles.
- Conducting different writing competitions in class, school and district levels. (See appendix)

## **CHAPTER – FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The final chapter deals with the findings and recommendations. This chapter has been divided into two parts. The first part deals with the findings and the second part deals with the recommendations made on the basis of the findings.

#### **4.1 Findings**

Findings drawn from the analysis of responses to the different research tools have been listed below:

##### **4.1.1 Findings Drawn from the Students' Responses**

1. None of the students were found possessing excellent achievement in relation to the curricular objectives and the evaluation criteria applied in the research.
2. Out of the total, 30% of the learners were found having good writing proficiency but they were found weak in grammar and organization of the content.
3. .50% of the learners were found having average writing proficiency (neither poor nor good). They were weak in grammar, vocabulary and organization of the content. They were also not able to present the required content on the subject matter.
4. Other students were found poor in their writing. They have problems in most of the aspects of writing.
5. Most of the learners were found feeling difficulty in interpreting Para orthographic texts; spelling mistakes were not taken seriously.
6. Regarding the problems in learners' writing, grammatical mistakes were found as the most serious. Those learners who presented the content with effective vocabularies were found using irrelevant grammatical structures. Subject verb agreement and tense were the major problems.

7. Those learners having average writing proficiency according to the grading criteria of this research were found weak even in content as well. Those whose score was near to the poor students have problems in vocabulary.
8. It was found that those who claimed to read English newspapers were using effective vocabularies in their writing.
9. Learners were not taught on how to organize ideas they experienced and how to organize the content of the subject matter they knew. They were unknown about organization structures; chronological, spatial and order by importance.
10. Learners were weak in grammar because they were taught grammar deductively. Since the teachers themselves replied that the textbooks lacked grammatical exercises, it was found that they were not teaching grammar in context.
11. Students were not motivated in learning English. It was found that students were learning English to pass the exam and not to be able to communicate in English. So the students practised reading and writing activities being based on exam questions and not on real life oriented reading and writing activities.
12. No school was found conducting regular writing competitions in the school. Similarly no school conducted publishing article in school where the students would find audience to read their writing.
13. Writing activities such as, letter writing, essay writing, applications writing etc. were also learnt by heart. So students felt difficulty in manipulating the tasks they knew in various other practical situations.

#### **4.1.2 Findings Drawn from the Teachers Responses**

1. All the teachers replied that there were around 60 students in their classes and it was impossible to pay attention to the individual students' writing. It was also found that they were familiar with peer-correction,

self-correction and group correction techniques but they were not applying these techniques in the classroom.

2. It was also found that all the teachers were assigned at least 5 periods and mostly 6 periods a day. They had not enough time to check students' homework.
3. Many teachers were not serious about learners' achievement because they got nothing even in the excellent achievements of the learners.
4. It was found that all the teachers were aware about their learners' problems. They also knew the theory on how to deal with those problems but they did not apply their knowledge in practice. Thus it can be said that teachers are not devoted in their profession and self motivated in their responsibilities.
5. Some teachers replied that textbooks and teacher's guide were enough to teach the learners. Others claimed they were not sufficient and they used other materials as well. The research was conducted in urban area where the teacher had access to use different supporting materials but it was found they rarely used other materials except the textbooks.
6. It was found that there was no regular supervision in the school. Teachers themselves did not know when supervisor comes and what he does. Even the SMC was found loose in monitoring the school environment.
7. It was found that some teachers did not accept learners' mistakes. They wanted their learners' response in accurate form. This was demotivating the learners in exploratory writing. They were only copying and imitating and did not make hypothesis, they made less progress because they were unable to create and formulate new sentences of their own.



### **Summary of the findings:**

- None of the students were able to achieve all the goals specified in the curriculum.
- Out of the total, 30% students were found possessing good writing proficiency, 50% had average writing proficiency and 20% of them were poor in their writing.
- Grammatical mistakes were noticed as the most serious problems.
- Pair work and group works were rarely organized in the classroom.
- Grammar translation method was applied by all the teachers.
- Teachers had theoretical knowledge on how to teach effectively but they did not apply their knowledge in the classroom.
- Teachers were not found highly motivated in their profession.
- Students were also learning English to pass the exam rather than for the sake of learning to communicate.

### **4.2 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made on the basis of the findings of the study:

#### **4.2.1 Recommendations to the English Teacher**

In a formal classroom situation a teacher monitors the whole teaching learning activities. It is believed that teaching is causing to learn. Thus, unless the student has learnt, the teacher has not taught. Thus teacher is supposed to be the most responsible person to bring the desired changes in student's behavior. Following recommendations are made for the teachers:

1. Teaching is not only a duty for 10 to 4 but also a responsibility to bear. Teacher thus should think about learners' achievement as well. Teachers are supposed to be the most responsible persons to improve students' achievement.

2. Any approach to grammar teaching in the classroom should:
  - Acknowledge and build on what the students already know.
  - Involve students in exploration and investigation.
  - Be descriptive and not prescriptive.
  - Address the grammar of formal Standard English.
  - Focus on functions of grammar in real text.
3. No doubt, teacher correction can not be possible for individual students. Some students can be checked as a model. Self-correction and peer-correction should be conducted.
4. As far as possible, teacher should use only English as the medium of instruction.
5. Motivation is one of the crucial factors in teaching learning activity. Teacher should link the classroom learning in to students real life situations so that they will be intrinsically as well as extrinsically motivated in learning.
6. Textbooks and teacher's guide are not the sufficient materials to teach in the classroom. Teacher may not find all readymade materials to teach. Teachers are also responsible to search other materials and be innovative to meet the changing situations.
7. Teacher should not worry about learners' mistakes. Mistakes are an inescapable fact of language learning. Mistakes could be taken as the natural part of learning process; not wrong turnings on the road towards mature language use but actually part of the road itself.
8. Teacher should think, search and apply how to manage large classes. Peer-work and group work techniques can be applied but teacher should be careful while conducting these activities.
9. As far as possible, language skills are to be presented intergratively. The relationship between writing, speaking and listening, and reading can be formulated in many different productive ways in teaching.

10. Writing becomes more purposeful when pupils perceive real audiences and opportunities for publication, and when they see that they have opportunities to make their own meanings, so teacher should motivate learners to publish article.

#### **4.2.2 Recommendations to the SMC and other Concerned Authority**

Following recommendations are made to the SMC and other ELT related authority:

1. Learning occurs in the good environment so SMC should work for creating conducive environment in the school area.
2. If the authorities want satisfactory behavior from the teachers, they should satisfy the teachers first. So teachers are to be addressed in their demands and other facilities so that they will be motivated in their profession.
3. Basic physical facilities such as adequate benches, blackboards, library with different reading materials etc. are must in all the schools.
4. School should organize different competitive activities in writing at regular interval.
5. Regular supervision should be done by SMC as well.
6. Government and other ELT related authority should provide regular refreshment training for professional development of the teacher so that they will get chance to be familiar with the new approaches and techniques developed in the field of language teaching.

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