CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study is about "the techniques used by the teachers while teaching writing skills". This chapter consists of general background, review of related literature, objectives and the significance of the study.

1.1 General Background

The term 'writing skill' was not viewed as a language skill to be taught to learners, even as late as the 1970s. Instead, it was used as a support skill in language learning to, for example, practice handwriting, write answers to grammar and reading exercises, and write dictation.

In the 1970s many English as a second language (ESL) programme writing classes were, in reality, grammar courses where as in the early 1980s, as teachers became more aware of current practices in Native English speakers (NES) composition, there was a shift from strictly controlled writing to guided writing. The slow but significant shift from language- based writing classrooms to the study of composition techniques and strategies began with (1) researchers' recognition of the newly developing field of NES composition and (2) teachers' realization of the needs of English L_2 students in the academic environment, particularly the role of writing in gate-keeping in post-secondary institutions (e.g. entrance and placement examinations). During the 1980s the expressive approaches' became prominent in NES composition classrooms: writing was taught as a process of self- discovery; writers expressed their feelings in a climate of encouragement ....(Reid, 1995b, in Carter and Nunan, 2001, p.28).

According to Reid (1995 b, in Carter and Nunan, 2001, p. 29), as the start of the twenty- first century, writing classrooms have achieved a more balanced perspective of composition theory; consequently, new pedagogy has begun to develop: traditional teacher-centered approaches are evolving into more learner- centered courses, and academic writing is viewed as a communicative

social act. During the last decade, recognition of the importance of L2 writing in school settings internationally has been demonstrated in three ways. First, the inclusion on standardized tests of English language proficiency such as the TOEFL Test of Written English, MELAB writing sub test and IELTS writing sub- test, second, the necessity for better teacher preparation in L2 composition has resulted in more courses or at least course works in graduate TESOL programmes and in more developed materials for l2 writing instruction. Finally, there are a number of specific series (initiated by major international publishers) devoted to writing development for beginning to intermediate L2 learners of English ; e.g. the Cambridge Skills for Fluency Series Writing, 1,2, 3, 4 (Littlejohn 1998) and the Oxford Basics Series Simple Writing.

In the field of creative writing in TESOL classrooms and in the context of literature in languages teaching, approaches to writing have been taken that involve strategies such as:

﹚ re- writing from different view points;

﹚ shifting registers to explore changing communicative effects;

﹚ writing predictions and completion to text as part of a process of detailed text study; and

﹚ cross- genre writing (e.g. from poetry to prose and vice-versa) (Carter and Nunan, 2001, p.30).

Regarding the nature of writing, Gannon (1985, p.25) defines it as "a way of realizing languages in those communities which have acquired a writing system. It is characterized by its use of visible signs systematically ordered". Similarly, Widdowson (1978, p. 62) describes writing as …"the use of visual medium to manifest the graphological and grammatical system of the language" on the one hand and that "writing is the act of making up the correct sentences and transmitting them through the visual medium as marks on paper".

What is important to note here is that there is a fiasco whether writing system is the product or process. In this regard, Harmer (1991) says, in the teaching of writing we can either focus on the product of that writing or on the writing process itself. When concentrating on the products, we are only interested in the aim of a task and in the end product. Many educators, however, advocate a process approach to writing. This pays attention to the various stages that any piece of writing goes through. By spending time with learners on pre- writing phases, editing , redrafting and finally producing a finished version of their work, a process approach aims to get the heart of the various skills that most writers employ and which are therefore, worth replicating when writing in foreign languages (pp. 325-326). Thus, looking at writing as a piece of discourse is to consider it a finished product. However, writing is not only seen as a way of putting ideas from mind to paper but it is also so complex process that it needs reorganization and revision and coherence. Moreover, it is considered as the process of generating meaning as Spencer (1983, p.77) states" complex thoughts and feelings are crystallized in words and become more directly available for reflection, critique or response". The argument is that "writing is an activity which involves the writer in the process of formulating ideas, then testing and confirming them" (Khaniya, 2005, p.148).

In Rivers' (1968, p. 243) words:

> Writing refers to the expression of ideas in a consecutive way, according to the graphic convention of the language; the ultimate aim of the writer at this stage is to be able to express him in a polished literacy from which requires the utilization of a special vocabulary and certain refinements structures. Writing is the very complex process requiring many composite skills, like mental, psychological, rhetorical and critical.

Describing its complexity, Nunan (1992 p.36) says:

> Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate a control of a number of variables

simultaneously. At the sentence level, these include control of content, format, sentence, structure, vocabulary, spelling and letter formation. Beyond, the sentence the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts (p.36) .

Writing can be looked at in two levels. In its simplest form writing can be the act of putting down something, which has been spoken in conventional graphic form. In this sense, writing is nothing more than the correct association of conventional graphic symbols with sounds, which have no significant importance for the writer. Writing, thus, is clearly much more than production of graphic symbols. The symbols have to be arranged according to certain conventions to form words and the words have to be arranged to form sentences. So, in its highly developed form, writing refers to the expression of ideas in a consecutive way according to the message of some kind or translating our thought into language in graphic form.

So far as writing exercises are concerned, we should be sensitive to the fact that writing has its own rules and conventions and we can expect course material to take them into account. Writing is not speech written down, and writing ability can not be adequately taught by simply getting students to write down oral skills or do written grammar exercises. This may help them with their spelling but it will not equip them to produce coherent written text following the convections of writing.

Rivers (1968, p.243) describes writing as, "a more complicated process when it involves putting in graphic form, according to the system accepted by educated native speakers, combination of words, which might be spoken in specific circumstances , that is, which convey certain elements of meaning".

By the same token, Byrne (1979, p.1) depicts:

Writing can be said to be the act of forming graphic symbols: marking marks on a flat surface of some kind. But writing is clearly much more than the production of graphic symbols, just as speech is more than production of sounds. The symbols have to be arranged, according to

certain conventions, to form words, and words have to be arranged to form sentences, although again we can be said to be 'writing' if we are merely list of words, as in inventories of items such as shopping lists.

He further says, "Writing involves encoding of a message of some kind that is we translate our thoughts into languages" (ibid).

By the above discussion, it can be argued that writing is nothing but just brainstorming process. Until and unless we predict, guess, speculate about something, it is impossible and ill-advised to organize, revise, edit and prepare the final draft. .

1.1.1 Characteristics of Good Writing

Writing is an art of using language but it is a very complex task to write clearly and explicitly. Correct, appropriate and effective writing in logical sentence structure is the most desired thing. Simplicity and directness are the most useful properties of good writing. But, making a simple and clear piece of writing is difficult from the syntactic and semantic point of views. It requires good imagination and logical sequence of thought. According to Richards (1968, p.36) some essential characteristics of good writing are introduced as follows:

(i) Economy

A good writer must express his ideas briefly and effectively. There should be economy of words to express meaning clearly and quickly. A short but effective writing can be popular for every reader because it saves time, energy and materials. Economy of words without losing the meaning is one of the best qualities of good writing. If there is more economy in writing, the less chances of occurring fault. Good writing is like a gold coin, small in size but precious one.

(ii) Simplicity

The second quality of good writing is reducing complexities and expressing ideas or thoughts in a natural way. It avoids the extra stylistic words, ambiguities and so on. Simplicity and smoothness make writing understandable and readable which never disturb the readers to understand the gift of writing.

(iii) Clarity

A good writer should not add complications or should be plausible in his writing. The writing must be free from ambiguity and should be explicit. The writer should have the idea of what to say and how to sequence the expressed thoughts. Good writing should avoid exaggeration and self contradictory statements.

(iv) Continuity

Continuity of thought is another important factor of a good writing. There should be continuity of thought from one word to another, from one phrase to another, from one sentence to another, from first to second paragraph and from first chapter to next chapter. The concept of continuity of though is based on the natural linkage of ideas. It should maintain standard from the beginning to the end.

(v) Free from Errors

The writer can not use a whole range of facial expression, gestures and general bodily language to convey the massage. As writing is a permanent cord of ones thought or ideas, it must be accurate. Every written piece has to be free from lexical, syntactic, semantic, and grammatical errors.

Furthermore, a good piece of writing requires examples and illustrations to explain abstract and difficult ideas. There should be appropriate facts, figures, depth of knowledge, specific and maximum objectivity in every piece of effective writing. Writing involves thinking, planning, assembling, clarifying and organizing processes. The art of writing is based upon one's own mental capacity which is very important for specific subject matter.

1.1.2 Components of Writing

Writing is not merely an activity of encoding verbal thought in printed symbols. According to Awasthi (2009) in his class note, it consists of a number of other components which are given below:

(a) Mechanics

The mechanics refers to these aspects of writing such as spelling, use of punctuation marks, capitals, abbreviations and members which are often dealt within the revision or editing stage of writing. The mechanics of writing is very basic concept in writing process.

(b) Coherence

Coherence refers to the relationship between an utterance and the meaning it conveys. It is the semantic relationship of different sense units between and among the utterances.

(c) Cohesion

Cohesion refers to the grammatical and/ or lexical relationships between different elements of a text. This may be the relationship between different sentences or between different parts of sentence.

(d) Orthographic and Para-Orthographic Texts

The orthographic system deals with linguistic symbols such as spelling, words, phrases, clauses, sentences, etc. and para-orthographic text is related to the use of diagram, figure, symbols etc.

1.1.3 Purposes of Writing

The purposes of writing are as follows:

(i) Writing for Reinforcement

Reinforcement refers to practising something that students have just learned. It is to reinforce a grammatical concept that has just been introduced through drills.

(ii) Writing for Training

Writing for training is similar to writing for reinforcement but differs in that it is not limited to reinforcement of grammatical structures previously presented in another mode but it introduces patterns of linguistic and rhetorical forms that might be new to the students and gives them practice in using and manipulating these new patterns. Students work with units of discourse longer than the sentence, but within parameters strictly prescribed by the teacher or textbook. This focuses on the manipulation of rhetorical and grammatical structures, particularly through the use of transformations.

(iii) Writing for Imitation

Writing for imitation uses models of content or form as a stimulus for writing. Students become familiar with rhetorical and syntactic forms by following carefully chosen models. Purpose, relying on models of rhetoric and syntax, is to familiarize non- native speakers with rhetorical forms perceived as specific to the target language, weaning them from patterns in their first language.

(iv) Writing for Communication

It consists of more recent interest and awareness of the importance of the writer's purpose and audience for writing even though teachers postulate new audiences; the audience is most often fictional: the teacher will read the final product and comment on it, probably by correcting linguistic errors. It is sometimes a context for writing what is given through guidelines as to content and purpose. Not only an information gap exists, but task dependency- one student has the information that another does not and has to convey that information so that the receiver can use it. Journal writing is a good activity for authentic communicative writing.

(v) Writing for Fluency

Writing for fluency consists of on going discussion concerning fluency vs. accuracy, content vs. form, product vs. process be concerned with both but not necessarily sequentially. Writing assigned for developing fluency does not

necessarily require certain standards of social acceptability, particularly if the writing is a draft, a journal, listing, brain storming, revisions or free writing, in which accuracy is not at issue for the teacher. Students are free to generate their own content; they are urged to concentrate on ideas and not be concerned about spelling and grammar (accuracy) until they are satisfied enough with their content to work on editing. Other types of writing for fluency are final drafts, examination essays, etc and call for accuracy but that does not mean that content and ideas are less important, only that accuracy is as necessary as content and ideas for the reader.

(vi) Writing for Learning

It consists of the governing philosophy for the five purposes above, which are presented in a *developmental* order. The five purposes above tend to be discrete: they do not include all the other purposes, with them. Writing for learning is *comprehensive* and *cumulative.* it can replace all the other purposes, yet at the same time include them too. When this is the framework for writing, all activities are seen as a way to learn a language as well as to learn more about the subject matter being written about.

Writing is wasted if we use it just for testing and skill practice. A main characteristic of writing*: its ability to be available for scrutiny and revision.* Writing for learning emphasis is now on all three points of the communication triangle: writer, reader, and text, and writing thus becomes truly interactive and communicative. Writing is the ideal medium for getting it wrong. It is also the ideal medium for eventually getting it right (as cited in Sharma, 2009).

1.1.4 Stages of Teaching Writing

Writing is the productive skill in written mode of communication. It is a complete process requiring many composite skills viz. mental, psychological, rhetorical and critical. Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. According to White and Arndt (1991), it is better to go through the following process while teaching writing skills.

1.1.4.1 Planning

Teaching writing will not become a success unless the teacher prepares an overall plan of it. Planning is a pre writing activity that encourages students to write. The following activities provide the learning experiences of students at this stage:

a. Brainstorming: - It is the process of quick thinking with out inhibition and fertile means of generating ideas.

b. Consulting resources for information: - Writer shares information in a group by visiting library and refers to resources in this stage.

c. Making notes: - Writer makes structured and unstructured notes by means of spiderogram. Spiderogram technique is very useful for gathering the idea of brainstorming. (Source: White and Arndt 1991)

d. Organizing notes:-. Writer maintains unity and coherence by dividing ideas into paragraphs and using transitional devices. He also writes topic sentences and provides supporting details.

1.1.4.2 Making an Outline

In this stage, the organized ideas are to be set in certain order and relationship by using notes and deciding paragraphs and sequence. It might be written in short phrases, incomplete sentences, but must be legible.

1.1.4.3 Preparing the First Draft

Once sufficient ideas are gathered at the planning and outlining stage, the first attempt at writing- that is drafting-may proceed quickly. At the drafting stage, " The writers focus on the fluency of writing and are not preoccupied with grammatical accuracy or the neatness of the draft " (Seow in Richards and Renandya, 2002). According to White and Arndt (1991, as cited in Sharma and Phyak , 2009, p. 272), "drafting activities make the more from pre- writing activities to actual writing process. They are moving from writer based writing to reader based writing". One important dimension of good writing is that the writer's ability to visualize the audience in terms of level, age, purpose, linguistic background and interest depending on the genre of

writing i.e. narrative, descriptive, expository, argumentative and reflective. The writer deletes and adds sometimes, if essential.

White and Arndt (1991) give the following suggestions in this stage:

- Keep in mind the assumed readers and their knowledge of the subject.

- Think of what information the readers needs need to know to make sense of the text. '

- Identify missing information.

- Add the new information at appropriate points in the text.

- Delete the information that is repeated – Re- order words/ sentences to maintain coherence.

1.1.4.4 Revising, Editing and Producing the Final Draft

First draft can never be the final product. The writer can change the words, sentences or even some part of organization. S/he can judge the overall components of the writing text. Production of the final copy is the goal of writing. This is a post-writing activity where the writer reads carefully, makes proof reading and prepares the final draft for publication.

The term process writing has been bandied about quite a while in ESL/EFL classrooms. Process writing in the classroom may be constructed as a programme of instruction which provides students with a series of planned learning experiences to help them understand the nature of writing at every point. White and Arndt (1991) present the following model for writing process.

Similarly, Richard and Renandya (in Seow 2002, P.315) make the following figure for writing process.

(as cited in Phyak and Sharma,2007,pp.269-297)

1.1.5 Use of Visual Materials in Writing Activities

Wright (1976, p.38) lists the broad functions of visual materials used for writing activities as below:

1. To motivate the student.

2. To create a context within which his written text will have meaning.

3. To provide the student with information to refer to, including objects, actions, events, relationships.

4. To provide non- verbal cues for manipulation practice.

5. To provide non- verbal prompts to written composition.

He (ibid) further clarifies the use of visual materials in writing activities in terms of spelling, repetition, reproduction, manipulation and composition.

(i) Spelling

The overhead projector, the magnet board, the word maker and other gadgets all help the teacher to demonstrate the effects of adding, removing and substituting letters. Letters or groups of letters can be given to the pupil on cards which he can then form into words. Examples are as below;

Example 1

A very simple game for two players consists of making a word and then of changing it by the substitution of one letter (and / or the addition of or removal of one letter). The player to make the last change wins the game.

Son, sun, bun, bud, bus . . .

One person could play the game, simply recording how many words he made.

Example 2

The students go through a picture magazine and list all the objects or actions which begin with a certain letter or sound. This activity might be done in pairs or groups and done competitively with other groups.

(ii) Repetition

One way of the art of copying into an interesting activity is to copy menus, songs, instructions, directions etc in our daily life. Examples are as below;

Example 1

Show a number of cartoons with their captions in a jumbled order. The student must read intensively in order to see where each caption should go and must copy the sentence down the cartoon itself.

Example 2

Each pupil makes a booklet. The songs, poems, sayings, menus, instructions for making things are copied into the booklet. These may be mixed or follow a single them.

(iii) Reproduction

Visual material for reproduction activities serves to remind the pupil of the sentence (s) to be reproduced. It provides a link for him with a situation in which he has repeated the sentence or in some way become familiar with it. The material may be interesting, amusing, or have some cultural information. Examples are as below;

Example 1

The teacher or the students draw a number of simple pinmen drawings on the board, agree on a suitable caption and write it underneath. When the drawings and sentences are complete the students copy the pinmen drawings. The teacher then removes the sentences and the students endeavour to remember them and to write them next to their drawings. The drawings act as a reminder.

Example 2

The teacher holds up a number of flash cards of words or puts them on the flannel board, overhead projector or blackboard. The pupils read these silently and endeavour to compose a sentence with them. When the words are removed the sentences are written down.

(iv) Manipulation

Visual materials can help by providing a variety of context for the teaching item, which is so necessary at the manipulation stage. Also, if required, they can provide convincing representations and simulations of real life situations in which the language is to be manipulated. Example of this activity is as follow:

Example 1

Advertisement, notices, announcements are studied and alternative versions are written out. These new versions may be serious, perhaps giving notice of a meeting of language society, or humorous, making ridiculous claim for a product.

(v) Composition

(a) Guided Composition

Whatever other functions the materials may have, providing interest, fun, cultural setting and so on the main function is that of guiding the student to use his store of the foreign language to communicate his ideas and opinions. The principal criterion will be to provide an interesting stimulus for the student. Example of this writing activity is as follows:

Example 1

A visitor is coming from abroad to stay with you and your family. With the help of this map and bus timetable write to explain how to get to your home. Apologise to him and explain that you can not be at the station to meet him.

(b) Unguided Composition

Visual material can also be useful to create the appropriate information for writing free composition. Examples of this activity are as follows:

Example 1

With the aid of maps, photographs, a list of events, list of trades and professional services and graphs showing types of employment or weather, write a guide to your village, town or region for foreign visitors.

Example 2

With the support of photographs, drawings and maps, write a short autobiography alternatively, keep a diary (pp.38-47).

1.1.6 Testing of Writing

The writing skill in general has various sub-skills. Heaton (1975) has attempted to group the many and varied skills necessary for writing good prose into five main areas.

a. Grammatical Skills

It is the ability to write correct sentences.

b. Mechanical Skills

It is the ability to use correctly those convictions peculiar to the written languages e.g. Punctuation, Spellings.

c. Treatment of Content

It is the ability to think creatively and develop thoughts, excluding all irrelevant information.

d. Stylistic Skills

It is the ability to manipulate sentences and paragraphs and use language effectively.

e. Judgement Skill

It is the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience.

Therefore, testing writing indicates the skills mentioned above. The writing ability is tested usually in the form of essays, letters and reports. The general technique of testing varies according to whether they deal with separate factors such as punctuation, spelling, structure or vocabulary.

Khaniya (2005, p. 141) opines "the best way to test people's writing is to get the learners professional testing institutions are unable to construct indirect test. Our assessment systems depend on the writer expression for the scoring of the student". Murray, (1978 in khaniya ibid) further says "writing is a process, not product and the process of writing can be studied and understood."

Khaniya (ibid) further considers three problems in testing writing as:

i. Setting writing tasks properly representative of the population of tasks that student should be able to perform.

ii. The tasks that elicit samples of writing (set as many as possible) which truly represent the student ability.

iii. The writing should be scored reliably (Holistic- Impressionistic, Analytic and a Combination of both).

1.1.7 Mechanics of Writings

The mechanics of writing are described below:

a. Capitalization

Appropriate capitalization is a matter of convention. Many of the conventions e.g. capitalizing the first letter of the first word of a sentence, the pronoun I, the first letter in the first word of the quotation and so on are very familiar to us. Some capitalization, however, is a matter of style rather than convention. When capitalizing for stylistic purposes, writers usually do so to emphasize key word or concept. Some basic rules of capitalization are as follows:

) Capitalization is used in the first word and all important words of the title of books, newspapers, periodicals, articles, reports, chapter titles and major divisions e.g. The Good Faith.

) It is used to begin all proper nouns, proper adjectives, historical events, periods, documents, and days of the week and months, names of organization, departments, political and social group, race and languages: e.g. Nepal, Nepali, Shakespeare, the Renaissances, Sunday, March, World Health Organization etc.

) It is used in honorary and official titles, specific school course , trade names and abbreviation; e.g. Prime Minister, Professor Awasthi, Professor Bhattarai, UNO, Maruti Car etc.

) It is used to write the first letter inside the quotation marks and begin each line of poverty, etc.

b. Punctuation

Punctuation is "an art or practice or system of inserting marks or points in writing or printing in order to make the meaning clear" (Webster, 1988). The proper use of punctuation marks such as comma, colon, semi- colon, hyphen, full stop, dash, parenthesis, quotation marks and apostrophe and so on help the writer organize written language and clarify relation between words and clauses. There are different punctuation marks used for different purposes. Some are presented below with their use.

I. Comma

) Comma is used to separate items in a list of words, phrases or clauses and question tags from the rest of the sentences, e.g. Ram bought a book, an exercise copy and pen yesterday.

Sita is a student, isn't she?

If you want to pass, work hard.

⟩ It is used to separate an introductory or transitional word or phrase from the rest of the sentence; e.g. Securing good marks in English is very difficult and one should, therefore labour hard.

⟩ It is used before and after a non- defining clause and a phrase in apposition; e.g. the woman, who is studying in the library, is my teacher

II. Full stop

It is used to mark the end of a sentence; e.g. Honesty is the best policy.

III. Question mark

It is used at the end of an interrogative sentence and used in parenthesis to express doubt; e.g. what are you doing?

IV. Exclamation mark

It is used to express a high degree of happiness, sorrow, anger, surprise or other strong emotion:

e.g. Hurrah! We won the match.

What a nice picture she made!

V. Colon

⟩ It is used after a principle clause where the following statement illustrates or explains the content of the principle clause;

e.g. They left old house: it was ruined.

⟩ It is used before along visit, and often introduce by phrases such as for example as follows:

VI. Semi- colon

It is used to join independent clauses that are not connected with the comma or coordinating conjunctions;

e.g. The sun is rising now; the shadows were long.

VII. Dash

It is used instead of a colon or a semi-colon to make the writing vivid or dramatic; e.g. You have been cheating me for years- how can I trust you again?

VIII. Parenthesis

It is used to enclose cross references and to separate extra information, an after thought or a comment such as: e.g. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) is known as the father of English essay and modern English prose.

IX. Quotation marks

It is used to enclose direct quotation dialogue, titles of shorter works such as poems, short stories etc. Bacon said, "Study serves for delight, for ornament and ability".

X. Hyphen

It is used to form a compound word from two other words, from prefix and a proper name and form two other words which are separated by two other words which are separated by prepositions such as: kind- Hearted, pre- Romantic sister- in- law.

XI. Apostrophe

) The apostrophe "s" to indicates the possession such as: the author's, the student's etc.

) It is used in contracted forms such as; I'm (I am), they're (they are) etc.

c. Grammatical Items

There are different areas of "grammatical items" which the researcher studied. The areas are article, preposition and subject- verb agreement - in the sentences, the students wrote.

) The term article covers definite and indefinite article (i.e. a, an, the). An article is a quality of noun and is placed before them. It is not used for other parts of speech.

e.g.; Pokhara can be said the Switzerland of Nepal.

The Kathmandu Post

He is a doc tor.

I saw an insect yesterday.

〕 The term subject - verb agreement covers the agreement of verbs with the number of subjects. The two main rules are:

〕 Singular subject takes singular verb. Plural subject takes plural verbs.

e.g. Many girls are intelligent.

Every body is writing

Robina with her sister goes to school by bus

According to Murphy (1994), there are some rules of S-V agreement which are as follows:

a. The singular subject (he, she, it, Ram, a girl . . .) takes singular verbs (is, was, has, does, goes)

b. The plural subject (we, you, they, girls) takes plural verbs (are, were, have, do , go)

c. Both subjects (singular and plural) come with- did, had, can, would will, may etc)

d. 'I' sometimes comes with singular verbs and sometimes with plural. (it am, was, do, have)

1. Singular Subjects

a. Somebody/ Nobody/ Everybody . . . something/ everything

b. V-ing/ to- inf as a subject (reading …/to read …

c. Every …. and … (every man and woman)

d. No. . . . and … (Nobody and girls …)

e. Arithmetic sums (Two plus two. …)

f. There + singular verb+ singular subject. (There … a boy ...)

g. The number of +plural noun (the number of boys …)

h. News, physical, measles, politics, etc.

i. Two nouns giving one meaning (Bread and butter …) (time and tide …)

j. Certain amount, distance, measurement (ten rupees is a small amount of money).

k. Many a + singular subject + singular verb (many a boy …)

l. One of /either of / neither of / each of, etc. (one of my friends ….)

2. Plural Subjects

a. Many / both several/ these/ those (many boys are intelligent).

b. A few +plural noun (a few mangoes are ripe).

c. A+ number of +plural nouns (A number of boys are reading)

d. Police/ People/ Cattle/ Gentry , etc. (Police have caught the thief)

e. There+ plural verbs + plural nouns (there are ten children playing outside).

f. The+ adjectives+ plural verbs. (The intelligent girls are selected for the quiz contest)

⟩ The term preposition is a word that expresses the relationship between a noun or pronoun and another part of sentences. The preposition expresses the relation of place, time, manners, direction, motion, reason, purpose, etc. The use of preposition completely changes the meaning of any sentences.

⟩ For example: "It was written to by/with me". In this situation, each preposition changes the whole meaning of the sentences

1.1.8 Techniques of Teaching Writing

Harmer (1991, pp.109-121) presents the following techniques which encourage the students in written practice:

a. Sentence writing

b. Parallel writing

c. Cohesion

d. Oral composition

e. Dictation

1.1.8.1 Sentence Writing

Sentence writing aims to give students practice in specific written language. For example,

i. Fill - in -gaps

One way of providing controlled written practice is to get students to fill in blanks in sentence. This is extremely restricted, of course, though it is often useful during presentation stage and as controlled homework practice. In the following example the authors use a postcard with multiple fill-ins (options) for both practice and humour (fun).

The Swan- Walter Universal Holiday Postcard Machine

B The Swan-Walter Universal Holiday Postcard Machine

1 It's easy to write holiday postcards! Write one now and send it to a friend.

Dear N
Well, here we are in
T , W , and we are
having a/an A time.
I am sitting / lying Pr
Pl , writing postcards,
drinking D and looking
at N s V
and PN are V
Pr Pl .
Tomorrow we are going to
T . I'm sure it will
be A .
Wish you were here,
Love, N

POSTCARD DICTIONARY

N (name)	T (town, city, village)	W (weather)	A (adjective)		Pr (preposition)
John	Rome	The sun is shining	wonderful	terrible	in
Mary	Manchester	It is raining	beautiful	awful	on
Alexandra	Honolulu	It is snowing	lovely	horrible	at
Mother	etc.	There is a hurricane	exciting	catastrophic	under
etc.		etc.	interesting	boring	by
			magnificent	etc.	near
					opposite
					etc.

Pl (place)	D (drink)	L (things to look at)	V (verb)	PN (plural noun)
my room	coffee	the sea	shopping	the children
their room	beer	the mountains	sightseeing	Mummy and Daddy
the bar	wine	the tourists	sleeping	George and Sue
the beach	etc.	the rain	drinking beer	etc.
a café		the sheep	dancing	
a tree		etc.	playing cards	
a mountain			having a bath	
etc.			etc.	

The students get a lot of good sentence-writing practice, and the task is made more involving and challenging by having them choose between all the alternatives in the various boxes.

Source: Harmer (1991, p.109)

The students get a lot of good sentence-writing practice, and the task is made more involving and challenging by having them choose between all the alternatives in the various boxes.

(ii) What are They Doing?

In this example students are asked to look at the picture and write the four sentences about what the people are doing?

This exercise has advantage of getting the students to use specific language (in this case the present continuous) to make their own sentences. It is thus slightly more challenging than the first example.

1.1.8.2 Parallel Writing

Harmer (1991, p.111) says that students will first see a piece of writing and their use as a basis for their own work. The original piece that they look at will show them how English is written and guide them towards their own ability to express themselves in written English.

Examples of this writing can be presented in the following techniques.

(i) Description of Persons

In this technique, students have to write description of persons based on the firs letter as in the model.

I am auspicious/ altruist Ashmita Sharma. I am from Achham district. I always drink Aloe Vera Juice and I love athletic most.

ii) Hotels

Harmer (ibid) mentions, students have to write descriptions of hotels based on a guide book after first seeing how the symbols are used in a written model.

The teacher starts by getting the students to look at the 'key to symbols' either singly or pairs. He or she then finds out if there is any vocabulary the students do not understand. When it is clear that the students understand all the symbols they study the entry for the Hotel Concorde. They are then asked comprehension questions to check they have understood the text.

If necessary the teacher can then elicit similar sentence about, for example, Castile Hotel as a further check that they can apply the symbols to the model. Students are then asked to write (either singly, or in pairs, or in groups) a similar paragraphs about one of the other hotels. They might write something like the following.

The Windmill Hotel in Mykonos is a simple hotel. It has no telephone. It is in the countryside.

This kind of writing which the students have to do here is very controlled; the activity is very like an oral substitution drill. Nevertheless the fact that students have to interpret symbols and relate them both to the original text and to the one they wish to write makes the activity extremely involving for them.

This is a page from a hotel GUIDE BOOK.

① Read the symbols and their meanings:

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL GUIDE: HOTELS: KEY TO SYMBOLS	
★★★★ good hotel	B breakfast
★★★ average hotel	✗ lunch
★★ simple hotel	⟂ dinner
☎ telephone number	⇆ bathrooms
⊙ city centre	▦ swimming pool
🛉 countryside	⌐ showers
○ time of opening	🚂 railway station
⇔ bedrooms	🚂 no station
🔥 central heating	

② Here is the entry for the Hotel Concorde, Paris.

HOTEL CONCORDE: PARIS, FRANCE

★★★★ ☎ 88-66-21 ⊙ ○ all year

40 ⇔ 🔥 B 7-9 ✗ 11-3 ⟂ 8-11

25 ⇆ 15 ⌐ ▦ in hotel 🚂 2km

It means:

The Hotel Concorde in Paris is a good hotel. The telephone number is 88-66-21. It is in the city centre.

The hotel is open all year and there are forty bedrooms. There is central heating in the hotel.

Breakfast is from seven to nine, lunch is from eleven to three, and dinner is from eight until eleven. There are twenty-five bathrooms and fifteen showers. There is also a swimming pool in the hotel. The nearest railway station is two kilometres away.

Now read these symbols, and describe the hotels in the same way:

EMBASSY HOTEL, NEW YORK CITY, USA

★★★ ☎ 437 8896 ⊙ ○ all year

200 ⇔ 🔥 B 6.10 ✗ ⟂ 7-9 🚂 1km

✗ 200 ⌐ ▦ nearby

CASTILLE HOTEL, near MADRID, SPAIN

★★★ ☎ 68 85 53 🛉 ○ summer only

30 ⇔ 🔥 B 7-9 ✗ 12-3 ⟂ 8-12

10 ⇆ 10 ⌐ ✗ 🚂 25 km

WINDMILL HOTEL, MYKONOS, GREECE

★★ ✗ 🛉 ○ March to October

six ⇔ ✗ ✗ ✗

one ⇆ one ⌐ ✗ ✈ ⇔

Source: Harmer (1991, p.112)

1.1.8.3 Cohesion

In this technique, a number of exercises are designed to help the students to organize their writing clearly and coherently. This involves not only the ordering of sentences but also the use of cohesive device (i.e. languages that is used to join the sentences together).

(i) Co- ordinators Sunshine

In this technique, simple exercise for elementary students designed to teach them how to join sentences with 'and' and 'but' for example,

Join the following pairs of sentences using 'and' or 'but'.

 i. Sunshine makes people happy. Sunshine can be bad for you.

 ii. Sunbathing feels good. People with light skins can get skin cancer from sunbathing.

 iii. People are more careful in the sunshine. People are morefriendly to each other when the sun is out.

The students will not only have to select 'and' or 'but', they will also have to change 'sunshine' and sunbathing to 'it' and 'people' is changed into 'they'.

1.1.8.4 Oral Composition

Oral composition has been popular in language teaching for a long time. The idea is that the teacher and the class together build up a narrative before the students are then asked to write it. This process allows the teacher and the students to focus in on a variety of language items from verb tenses to cohesive devices, etc.

Oral composition can be handled with visual or aural stimuli. In other words, the teacher can show the students a series of pictures, mime a story, or play them with a series of sounds. For example,

The teacher is going to work from the following set of pictures:
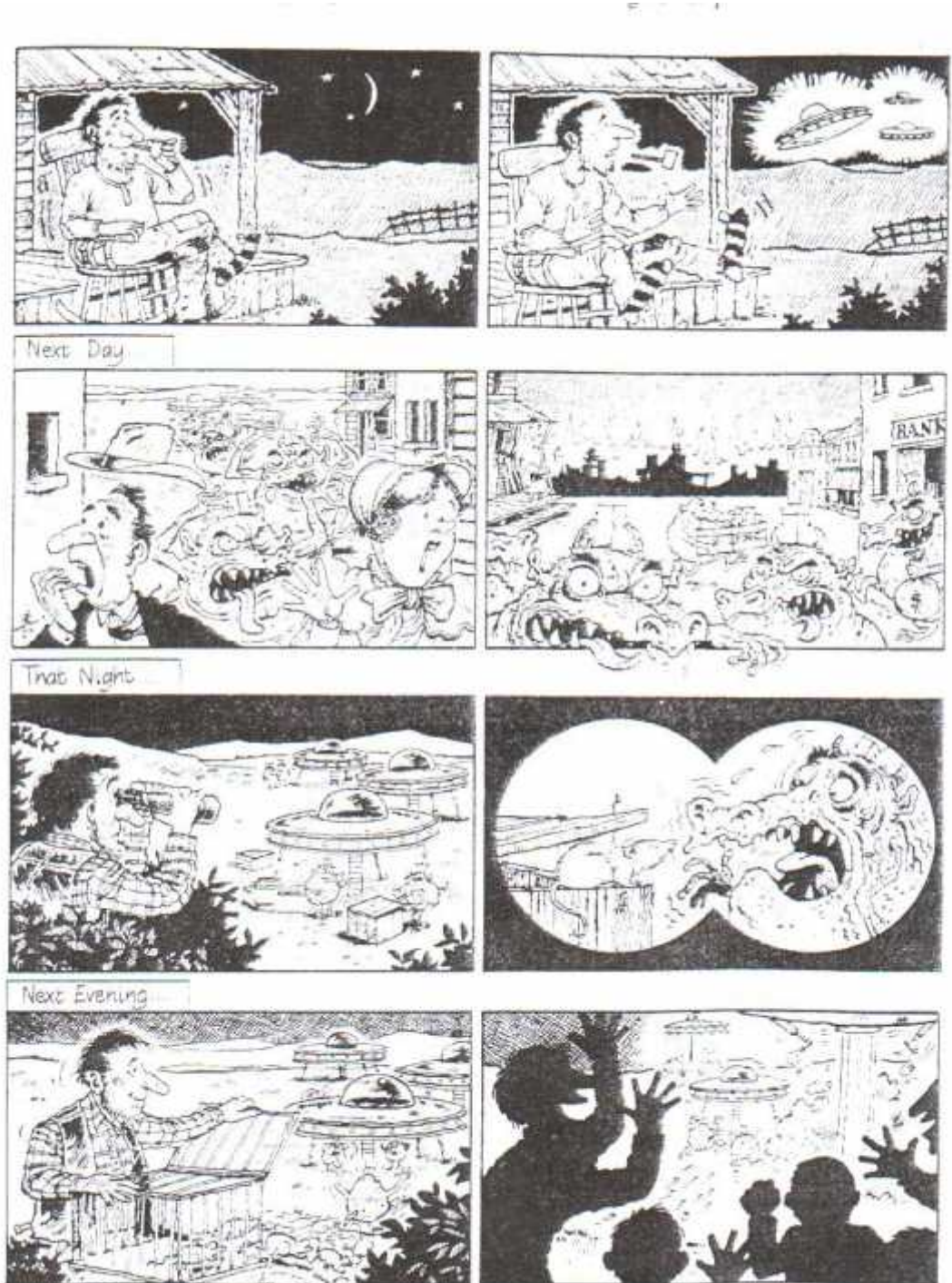
The teacher starts by getting students to look at the first picture in the sequence. The students are encouraged to write what the man is doing, e.g.

T - So ….. What can you say about the man ……….

s1 -the man sitting ?

T- Ok ……… but when …….?

S2- last night!

T- Hmm ….. A bit before that

S3- Last Monday.

T- Ok. So can someone give me a sentence?

S1- last Monday evening a man was sitting on his porch. He was smoking a pipe, etc.

The teacher then produces another picture and elicits the same kind of language until the first four pictures have been dealt with. Students could then be given the last four pictures as homework.

Oral compositions are useful for the teaching of narrative style and the use of various past tenses. However, they take a longtime and should therefore, be used sparingly.

1.1.8.5 Dictation

Like many teaching techniques that go completely out of fashion for a time, dictation is making a comeback. This is largely due to the work of Paul Davis and Mario Rinvolucri who have looked at the subject and changed it out of all recognition by asking the question, who should dictate what and to whom? Two examples show how dictation can be a useful way of getting into a topic (p. 119).

I. Beautiful Things

In this technique teacher tells the students to take out the pen and paper and then dictate the following:

One of the most beautiful things I have ever seen is …………..

Then the teacher tells them complete the sentences themselves. They may do it seriously or superficially.

II. Poetry Dictation

In this technique, the teacher brings one copy of poem into the classroom and either keeps it on the desk or pins it to a board. The students are put into groups. Each group sends a member up to the poem where they read only first line. They take this line back to their group and dictate it. Now second member of the group goes to the poem and reads the second line so that it can be dictated to the group. A third student goes up for the third line and so on.

The technique works beautifully because the students are kept guessing about what the next line(s) will be. They are far more involved in the meaning of the poem than they would be if they were just reading it, and they are getting writing practice (Harmer, 1991, p. 120).

What is important to note here is that we can also use dialogue and prose passages instead of poetry.

1.1.9 Written Communicative Activities

According to Harmer (1991, pp.139-145), "Writing is frequently relegated to the status of homework. This is a pity since writing, especially communicative writing, can play a valuable part in the class. The main written communicative activities which are suitable for lower secondary level are as below;

1. Relaying Instructions
2. Writing Reports and Advertisement
3. Co- operative Writing
4. Exchanging Letters

1.1.9.1 Relaying Instructions

In this activity, one group of students has information for the performance of a task and they have to get another group to perform the same task by giving them written instructions. There are following activities:

I. Making Models

In this model, these three stages are to be followed.

Stage I: A small group of students is given material to make a model with (e.g. building bricks) and they are told to make a model.

Stage II: The group now writes instructions which will enable other people to duplicate the model.

Stage II: Other students are given the instructions and told to build the model by reading the instructions.

There is, of course, immediate feedback. The original group can see how well they have written instructions by watching the efforts of the other students to duplicate their model.

II. Giving Directions

In this activity students write direction which other students have to follow.

Stage I: Students are told to write directions from the place where they are studying to some other place in the same town or city. They are told not to mention the destination by name

Stage II: Students give their directions to a partner who has to guess what the destination is by following the directions.

The same effect can be created by letting the students work from a street plan of a town with clearly marked buildings, etc.

III. Writing Commands

In this activity, students write each other messages which contain commands.

Stage I: The teacher tells students to write a command for one of their classmates on a piece of paper. The student might write something like this:

> Maria: Take off your left shoe!

Stage II: The written messages are then passed on to the students who have to obey the commands (p 141).

This activity is especially appropriate for beginners and is most enjoyable.

1.1.9.2 Writing Reports and Advertisements

In this technique, the following three activities are to be considered in which students write news reports or advertisements (Harmer, 1991, p. 141).

i. The News Broadcast

Students write items for news broadcast which they can organize for 'transmission'.

Stage I: The teacher asks all the students in the class to write two news items on a piece of paper.

Stage II: The teacher then collects all the pieces of paper and forms the class into small groups.

Stage III: The teacher then distributes the pieces of paper equally between the groups in no special order. The students are asked to combine the items (making changes where necessary) to make up a complete news broadcast.

Stage IV: Each group then read it to the rest of the class. Ideally, of course, each group could record their broadcast to make it more realistic.

This activity is attractive because it involves all the skills as well as the ability to order and organize ideas. It also involves current events and is thus interesting and motivating.

II. The Tourist Brochure

In much the same way as the news broadcast, students can be asked to join together to write a brochure about the place they live in or are studying in.

Stage I: The students are all told to write two sentences (or more) about the attraction of the place they live or study in.

Stage II: The class is then divided into small groups.

Stage III: In each group the students pool their sentences and use them to devise a short brochure about the place they live or study in for a tourist magazine.

Stage IV: Students from each group may read out their final version. A better alternative, however, is to put the texts in a folder which can be passed round the class or to stick them to a notice board in the classroom.

III. The Advertisement

After discussing what successful advertisements contain, students can write and design their own.

Stage I: The class discusses (together and / or in pairs/ groups) what makes a successful advertisement.

Stage II: The class is divided into groups. They are told that their task is to select a product and write an advertisement for it which will appear in a magazine.

Stage III: When they have completed their advertisements they can pass them round the class. Alternatively they can be given a period of time (e.g. a weekend) to design the artwork for their text. The advertisement can then be pinned to the class notice board.

1.1.9.3 Co-operative Writing

In this technique, more activities where students actually write things together; where the process of co-operation is as important as the actual fact of writing itself. In the first two of these activities there is a definite game-like quality present.

I. A Fairy- Tale

In this activity, student are put into groups and told that they are going to write joint stories. For this, the following stages are to be followed.

Stage I: Students are put into groups, where, they should be of equal number.

Stage II: Students are told to tear a page from their exercise books and write the following sentences unit:

> Once open a time there was a beautiful princess who lived in a large castle at the edge of a forest.

Stage III: The students are then instructed to continue the story by writing the next sentence.

Stage IV: The students are then told to give their piece of paper to the student on their left. They should now continue the (new) story they have in front of them by writing the next sentence. The procedure is repeated until the papers have gone round the whole group but one. The teacher then tells the students to write the penultimate sentence.

Stage V: The stories are now returned to their originators (by passing the papers to the student on the left). They must write the concluding sentence. Students can read the resulting tales to the rest of the class. This activity can be immensely enjoyable for the lower secondary level.

II. Story Reconstruction

In this activity, students are put into four groups (A, B, C, and D) each of which is shown a picture from a story sequence. In Stead of talking about the pictures, however, the activity continues as follows:

Stage I: The students individually write two sentences (in the past) about the pictures they have seen.

Stage II: The teacher forms new groups of four (i.e. one student from the original group A, one forms the original group B and so on).

Stage III: The students show each other their sentences and they then use them to construct a narrative (p. 142).

The finished stories can be circulated round the class put on the board or used for student- student correction.

1.1.9.4 Exchanging Letters

In this technique, students get the ways of exchanging letters with each other by means of the following realistic tasks.

I. Writing Message

As the most basic form of letter writing is the message, this technique can be quite considerable for the lower secondary level. The stages of this activity are as below:

Stage I: Students are told to write a message to another member of the group which demands an answer.

Stage II: The completed messages are then given to the students who have been written to.

Stage III: The student who has received the message then writes a reply which is passed back to the original writer.

II. The Agony Column (The personal column of regular newspaper which advises to the difficulties)

This activity involves the students writing letters to 'agony column'- those parts of newspaper and magazines where supposed experts given advice on everything from marital problems to trouble with the neighbours. In this activity, students invent some problem and then have it answered by other members of the class as below:-

Stage I: The class and the teacher discuss 'agony columns', getting examples from the students' knowledge of their own countries. Where students say there is no such thing in their newspapers and magazines the teacher will show them examples from English or American agony columns.

Stage II: The teacher arranges the class into small groups and asks each group to think of a problem and then write a letter.

Stage III: The letters from each group are given to another group who have to consider the best answer and then write a reply.

Stage IV: The replies are then given to the original groups to consider. The teacher can put them into a folder which can be passed round the class. If there is a notice board the best and/or most amusing letters can be pinned up for all to see.

III. The Complaining Letters

In this activity, students write complaining letters about goods they have bought after seeing an advertisement. The students (others) represent the company who make the goods then have to reply to these letters. The following are the stages.

Stage I: Students are divided into small groups. Each group is given an advertisement. It would be ideal if they could be given advertisement prepared by their classmates.

Stage II: The groups are told to imagine they have bought the item that is advertised but are not satisfied with it for some reason. They should write a letter of complaints to the company.

Stage III: The letters are then given to different groups. The new group has to study the letter of complaint and decide what to do about it. When the decision has been reached, they can write a reply to the original letter.

Stage IV: The letters are then returned to the original groups who read them and discuss what they have been sent. Harmer (1991, pp.143-145)

1.1.10 A Model Technique of Teaching Writing (Picture Flower)

Yalin (2004) provides a technique for teaching writing at lower secondary level as below:

Procedures

1. Teacher draws the picture flower on the board and fills the picture with information.

2. Teacher asks the students to guess the information about and so they try to guess.

3. Teacher makes a model Yes/No questions from the information

    e.g Do you live in Bharatpur? And ask them to make similar Yes/No questions from the other information on the picture.

4. Teacher divides the student into groups and asks them to choose the leader.

5. Teacher asks the leader to present the Yes/ No question and provides feedback. The leader presents Yes/No questions. Each group will get chance.

6. Teacher gets feedbacks and helps the students if necessary.

7. After the end of making yes/no question, Teacher asks them to guess the topic of the paragraphs.

8. Teacher provides model statement on the basis of yes/No questions.

9. Teacher asks them to complete paragraph.

10. Teacher asks them to share and exchange each-other and find out mistakes.

11. Students prepare final draft correcting and modifying the mistakes and writing.

12. Teacher asks to stitch on the wall and read it.

13. Teacher asks them write own information on the picture flower and provide homework.

1.2 Review of Related Literature

Every new task needs the knowledge of previous background which can help and direct to each the new target for finding out new things or ideas. Many articles, reports, and books have been written on the area of writing skills.

Rivers (1968, p. 244) says, " Writing is not, then a new skill which can be learnt in an isolation , . . . writing gives the students practice in manipulating structural variants adding the reinforcement of the kinaesthetic image to the auditory and visual". Similarly, Verghees (1990, p.16) says "learning a second language is an effective learning if the four skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing is the most demanding languages skill".

 Hockett (1972) says,

 Though writing is not the linguistics' primary concern, he is interested in it, any educated member of four society of course is, and also for two special reasons. One is that our records of our past speech, until the extremely recent invention of the phonograph take the form exclusively of documents and inscriptions. The other is that writing is itself of tremendous importance in human life, and that the natural and history of writing can only be clearly understood in terms of the working of languages.

From pedagogical points of view writing process cannot be ignored as Arndt (1978, p.227) says:

> ... it may be ill-advised and perhaps even impossible to divorce the processes and products from each other in teaching or research. For at the heart of effective writing lie the techniques for successful fusion of thought and language to fit the theoretical context . . . in the fundamental sense of gearing message to audience. Thus, writing is based on the students experience on the composing process, rather than correct forms, i.e. product.

According to Widdowson (1978, p. 62) , One way of describing writing is to say . . . " the use of the visual medium to manifest the graphological and grammatical system of the languages and another that writing is the act of making up correct sentences and transmitting them through the visual medium as marks on paper". He further considers writing on activity of developing a discussion as transferring information of various kinds from the writer's world knowledge to that of the reader's and the linguistic rules facilitates the transference, though mere linguistic rules are not sufficient to do this, knowledge of use is needed.

Odell (1981, p. 43) argues that writing is the good activity to improve our understanding of any subject. The assumption is that the knowledge or ideas in crude form may be refined by trying to put them on the paper. The argument is that writing is an activity which involves the writer in the process of formulating ideas, then testing and confirming them.

Zamel (1983) has carried out a study of six ESL students studying in an American University. On the basis of the study, she presents some strategies that skilled ESL writers follow when writing. Such writers:

a. write primarily to express meaning, i.e. are more concerned about the content that the form.

b. pay more attention to revision at the discourse level than at the world level.

c. constantly read back what they have written for organizational details and recognize whole chunks for writings as well as discard ideas to incorporate new information, an express original ideas etc.

d. distance themselves from their writing and read it from the points of view of a target reader and supply modification.

e. edit and improve their writing till they feel it reflects what they want it to reflect.

In short, looking only at what the students have written is not full demarcation line, how that product came into being is also very significant in writing.

Emphasizing students' experience in the composing process, Krashan (1984, p.36) warns:

providing the students more information about would result in a wooden, awkward approximation to good prose . . . it could seriously inhibit their writing process . . . over-teaching can prevent the discovery of new meaning and can seriously disrupt fluency and the flow of ideas on to the page.

Reid (1995b, as cited in Carter and Nunan, 2001, pp.30-33) states that English L_2 writing research has been substantially influenced by- and has paralled often NES (Native English Speakers) composition research. For example, L_2 researchers have investigated students composting and revision strategies by ethnographies methods such as case study and speak- aloud protocols.

Similarly, Raimes (1991) says the need for 'more of everything for L_2 writers: strategy training, direct teaching, support systems, teacher response, practices, etc. Recent research focuses instead on salient and substantial difference rather than deficiencies Silva's review (1993) of L_2 writing research points out that L_2 writers differ in their sequence of writing behaviours .Increasingly, teacher-researchers have begun asking students about their preferences for and evaluation of techniques, approaches and materials in L2 writing classes. Using interviews, case studies and survey data researchers are learning more about

students' preferences concerning teacher and peer commentary on their written drafts (Ferris 1995, 1997: Zhang1995; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz 1996; Lee 1997; Lipp & Davis-Ockey 1997; Porte 1997: F. Hyland 1998). Other L2 writing class, the role of teacher and student in individual or small group writing conferences (Goldstion & Conrad 1990); Patthey-Chavez and Ferris 1197; Nelson & Carson 1998) and the writing task student are assigned in their academic classes (Leki & Carson 1997; Spack 1997). Finally, a recent research area has extended the areas of constrastive rhetoric and the social- cognitive approach to academic writing in which teachers focus on the context- the writing situation- and the audience of the writing product to the rhetoric of specific genres in different disciplinary 'culture's. Researches have studied the writing conventions and the expectations of academic readers in such genres as written argumentative and persuasive techniques, written narrative strategies and expository and report writing (Robinson 1991; Flowerdew 1993; Duidley-Evans 1995,1997; Mayer 1996; K. Hyland 1998, 2000).

Regarding the writing as practices Reid (ibid) further argues that the pedagogical practices necessary for students to increase their writing competence have been hotly debated. Historically, the question of whether or not writing should (or could) be taught has only recently been answered by research in the relatively new field of composition and rhetoric, and by the advanced degrees that legitimised specialisation in that field. Moreover, a few L_2 teachers felt prepared to teach composition, and most English L_2 learners had received little, if any, directed writing instruction in their L_1.

Times have now changed: English L2 writing teachers are better prepared, language programmes recognize the value of L2 writing competencies, and students are more aware of the writing required in school settings. Some pedagogical issues are similar across languages programmes, such as how to provide the most appropriate instruction, how to respond to students work in ways that help their languages progress, and how to assess students fairly. Several resource books for English L_2 writing teachers offer substantial

information about theory and practice, methods and materials, as well as varied pedagogical perspectives.

As ESL research and practice have developed, many techniques and methods have proved successful in English L_2 writing classrooms; e.g.

  a. careful needs analysis to plain curriculum (Reid 2000);

  b. co- operative and group work (including collaborative writing) that strengthen the community of the class and offer writers authentic audiences;

  c. integration of languages skills in class activities;

  d. learning style and strategy training to help student learn how to learn (Reid, 1998); and

  e. the use of relevant, authentic materials and tasks.

The use of technology in English L_2 writing courses may be the foremost curricular change today- composition students regularly use word processing which has revolutionized the writing process. Computer-networked classroom allow students to communicate both locally and globally; in communicating locally, this may involve students commenting on their peers writing and working co-operately on writing projects; globally, this may involve students writing to email Keypal's and working with another composition class on another continent (Manson-Smith 1997b).

In a nutshell, Reid, states that because the specilsation of English L_2 writing is relatively new area of inquiry, many of the concerns now being investigated will continue to be refined and revisited in order to provide the students with high- quality pedagogy; new technology will continue to be used in the L_2 writing class.

Grabe and Kaplan (1997) have contributed the initial critical needs analysis for English L_2 writing teacher preparation. They propose the students in such a course:

i. explore theories of languages as well as writing and literacy development.

ii. study a wide range of curriculum design.

iii. investigate cognitive and psycholinguistic processes.

iv. learn about affect and strategy training , and

v. experiment with varied instructional practices.

At the same time, researchers must continue to examine how L2 students learn, how to measure L2 writing development and how to develop coherent curriculum. Finally, English L2 writing teachers must forge a closer working relationship with NES researchers and practitioners to provide ' a larger, more inclusive, more global perspective on writers and writing ' (Silva et al. 1997, p. 425).

According to Khaniya (2005, pp. 148-149),

> A brief survey of the literature suggests that writing is not seen just as one of the language skills to be learned, but as an effective way for a learner to generate words, sentences and even chunks to discourse. This is how the recent studies on writing have shifted the emphasis away from the finished product on to the process involved into writing. According to researchers, the constraints of the foreign language and the inefficient writing strategies are the problems that the students find in writing because skilled L_2 writers use effective strategies of evaluation and text-generation and they keep revising and reorganizing "what is said" and generate meaning "what to say next" in order to make the writing organized (Arndt, 1987, p.258).Similarly, Perl (1979, p.324) considers the recursive nature of writing the most salient feature of composing process. She (ibid, p. 328) also finds, in her study, a sequence of patterns of prewriting, writing and editing.

There are several researches works carried out on writing proficiency by former researchers in the department of English education. Some of them are as follows:

Karki (1996) did his research on ' A comparative study on English Writing proficiency between the private and public school of grade X in Lamjung District". The finding is that the students of private schools were found for better in every aspect than the students of the government schools.

Similarly Poudyal (1999) carried out a study on " A comparative study of English languages writing proficiency in Higher secondary school of Gulmi and Kathmandu". He found that the students of higher secondary level of Kathmandu had better writing proficiency than the students of Gulmi. They committed fewer errors in constructing sentences.

Contrary to this, Barakoti (2001) studied "Errors committed by PCL second years students in writing free composition". It was found that the students had committed errors in sentences construction, spelling and organization of thought. It shows that the students do not give proper attention to writing comparing to other languages skills.

Bhattarai (2002) also carried out the study on" A comparative study of the writing proficiency of the bachelor's level students". He found that the student s of institutes have greater proficiency in writing than the students of faculties.

By the same token, Shah (2003) did his research work on" Writing proficiency of grade nine students". He found that the students committed errors in the use of other specific punctuation mark i.e. capital letters, full stop, apostrophe, question marks and so on.

Adhikari (2005) carried out a study on "The effectiveness of strip story in developing writing skills". He found that the group of students taught using strip story technique performed better than the group taught with usual

classroom technique. Hence, this research concluded that writing strip- story has significant role in developing writing skill.

Ghimire (2006) studied, "Errors committed by Twelfth Graders in Writing Free composition". He has analysed the errors in terms of tense, agreement, article, preposition and spelling and found that the students were better in using article than in writing preposition.

Kafle (2008) carried out a research "study on writing proficiency of grade ten students of Kathmandu Valley in Guided writing". It was found that students obtained more marks in parallel writing than other types of guided writing like, developing skeleton into fuller text, paraphrasing, etc. It shows the writing skill of girls in every selected schools were found better than the writing skill of boys.

Subedi (2008) did her research work on " Proficiency in writing skill: a case of letter". She found that the overall proficiency of grade nine students in letter writing was found to be satisfactory.

Sharma (2009) did her research on "Writing proficiency of the students of Higher Secondary Level". She found out on that the actual writing proficiency of the twelfth graders in the use of punctuation, articles, S-V agreement and preposition.

Although the research works mentioned above are related to writing proficiency, none of the research has been carried out on techniques of teaching writing skill in Kathmandu valley. Thus, this study focused on investigating the techniques used by the teachers while teaching writing skills in lower secondary level in Kathmandu valley. Therefore, the present study is distinct from the other researches done previously.

1.3 Objectives of this Study

The objectives of this research were:

a. to find out the techniques of developing writing skills used by the teachers while teaching English at lower secondary level.

b. to suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is related to the various teachers' innovative techniques with various stages and suitable activities for the lower secondary level students. Thus, this study not only provides the insight related to the techniques , methods and activities to the lower secondary level teachers but also draws the attention to the concerned people such as text book writers, syllabus designers and other related persons. Moreover, this study provides techniques to create conducive environment for teaching writing skills. The pedagogical implications of this study will be quite considerable in Nepalese context for English language teaching.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

To carryout this research, the researcher adopted the following methodology to complete the set of objectives.

2.1 Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used as below:

2.1.1 Primary Sources of Data

Teachers and students of Grade eight in Kathmandu district were the primary sources of data.

2.1.2 Secondary Sources of Data

All the books related to techniques of writing skills used as the secondary sources such as Rivers (1968), Wright (1976), Heaton (1977), Widdowson (1978), Byrne (1979), White (1980), Zamel (1983), Gannon (1985), Harmer (1991, (1986), Carter and Nunan (2001) and reports, articles, journals and the theses approved in the Department of English Education, T.U.

2.2 Sample Population and Sampling Procedure

The researcher selected Kathmandu district as a research area purposively. Likewise, she selected five government-aided schools purposively. Accordingly, five teachers, one from each school, were purposively selected.

On the other hand, ten students each from five government-aided schools were selected systematically. Every n^{th} student from each school was selected keeping in view the number of students enrolled in the grade eight understudy. Thus, total sample population was 50 students and 5 teachers.

2.3 Tools of Data Collection

The researcher used two types of tools in collecting required information: observation check-lists and survey questionnaires.

To tract down the techniques used by the teachers in different schools, observation checklists were used based on the lower secondary level curriculum. To identify the activities of the teachers to the selected technique, survey questionnaires were adopted.

2.4 Process of Data Collection

The researcher went to the field and built rapport with concerned people. She explained to the teachers about the purpose of her study. She observed the selected teachers' classes and collected data through the checklists. Similarly, she asked the selected students to fill in the survey questionnaires and collected data from them. She observed three classes of each teacher.

2.5 Limitations of the Study

The study had the following limitations:

a. The study was limited to five government-aided schools of Kathmandu district.

b. The study was further limited to 5 teachers and 50 students of lower secondary school.

c. The data collection tools were observation check-lists and survey opinionnaires.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Systematically collected data from the five teachers and fifty students were transcribed and coded with the help of frequency distribution tables and then analyzed and interpreted by using bar diagrams and pie- charts.

3.1. Analysis   and Interpretation of the Data obtaineds from Checklists

The total number of five teachers from the five different government aided schools of concerned level was observed thrice to find out the techniques used by them while teaching writing skills. For this purpose, forty   techniques under the five different areas were checked. The data collected from these check-lists were coded and transcribed by using the following frequency distribution table where good means used, tolerable means used but not in a systematic way and poor means did not use the concerning techniques.

Table No. 1

Frequency Distribution of the overall Activities

S.N.	Techniques used by teachers	Good		Tolerable		Poor		Total
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1	Use of visual materials	_	_	12	48%	13	52%	25
2	Picture Flower techniques	7	14%	18	36%	25	50%	50
3	Harmer's techniques	9	22.5%	21	52.5%	10	25%	40
4	Communicative activities	12	21.81%	27	49.09%	16	29.09%	55
		YES		No		Total		
		No.	%	No.	%			
5	Writing exercises	25	76.6	5	23.4	30		

While analyzing the data from the above table, firstly, it has been identified that almost 12 activities (48%) out of the 25were tolerable,13(52%) poor and none of them was good regarding the use of visual materials. Secondly, it

has been noticed that 7activities (14%) out of 50 were good, 18 (36%) tolerable and 25(50%) poor under the picture flower techniques. Thirdly, it has been found that 9 activities out of 40 (22.5%) were good, 21(52.5%) tolerable and 10 (25%) were poor concerning to Harmer's techniques. Fourthly, it has been ascertained that 12 activities out of 55 (21.81%) were good, 27 (49.09%) tolerable and16 (29.09%) poor regarding the communicative activities. Finally, it has been obtained that 25 activities out of 30 (76.6%) were used and 5 (23.4%) were not used while providing the writing exercises.

3.1.1 Analysis and Interpretation in the light of Harmer's Techniques

The data collected from the five teacher's observation regarding the light of Harmer's techniques has been presented systematically and descriptively using the following pie charts.

Pie- Chart No.1

Fill in the Blanks

While analyzing the data from the pie- chart, it has been identified that almost one fifth of the teachers (20%) were good and most of them (80%)

tolerable but none of them was poor   while using the technique fill in the blanks .

Pie Chart No. 2

What are They Doing?

To analyze the data from the pie chart , it has been noticed that most of the teachers   (80%)   were good and one fifth of them (20%) were poor while using the technique 'what are they doing?'

Pie Charts No. 3

Description of Persons

To analyze the data from the pie chart, it has been displayed that hundred percent of the teachers were tolerable whereas none of them good and poor.

Pie-Chart No.4

Identification of Hotels

The above pie- chart reveals that one fifth of the teachers (20%) were tolerable but a excessive number of them (80%) poor in this technique while teaching writing skills.

Pie-Chart No.5

Use of Coordinators

The above pie chart shows that a few of the teachers (40%) were good and the majority of them (60%) tolerable but none of them was poor while teaching writing with the use of coordinators.

Oral Composition

The above pie chart clarifies that none of the teachers used this technique while teaching writing skills.

Pie-Chart No.7

Beautiful Things

To analyze this pie- chart, it has been showed that a few of the teachers (40%) were good and the majority of them (60%) tolerable while teaching writing skill using 'beautiful thing'.

Pie-Chart No. 8

Poetry Dictation

The above pie chart shows that the most of the teachers (80%) were tolerable and a few of them (20%) poor using poetry dictation.

3.1.2 Analysis and Interpretation of the Technique 'Exchanging the Letter'

The interpretation of the data collected from the observation by using the check lists about the technique 'exchanging the letter' have been presented and then analyzed systematically by using the following frequency distribution table and multiple bar diagram.

Table No.2

Frequency Distribution of Techniques Used by Teachers

S.N.	Techniques used by teachers	Good		Tolerable		Poor	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Letters to the relatives and friends	2	40	3	60	-	-
2	Complaining letter	-	-	1	20	4	80
3	The letter of application to the teacher	5	100	-	-	-	-

While analyzing the data from the table, firstly, it has been viewed that a few of the teacher (40%) were good; the majority of them (60%) tolerable and none of them was poor while teaching letter to the relatives and friends. Secondly, it has been identified that only one fifth of the teachers (20%) were tolerable; the most of them (80%) poor but none of them was good while teaching complaining letter. Thirdly, it has been found that the total number of teachers (100%) were good while teaching letter to the teachers.

3.1.3 Analysis and Interpretation of Writing Exercises

The research data collected from the observation in five different schools about the writing exercises have been presented systematically and descriptively by using the following table and percentage bar diagram.

Table No.3

Frequency Distribution of Writing Exercises Used by the Teachers

S.N.	Writing exercises	Yes		No.	
		No.	%	No.	%
1	Pre writing exercises	5	100	-	-
2	Writing the letters of the English Alphabet.	3	60	2	40
3	Copying words and sentences	3	60	2	40
4	Punctuations	2	40	3	60
5	Controlled writing exercises	5	100	-	-
6	Free writing exercises	4	80	1	20

To analyze the data from the above table, firstly, it has been identified that all the teachers (100%) provided the pre- writing exercises. Secondly, the majority of them (60%) asked the students to write the letters of the English alphabet and some of them (40%) did not ask it. Thirdly, similar is the case in copying words and sentences. Fourthly, a few of the teachers (40%) provided the punctuation exercises and the majority of them (60%) did not provide it. Fifthly, all the teachers (100%) provided the control writing exercises. Sixthly, the most of the teachers (80%)   provided free writing exercises and only a few of them (20%) did not provide it.

3.2 Analysis and Interpretation of the Data from Survey Opinionnaire

The total numbers of 50 students from the five different government aided schools were surveyed to get the reactions towards the techniques used by the

teachers. For this, 16 statements related to different techniques were distributed and asked to tick one alternative against each statement according to the degree of agreement or disagreement with that item. The data collected from the survey opinionnaires have been coded and presented systematically by using the following table and then analyzed and interpreted descriptively.

Table No. 4

Frequency Distribution of Opinions of Students

S.N.	Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Uncertain		disagree		Strongly disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	The teacher uses 'what are they doing?' technique.	28	56	19	38	2	4	-	-	1	2
2	The teacher uses parallel writing.	16	32	6	12	19	38	5	10	4	8
3	The teacher asks the students to use cohesive devices.	34	68	11	22	5	10	-	-	-	-
4	The teacher shows series of pictures with series of sounds in oral composition.	11	22	21	42	5	10	9	18	4	8
5	The teacher asks the students to dictate the sentences.	30	60	16	32	4	8	-	-	-	-
6	The teacher uses relaying instructions and directions for written practices.	15	30	28	56	6	12	-	-	1	2
7	The teacher asks the	5	10	27	54	16	32	2	4	-	-

	students to write reports and advertisements.									
8	The teachers use co-operative writing.	34	68	12	24	-	-	-	-	4	8
9	The teacher asks the students to write the letter of application to the class teachers.	36	72	8	16	6	12	-	-	-	-
10	The teacher engages the students in writing through picture flower technique.	4	8	14	28	23	56	3	6	6	12
11	The teacher provides the pre- writing exercises.	41	82	5	10	2	4	-	-	2	4
12	The teachers provide free writing exercises.	37	74	10	20	3	6	-	-	-	-
13	The teacher asks the students to plan what to write.	19	38	24	48	7	14	-	-	-	-
14	The teacher asks the students to make the first draft from the outline.	14	28	30	60			-	-	-	6	12
15	The teacher asks the students to revise and edit the first draft and write the final draft.	33	66	10	20	4	8	-	-	3	6

While analyzing the data from the above table, firstly, it has been identified that majority of the students (56%) strongly agreed, a reasonable number of them (38%) agreed and few number of them (4% and 2%) were uncertain and strongly disagreed respectively towards the use of technique 'what are they doing?'. Secondly, it has been found that virtually a large number of the

students (38%) were uncertain, 32% strongly agreed and a few of them (8%) strongly disagreed to the use of technique of 'parallel writing'. Thirdly, it has been ascertained that most of the students (68%) strongly agreed and a less number of them (10%) were uncertain to the use of 'cohesive technique'. Fourthly, a great number of the students (42%) were agreed and only 8% of them strongly disagreed to the statement that the teacher shows the series of pictures with the series of sounds in 'oral composition'. Fifthly, a higher number of the students (60%) strongly agreed and a lower number of them (8%) uncertain to the use of 'dictation technique'. Sixthly, almost a large number of students (56%) agreed and a few number of them (2%) strongly disagreed to the use of 'relaying instructions'. Seventhly, the majority of students (54%) agreed and a little number of them (4%) strongly disagreed to the use of 'writing reports and advertisement.' On the other hand, the majority of the students (68%) agreed where as the little number of them (8%) strongly disagreed on the use of 'co-operative writing technique.' Next, a great number of students (72%) agreed and a little number of them (12%) were uncertain in 'writing the letter of application to the teacher.' Similarly, the majority of the students (56%) was uncertain and a few of them (6%) strongly disagreed to the use of 'picture flower technique.' Predominantly, no fewer than 82% students agreed and no more than 4% students were uncertain and strongly disagreed in 'pre-writing exercises.' Accordingly, the majority of students (74%) strongly agreed and a fewer students (6%) were uncertain regarding the 'free writing exercises'. Again, a great number of students (48%) agreed and a declining number of them (14%) were uncertain to the statement that' the teacher asks the students to plan what to write'. Last but not the least, a high majority of students (60%) agreed and a less number of them (12%) strongly disagreed to the use of preparation of the first draft. Finally, an increasing number of students (66%) strongly agreed and a decreasing number of them (6%) strongly disagreed in preparing the final draft.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Findings

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from checklists, the researcher derived the following findings.

a. The majority of the activities (52%) were found in poor and only a reasonable number of the activities were found in tolerable condition while using visual materials. Thus, a few number of the teachers used visual materials.

b. Half of the activities (50%) were found poor and only a declining number (14%) good while teaching writing through 'picture flower technique'. Thus, this technique was also found less used in the context of Nepal.

c. A significant number of activities (52.5%) were tolerable and a little number (22.5%) good regarding the Harmer's techniques. Among them, no fewer than 80% teachers were good with 'what are they doing technique' and none of the teachers was good concerning to the techniques such as parallel writing , oral composition, and poetry dictation. Similarly, all the teachers (100%) were tolerable in 'description of person technique' and none of the teachers was tolerable in 'oral composition'.

d. All teachers (100%) were found good while teaching 'the letter of application to the teacher' where as none of the teachers was good while teaching 'the complaining letter'. On the other hand, a less considerable number of teachers (40%) were good while teaching 'letters to the relatives'.

e. All the teachers (100%) were good in pre- writing exercises and controlled writing exercises where as the most of them (80%) good in free-writing exercises.

Similarly, on the basis of the analysis and interpretation of the survey questionnaires, the researcher also derived the following findings.

a. A large number of the students (56%) strongly agreed and only a few number of them strongly disagreed to the use of the technique 'what are they doing ?'

b. As the majority of the students (38%) were uncertain and less of them (32%) strongly agree towards parallel writing, the technique was found preferred.

c. As a great number of students (68%) strongly agreed to the use of cohesive technique, it was found useful for the grade eight students.

d. A surprising number of the students (72%) agreed in writing the letter of application to the teacher. Thus, it was found extremely suitable in lower secondary level.

e. Virtually more then half of the students (56%) were uncertain and only 8% of them were strongly agree on the technique 'picture flower'. Therefore, it was found rarely used.

f. An excessive number of the students (82%) strongly agreed and only a few number of them (4%) strongly disagreed to 'the pre- writing exercises'. That's why, they were found inevitable for the grade eight students.

g. As the majority students strongly agreed and a fewer students were uncertain to the free writing exercises, they were also found useful for the grade eight students.

h. Half of the students agreed and a declining number of them were uncertain to the free- writing exercises .So, they were found reasonable.

i. As a substantial number of the students strongly agreed and a decreasing number of the students strongly disagreed regarding the final draft, it was found quite essential in writing.

From the above findings, it can be argued that writing exercises such as pre-writing exercises, controlled writing exercises, free- writing exercises and letter of application to the class teacher were used by the teacher. Similarly, Harmer's techniques such as what are they doing? fill in the blanks, parallel writing, description of person and dictation were considerably used. Contrary to this, use of visual materials and communicative activities were poor and Yalin's picture flower technique was rarely used.

4.2 Recommendations

On the basis of findings, some pedagogical implications have been made as below:

1. As the use of visual materials was found poor, the teacher should use visual materials as far as possible.

2. The teacher should be properly to apply picture flower technique.

3. As 'what are they doing?', parallel writing and description of a person were used as a very suitable techniques, these techniques should be applied everywhere.

4. Teacher should teach 'letter of application to the teacher or head teacher' and 'letter to the friend' rather then teaching letter of job application or complaining letter in lower secondary level.

5. Teacher should provide pre- writing exercises, controlled writing exercises and free- writing exercises extensively so that   students could participate actively.

6. As the cohesive devices play the vital role in academic use, students should be familiar with these devices.

7. As the students were unfamiliar to the oral composition, teacher should give the maximum chance to speak to the students while writing.

8. Teacher should ask the students to brainstorm, make notes and organize these notes because planning is very essential in writing.

9. Teacher should ask the students to revise and edit their writings many times before preparing the final draft.

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