

**WRITING PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION CLASS:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF  
BANGLA MEDIUM AND ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOL**

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**December 2017**



**BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.**

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**A Thesis**

**Submitted to the Department of English and Humanities**

**of**

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**by**

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**This paper is dedicated to all my teachers for their valuable  
guidance throughout my academic career.**

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## Abstract

Writing is one of the productive skills which sometimes seems difficult to acquire to the learners, even for native learners. There are many approaches to teach writing. But, creative writing is one approach of teaching writing which has become more dominating and familiar in recent era. In Bangladesh, Bangla medium school is implementing this approach now-a-days to teach writing in secondary (intermediate) level. The main aim of this study is to find out the actual reasons behind the poor creative writing skill of Bangla medium students. The hypothesis of this paper is – less exposes (input) to the L2 (English) is the main reason behind the poor writing skill of Bangla medium students’. For this, the researcher had observed a composition class of both medium and had collected a test sample from both Bangla medium and English medium school. The researcher also designed an interview questions for the teachers of Bangla medium school. The finding showed that, along with the less exposes (input) of L2, the pedagogical practice of grammar, delay in introducing and practicing of free writing, memorization of topic from beginning stages of learning, act as the main hindrances behind the poor writing skill. After analyzing the findings, the hypothesis has been proven true and findings also showed that, the students of Bangla medium school, really like creative writing classes and it indeed influences their language learning. Though, they are facing some other difficulties in various stages of creative writing classes, which can be solvable. Furthermore, it can be said, that the students can improve their writing skills, if, the reasons are removed eventually, under the careful observation of certified authorities.

## **Declaration**

This thesis paper is a result of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are invalid, every efforts is made to indicate this clearly, with due references to the literature, and acknowledge of collaborative research and discussion.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

This chapter consists of a review of the literature providing the background to my investigation. Here, I have produced the summary of the knowledge gained from the history and significance of the literature. My discussion begins with the basic characteristics of written language. Then the detailed discussion on creative writing skill will go along with a brief description of various types of classroom writing performance.

Bangladesh has 4 types of educational systems: Bengali medium, English-version, English medium, and Dakhil-Madrassa system. English Language has been given the status of second language or L2 in our country. Except Madrasa curriculum system, English has been used as an academic purpose since independence of Bangladesh. Hence, English has been taught as a compulsory subject in other three sectors, the students start learning English along side with Bangla, their L1. Though they get 10-12 years for learning English, they are still not very confident about fluent writing. Whereas, communicating through writing is an extremely critical component of education, livelihood and basic function in literal society. Especially in higher education, where English happens to be the medium of instruction, writing is essentially important.

In our Bangladeshi context, if Bengali medium or English-version schools are considered, it can be seen that writing skill has been given much more importance than the other three skills: listening, reading and speaking. Here, the schools follow the

National Curriculum and the students are being provided with some particular topics as a syllabus. The students are supposed to prepare them and reproduce them in examination.

In recent times, the syllabus designers of National Curriculum have changed some of the patterns and they have emphasized on free writing in the composition part of the syllabus.

Here, the students have to produce their own writing using their creativity.

Too much drilling practice of grammar, lacking of teacher's motivation, rote-learning, syllabus patterns, seating arrangement, context, and many other factors are the reasons of poor writing performance of our students'. In this paper I will try to find the exact reasons behind dissatisfactory performance of our Bengali medium students. Moreover, I will try to serve preferable recommendations to solve those difficulties.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Literature Review**

The psycholinguist Eric Lenneberg (1967) (cited in Brown and Lee, 2015, p. 426) mentioned that human beings universally learn to walk and to talk but swimming and writing are culturally specific. They are learned or acquired behaviors. People learn to swim with the help of an instructor who will teach them and in a presence of water. Just like writing, we learn to write in a presence of literate society and with the help of a teacher, who is willing to teach others.

Nunan (2003, p. 88) defines writing as physical and mental process, since it deals with graphic representation of speech and thoughts are presented in a well-mannered structural way. He also mentioned it as both express and impress. Writers need to be very careful with spellings, tone, and choice of words to convey their feelings. Because what is written and how is written may affect the whole message and readers impact.

Not everyone is an excellent writer. People do not learn to write naturally as they learn to talk. Even in L1 writing, learners hesitate. Learning a language is not only concerned with acquiring knowledge, rather learning is a skill or set of skills- which is something we learn to do (Gower, Phillips and Walters, 1995, p. 85). In language teaching, skills are often discussed in terms of four different modes - that is reading, listening, speaking and writing. Though "writing is the visual representation of a language" (Lindsay, 2000, p. 179) "it tends to get neglected in many classes, unless the students are working for written examinations" ( Gower et al., 1995, p. 113). But in real life, these four skills are generally integrated rather than occurring in isolation. For example, a lecture class

involves both listening and writing, to fill up any from it requires both reading and writing.

### **2.1. Importance of Writing:**

Writing is a visual form of communication, produced in handwritten hard copy to computer form. It allows a person to compose his ideas and thoughts and writes it down for other people to read over time. In this case they both needed to educate to write and to read.

People who can write creative piece are categorized as a talented person, which is not really required for all individuals. A person need to have the knowledge of writing in conveying information or message to another person or at a specific, targeted group such as employees, students, colleagues, clients, customers and so on. A person who can write well is considered to be well-educated, belongs to a literate society, an effective communicator and a successful one in both professional life and academic life. Because writing is an important skill for career development. No matter what types of job it is, there will always be an instance when an employee is required to write something weather it is a memo, an e-mail, a report or even a handwritten remainder. Thus, show how important and fundamental the writing skill is for every literate person.

Writing is essential part and parcel for everyday communication and academic learning. From writing a shopping list to writing an essay for school. Writing connects us with the past information and works as a bridge towards the future world. It helps us to convey ideas, solve problems and to understand our changing world. In this computer-mediated age, being able to write is an essential component in any language. "The popularity of e-mail, web forums, internet messenger service, text messaging has meant that there is now

a huge increase in written communication" (Scrivener, p. 234). He also finds, that this new kind of communication has its own peculiar rules and rituals, and evolved its own shorthand, abbreviation and lexis to write and received quickly. Never the less, in this face book oriented world, which offers easier, cheaper and faster connection and communication, being able to write is an important skill especially in English.

## **2.2. Characteristics of Written Language:**

Written words, codes or symbols surrounds us daily- at times enlightening, amusing, heart-warming, mystifying, depressing, saddening and so on. In every turn of our life, we, the members of a literate society are dependent on theses writing symbols. So, like David Nunan (2003, p. 110), we can see the clear overlap between reading and writing, in that a 'text' has to be written down before we can read it. Hence, writing comes in parallel with reading skill, writing ability will be developed best in associate with reading, partially with speaking and listening skill. Once our language learners are already literate in their L1, they need to become familiar with the broad and basic characteristics of English Language. The characteristics are given below through 'reader's viewpoint' and 'writer's viewpoint', as Lindsay said, "[r]eaders and writers interact through the reading of a text"(2000, p. 161). The headlines are suggested by H. Douglas Brown and Heekyeong Lee (2015).

### **2.2.1. Reader's View:**

#### **i. Permanence:**

Spoken language is rapid and fleeting. Once a sentence is uttered, it disappears unless there is a tape or a video recorder is around. The listener has to make immediate

perception and immediate storage. Whereas, the written language is permanent in a paper or in a computer file. Therefore, the reader has a flexible opportunity to go forward or backwards to re-read a word or phrases or sentences or even the whole text from the beginning.

**ii. Processing Time:**

Most of the reading contexts allow readers to read at their own rate, speed, especially reading for pleasure or for information such as reading a newspaper. The readers are not forced into following the rate of delivery rather they are in complete control of the amount of time needed to read a text. It is a big advantage for the 'slow' readers.

However, tests and other assessments in academic reading assignments are often timed, requiring the students (readers) to complete a task within a certain period of time. Students studying in L2 can feel frustrated by the extreme slow rate of reading and the necessity to re-read the text for multiple times. Therefore, the teachers are called on to help the students to achieve an enable fluency rate, which are prime focus then speed of reading. As Nunan expressed (2003, p. 76), "I define a fluent readers one who reads at a rate of 200 words-per-minute." So, classroom lessons in reading must account for those context and place appropriate emphasis on reading rates.

**iii. Distance:**

The task of the readers is to interpret the language that was written in some other place, other time with the help of written symbols and contextual clues. Because of the physical and time distance, the readers' cannot confront and ask the author. Neither they can transport themselves back through a time machine and observe the surrounding context,

as we can do in face-to-face daily conversations. This decontextualized nature of writing is one reason that makes reading difficult from the reader's perspective.

**iv. Orthography:**

Orthography of a language deals with the writing symbols, systems, spellings and graphemes- which represents punctuations, pictures, graphics and charts that enhance the message of a written piece. That is same goes for the English language. Though English orthography is highly predictable from its spoken counter-part, even for literate learners of English, the spelling system seems difficult. So, along with those written set of symbols, the learners must learn the spellings through extensive reading and copying from written model and orthographic processing should be an issue in teaching reading. Why? Lets answer it and conclude this point with Nassaji's statement (which is cited in Brown and Lee, 2015, p. 399), "limited knowledge of orthographic representations may negatively affect L2 readers' word recognition processes and reading comprehension."

**v. Complex city:**

It is obvious to say that writing is more complex than speech. Writing and speech represents different modes of complexity of a language. In English language, the most common difference in the nature of clauses. Spoken language tends to have shorter clauses and written language has longer clauses with more subordinations. Along with these longer clauses and linguistics difference, the readers have to deal with a large number of frequent ambiguities in reading. The readers "do their best to infer, to interpret, and to read between lines" in order to extract meaning from the written code (Brown and Lee, 2015, p. 399).

**vi. Vocabulary:**

In our everyday give and take with family, friends, colleagues, students the use of vocabulary is limited. But, in written language the appearance of low frequency words is quite common. Such words appeared because of writers' processing time; his/her desire to be precise in formal conversations of writing. For readers, these words also can present stumbling blocks to receive the accurate meaning or message. However, the readers can predict the meaning of the unknown words from the context; still the overall meaning of a sentence or a paragraph is not completely clear. At this stage, the learners tend to use bilingual dictionary for which the reading become dull and unpleasant.

**vii. Formality:**

Written language is more formal and formality refers to prescribed forms that certain written piece must adhere to. With the help of these rules and forms every literate adults are aware of the distinctive features of each of the genres of written language that mentioned in my 'genres of written language' section. The readers can easily and immediately distinguish a menu from a map; a story from a proof of a theorem and the list can go on. When a reader encounter one of the genres, he/she knows the purpose of reading it and therefore knows what to select and what not to select for short or long term memory. So, it is teacher's job to enlighten the students on the features of these genres because until the students are familiar with the formal features of certain written text, some difficulties in interpretation may arise while reading and receiving exact meaning from each genre.

### **2.2.2. Writer's View:**

#### **i. Permanence:**

Written language is not so flexible for the writer's. "Once something is written down and delivered in its final form to its intended audiences, the writer abdicates a certain power: the power to change, to clarify, and to withdraw" (Brown and Lee, 2015, p. 435). Perhaps for this, writing itself is a scary operation for the writers. Also, the students feel the same vulnerable position, while submitting their written work to their instructor. Therefore, a teacher should guide and facilitate his/her students to gain confident throughout their work and to revise and refine their work before final submission.

#### **ii. Production Time:**

Academic environment demanded students to write within given time limit. For example, writing in examination. Such students are trained or practiced to complete their educational writing within given time duration. But as for creative writers, they can stretch their given time limits to produce the final, finished, polished product. They deal with a great number of things before they end up with the final version. For instance, " they jot down ideas, put them in order, make a plan, reject it and start again, add more ideas as they go along, change words, rephrase bits, move sections around, review parts of what they have written, cross things out, check through the final version, write tidy notes, write on odd piece of paper as thoughts occur to them, write directly into a typewriter or a word processor if they are lucky enough to have one, look at the blank page for a long time, change pens, refer back to something they have read- and many more things, some of them quite idiosyncratic" ( McDonough et al., 2013, p. 191).

**iii. Distance:**

It is now vividly acceptable that writing is a process of encoding that is putting messages into words carried out with a reader in mind. It is likely that, in most of the academic situation, our students still write primarily for their teachers or perhaps for their examiners, both in the role of evaluator. But, in general the writer must consider the relation between his/her overall organization of the written piece and its audience (McDonough et al., 2013, p. 189). Once the writer is determined to write he/she must take account the stylistic choice, in other words, why and for whom he/she writing. The writers must have the ability to predict the readers' general knowledge, proficiency level, cultural, literal background, specific subject- matter knowledge and how the appropriate language will be interpreted. Hence, the writers cannot accept a face-to-face discussion with their targeted audiences or readers.

**iv. Orthography:**

Language learners should introduce to written symbols at very early stage of learning process. Teachers should create opportunities for learners to practice L1 or L2 symbols. Thought handwriting is a personal issue, studies have found that good handwriting, and neatness and layout contribute significant importance in extended writing. Hughes (1983) and Chou et al (1982) have suggested, a piece of writing is easier to read if presented neatly and it creates a favorable impression in the mind of the readers. Except the keyboarded writing system, handwriting of a writer's and other mechanical aspects like use of punctuation spellings

**v. Complexity:**

Writing in English is completely crucial even for native English writers. Writers must learn the discourse features of the L2, and "how to create syntactic and lexical variety, how to combine sentences and how to use coordinating and subordinating clauses effectively in writing" (Brown and Lee, 2015, p. 436). Not only native users of English, but also other language learners face challenges while mastering these features of writing. In academic writing, L2 students have to learn how to describe, explain, compare, contrast, illustrate, defend, criticize, and argue all within certain specific styles.

**vi. Vocabulary:**

Written language places a heavier demand on vocabulary use than speaking. Writers will take advantages of choosing appropriate words from the wide range of words collection to added richness in their writing. To enrich vocabulary knowledge, ample amount of reading is necessary for writers. There should be balance in use of high and low frequency words. Because too much uses of unknown words may lead the readers to an ambiguity of reading.

**vii. Formality:**

Every genre and layout of writing has its own properties. As teacher it is not wise to assume that all learners have vast knowledge about these genres and will pick up so easily. The students should study and read the specific genre before they can produce on their own. Again a reading approach seems pretty helpful. The students need to consider a number of different factors while writing a certain genres. "They need to have knowledge of the topic, the conventions and the style of the genre, and the context in which their writing will be read and by whom" (Harmer, 2003, p. 259). For example,

essential components for news writing genre will not match with advertising brochure genre.

### 2.3. Level of Writing:

As a language learner, writers certainly must have operate a number of different and interacting levels, may not consciously but with some own individual strategies. The first level of writing involves handwriting, spelling and punctuation. The second level involves sentences, grammar and vocabulary. The third level involves paragraph. The forth level involves overall organization. As students develop their learning stages so their writing skill begins to improve from most basic one (level one) up to the height one (level four). The levels of writing are shown with the following diagram which is suggested by McDonough et al., (2013, p. 188).

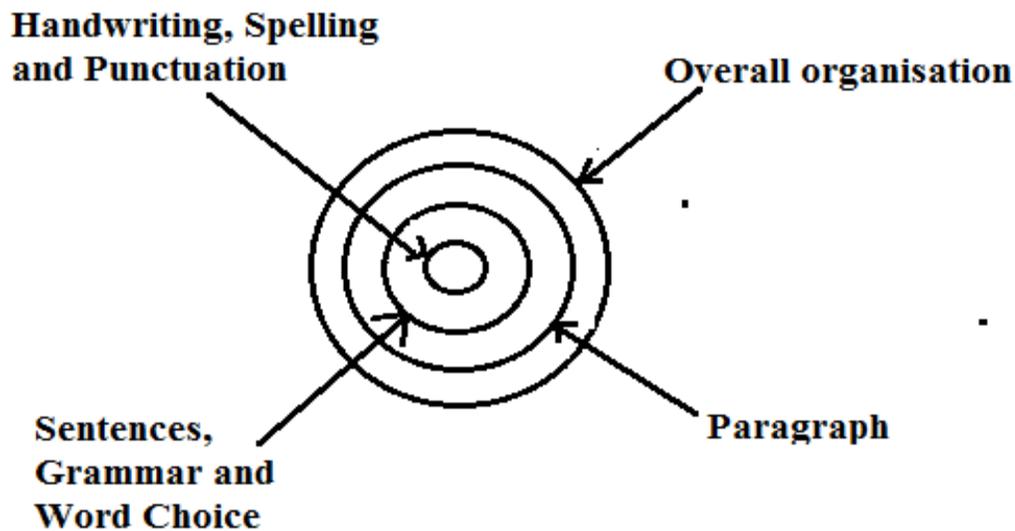


Figure: Level of Writing

The outer two levels certainly required consideration of both 'cohesion' which refers to linking devices and 'discourse coherence' which refers to the way in which a text forms a

thematic whole. These two criteria are now well-established in the teaching writing in a classroom. In the teaching of discourse-level of writing scholars (McDonough et al., 2003, p. 188) have a list of logical process, which every writer may entail while writing.

They are:

- sequencing: chronological order
- comparison and contrast
- classification
- cause and effect
- description of subjects and of processes
- definitions
- writing instructions
- predicting and speculating
- expressing opinion
- expressing reasons

Lexical cohesion which refers to the use of pronouns, the article system, ellipsis and substitution also covered the various connections with the above categories.

In the end writing is seen as primarily- message- oriented a communicative view of language. So, no matter how many techniques are used on teaching, it is noticeable that the learners are required to understand the overall purpose of a piece of writing not just the immediate sentences-bound-grammatical context.

#### **2.4. Reasons for Writing:**

We have to write for various practical reasons in life. In educational atmosphere, teachers and students write with a view to academic pursuit. Tricia Hedge (2005, p. 24) mentions the following reasons for writing:

- i. For Pedagogic Purposes:** to help the students learn the system of language.
- ii. For Assessment Purposes:** as a way of establishing a learner's progress.
- iii. For Real Purposes:** as a goal of learning, to meet students' need.
- iv. For Humanistic Purposes:** to allow quieter students to show their strength.
- v. For Creative Purposes:** to develop self-expression.
- vi. For Classroom Management Purposes:** as a calm activity which settles students down.
- vii. For Acquisition Purposes:** as a careful mode of working with language which enables students to learn it.
- viii. For Educational Purposes:** to contribute to intellectual development and enhancement of self-esteem and confidence.

#### **2.5. Reasons of Teaching Writing:**

Writing is crucially important for the second language learners. Writing should be taken care of in the classroom, making ways for conceptual development. There are number of good reasons for teaching writing to students of English as a foreign language. Jeremy Harmer (1998, p. 79) in his book *How to teach English* has listed four reasons why writing should be taught. Each of the reasons is explained in turn.

**i. Reinforcement:**

Written form of language is largely beneficial for most of the students. The visual demonstration of language construction is purely profitable for both understanding and memorizing the new forms of language. Some students acquire language in oral/aural way, but large number of students study language through visual representation of written text.

**ii. Language Development:**

The actual process of writing helps the students to learn the target language. As they develop through various stages of learning process, they enrich the command over vocabulary, grammar, mechanical aspects and so on.

**iii. Learning Styles:**

Some students are surprisingly quick at picking up any language forms by looking and listening. But written form of language is helpful for 'slow learners'. It may take a little longer time for them to absorb and produce the new language form. For those learners, written text and teaching - learning process of writing is essential.

**iv. Writing as a skill:**

This by far the most important reason for teaching writing, cause it is a basic language skill, just as important as speaking, listening and reading. Students need to know how to write letters, lab reports, reply to advertisements and how to write using electronic media. As they need to know how to pronounce spoken English appropriately, they also need to know how written language function in several stages.

**2.6. Styles of writing:**

There are two main styles of writing:

**Academic style:** it is very formal and strictly controlled by rules.

**Non-academic style:** it is rather personal and not strictly rule-bound.

The difference is shown in the following table (adapted from Hamp-Lyons and Heasley, 2007, p.):

	<b>Academic Style</b>	<b>Non-academic Style</b>
<b>Reader</b>	academics	family and friends
<b>Content</b>	serious thought	conversational
<b>Style</b>	complex sentences showing considerable variety in construction	mostly simple and compound sentences joined by conjunctions such as 'and' or 'but'
<b>Organization</b>	clear and well planned	less clear and organized
<b>Grammar</b>	error free	may not always use complete sentences
<b>Vocabulary</b>	technical and academic language used accurately	use of short forms, idioms and slangs

Table: Difference of Academic and Non-academic style of writing

Source: L. Hamp-Lyons and B. Heasley (2007), *Study Writing: A course in writing skills for academic purposes*, 2nd edition, p.11 . Cambridge University Press.

**2.7. Genres of written Language:**

In our highly literate society, there are hundreds of different types of written texts can be found. Each of the types listed below represents or is an example of genre of written language. Each has certain rules or conventions for its manifestation and thus we are able immediately to identify a genre and to know what to look for within the text.

<b>For Action</b>	<b>For Information</b>	<b>For Entertainment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public signs</li> <li>• product labels</li> <li>• instructions</li> <li>• recipes</li> <li>• maps</li> <li>• TV and radio guides</li> <li>• Bills</li> <li>• Menus</li> <li>• Telephone directories</li> <li>• Ballot paper,</li> <li>• computer manuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• newspapers</li> <li>• magazines</li> <li>• prose books</li> <li>• public notices</li> <li>• advertisements (personal or commercial)</li> <li>• political pamphlets</li> <li>• medical reports</li> <li>• guidebooks</li> <li>• travel literature</li> <li>• questionnaires</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• light magazine</li> <li>• comic strips</li> <li>• cartoons</li> <li>• fictions</li> <li>• poetry and drama</li> <li>• newspaper features</li> <li>• film subtitles</li> <li>• games</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• letters cards</li> <li>• invitation</li> </ul>		
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**Table:** Genres of Written Language

**Source:** M. A. K. Halliday (1985), *Spoken and Written Language*, p. 47 . Deakin University Press.

**2.8. Approach to Writing:**

According to Harmer, there are a number of different approaches to the practice of writing skills in the classroom, but to choose the appropriate approach for the students, teachers have to decide whether they want the students to focus on the process of writing more than its product, whether they want them to study different written genres or whether they want to encourage writing using their creativity. Among different types of approaches, over the last 20 years the process and product approaches are more dominate of teaching writing in the ESL classroom.

**2.8.1. Product- oriented Approach:**

According to Gabrielators (2000), a product approach is the most common and traditional approach in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text which is usually presented and analyzed at an early stage. For instance, in a typical product-oriented classroom, students are supplied with a standard sample of text and they are expected to follow the standard to construct a new piece of writing. It allows the teachers to concentrate "only in the aim of task and in the end product" (Harmer, 2003, p. 257). This approach focuses on linguistic knowledge as well as the appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax and cohesive devices.

Product-oriented approach comprises of four stages: formalization, controlled writing, guided writing and free writing. (Pincas, 1982) The first stage, formalization, aims to make learners aware of certain features of a particular text. In the next two stages, controlled and guided writing, make them practice and learn how to organize the ideas until they are ready for free writing. The free writing stage is the end product of the learning process when students use their writing skills, structures and vocabulary that they have been taught to produce the product. In this section, they show how fluent and competent users of language they are.

### **2.8.2. Process-oriented Approach:**

Writing in L2 is a conscious, physical, and complex process, that requires the author to be aware of and combine various components of language successfully. This approach concern, how ideas are developed and formulated in writing. Harmer (2003, p.258) states, "A process approach asks students to consider the procedure of putting together a good piece of work."

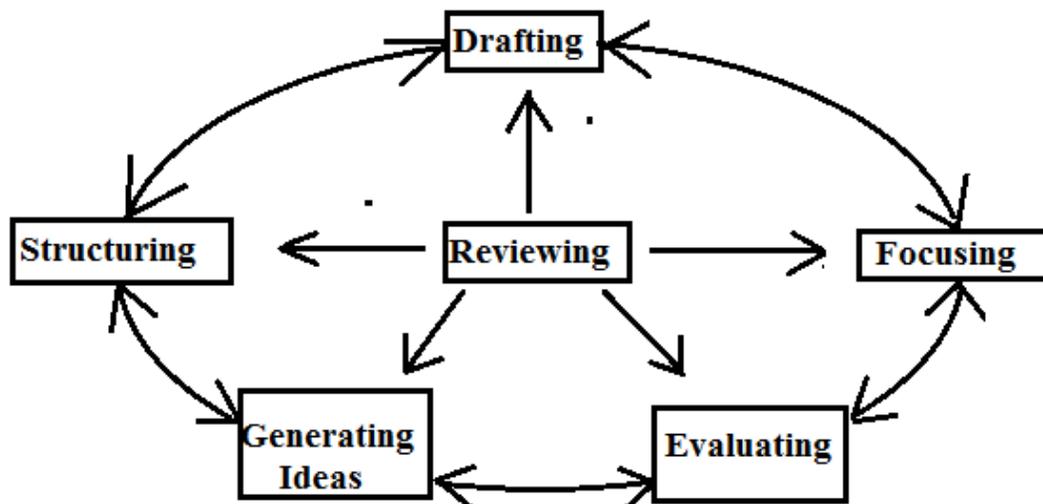
A process-oriented approach can have any number of stages with different views that writer's go through in producing a piece of writing. Ron White and Valerie Arndt (1991, p. 5) are keen to stress that, "writing is re-writing: that revision...seeing with new eyes....has a central role to play in the act of creating text." (Cited in Harmer, 2003, p. 258)

In their model, process writing is an interrelated set of recursive stages which includes:

- drafting

- structuring (ordering information, experimenting with arrangements, etc.)
- reviewing (checking context, connections, assessing impact, editing)
- focusing (that is making sure one is getting the message across that he/she want to get across)
- generating ideas and evaluation (assessing the draft and/or subsequent drafts)

White and Arndt's model can be represented diagrammatically, as below.



**Figure:** White and Arndt's process writing model

**Source:** Harmer, J. 2003. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, 3rd edition, p.258.

In real life, the writing process is more complex than this showing model. These various stages of writing are done in a recursive way. It means that the writer loop backwards and move forwards between these various stages according to his/her suitable situation.

For example, after doing some editing or revising writers may feel to go back to pre-writing stage and think again and then may edit or omit some pieces of information.

Along with all those stages, process writing has some distinctive features. Flower and Hayes' (1981) (cited in Hyland, K., 2011, p. 21) model had suggested that the process of writing is influenced by the task and the writer's long-term memory. The main features of Process approach are that,

- writers have goals
- they plan extensively
- planning involves defining a rhetorical problem, placing it in a context, then exploring its parts, arriving at solutions and finally translating ideas on to the page
- all work can be reviewed, evaluated and revised, even before any text has been produced
- planning, drafting, revising and editing are recursive, interactive and potentially simultaneous
- plans and text are constantly evaluated in a feedback loop
- the whole process is overseen by an executive control called a monitor

One of the most common disadvantage of this process is that it takes 'time' and students tend to lose their focus or concentrate. There are times when this type of writing is simply not appropriate but does not mean not to practice it thoroughly.

### **2.8.3. Social Approach:**

The least practiced approach in the classroom. This approach is introduced by Ken Hyland (2011, p.8), and emphasizes the role readers play in writing, adding a social

dimension to writing by elaborating how writers engage with an audience in creating texts.

### **2.9. Micro- and Macro-skills for writing:**

H. Douglas Brown and Heekyeong Lee (2015, p. 437) provided a comprehensive taxonomy of writing skills which they called micro- and macro-skills, involved in written discourse. Such list is useful in helping the teacher to break down just what it is that the learners need to actually perform as they acquire effective writing strategies in the classroom. The items on this page area adapted from Brown and Lee (2015, p. 437).

#### **Micro skills:**

The students can recognized and write the graphemes and orthographic patterns of English.

- i. The students can write at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.
- ii. The students can produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriates word order patterns.
- iii. The students can use acceptable grammatical systems (e.g. tense, agreement, pluralization), patterns and rules.
- iv. The students can express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.

#### **Macro skills:**

- v. The students can use cohesive devises successfully in written discourse.
- vi. The students can use the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse.

- vii. The students can appropriately accomplish the commutative functions of written texts according to form and purpose.
- viii. The students can convey the links and connection between events and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization and exemplification.
- ix. The students are able to distinguish between literal and implied meaning when writing.
- x. The students can correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text.
- xi. The students can develop and use a battery to writing strategies, such as accurately assessing the audience's interpretation, using pre-writing devises, writing with fluency in the first drafts, using paraphrases and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor's feedback and using feedback for revising and editing.

It is important to note that theses 12 skills apply to written discourse. Through this checklist of micro- and macro-skills, the teacher can get a good idea of what techniques need to cover in the domain of writing comprehension class. As a teacher while planning a specific techniques or writing module, such list helps to focus on clearly conceptualization objectives. And in evaluation of writing these skills can be serves as testing criteria.

## **2.10. Types of Classroom Writing Performance:**

### **2.10.1. Creative Writing:**

This type of writing has been dominating the ESL classroom for recent few years. Creative writing refers to imaginative writing where students are allowed to experiment and play with the language. Jeremy Harmer (2001, p. 259) defines creative writing as a journey of self-discovery and self-discovery promotes effective learning. Thus, the teacher should set up imaginative writing in such a way that the students are thoroughly engaged and can be able to produce a greater variety of correct and appropriate language than their usual routine work. It is important not to expect the whole compositions from the very beginning stage of writing. The teacher needs to build-up creative writing bit by bit, starting with simple phrases and sentences before expecting whole composition. Creative writing also depends on how a teacher is encouraging his/her students. Because sometimes 'nothing to say' may lead them to find creative writing a painful and boring experience.

Another scholar Penny Ur (2001, p.169) defines creative writing as the end product for which people often felt some kind of achievement and pride in their work and want it to be published and read. In order to provide an appropriate reader audience, the whole class can be such audience, apart from a teacher in a formal setting. Class notice board, class magazines, students from another classes, parents, and web-sites can serve as reliable sources of audience for publishing creative writing.

According to Alan Maley (2012), some benefits of creative writing for learners are:

- Creative writing aids language development at all levels, such as grammatical, vocabulary, phonology and discourse.
- It fosters 'playfulness' which encourages learners to take risks with the language, to explore it without fear of reproof.
- Creative writing put emphasis on the right side of the brain, with a focus on feelings, physical sensations, intuition and musically.
- It tends to develop self-confidence and self-esteem among learners.
- It leads to a corresponding growth in positive motivation.
- Creative writing feeds into more creative reading. By getting the process of creating the text, learners come to instinctively understand how such texts work, and this make them easier to read.
- Moreover, creative writing helps to improve expository writing.

### **2.10.2. Essay Writing:**

It is the most common writing practice that used and included in curriculum syllabus in almost every country of the world. Every students, in their academic life, they must have done this kind of writing. Students practice essay writing under the instruction of the teacher. Students must know the criteria of a good essay. A good essay may have the following characteristics (Adapted from Hamps-Luons and Heasley, 2006, p. 99):

- It has an introduction which highlights the question and establishes the writer's point of view. It states the thesis and the line of argument.

- It is well organized with a clear overall progression of ideas.
- It demonstrates clear understanding of concepts.
- It provides evidence of critical thinking with solid grounds. It provides adequate and relevant support for claims that are made.
- The main points are carefully elaborated and established in it.
- Arguments are carefully constructed in it.
- It is accurate in terms of grammatical usage, appropriateness of vocabulary and spelling.

### **2.10.3. Imitative Writing:**

At the beginning level of learning to write, learners are introduced to this type of writing practice. Imitative writing or simply copying is held to be valuable because it helps to teach spelling or to reinforce sentence structure. Some forms of dictation which "is useful for drawing attention to English spelling and pronunciation" (Lindsay, 2000, p. 181) fall into this category. Some examples are:

- exercise in handwriting letters, words, and punctuation
- keyboarding (typing) exercises
- copying
- listening cloze selection tasks
- completing forms and questionnaires
- spelling tasks
- labeling items filling in speech bubble
- forming stories from jumbled sentences

**2.10.4. Controlled Writing:**

This type of writing would not allow any creativity on the part of the writer. Intensive writing typically appears in controlled written grammar exercises. A most common form of controlled writing is to present a paragraph to students and they may ask to change or alter a given structure throughout. For example, change all present tense verbs to past. Some perfect examples of controlled writing are:

- series of questions
- making lists
- writing parallel texts
- sentence linking activities
- ordering tasks
- picture descriptions
- grammatical transformation exercises

**2.10.5. Fast Writing:**

The aim of fast writing is to write at least something from the first attempt of writing. The purpose is to getting writing started like an ignition key on a car. The students could have a whole page of their own writing. The key rules of fast writing are that when a teacher says 'start', the students should:

- starting writing about the given topic;
- non- stop writing;

- not put their pen down at all;
- not worry about spelling, grammar, etc;
- write 'um,um,um..' or 'rubbish' or something else if they cannot think of what to write;
- not stop to go back and read what they have written;
- keep writing till teachers say 'stop'; (which will be after 5/8/10 minutes or however long a teacher think is appropriate for the group of learners)

At the end, the students will have a page of writing. Most of it will be 'rubbish', but also some pieces can be retrieving. It is a useful task for many learners, the single most difficult thing is simply to start writing. Until the learners are start writing, he/she do not know what on earth they are going to write. So, fast writing is a way to finding-out process of writing.

#### **2.10.6. Free Writing:**

A free writing task "requires learners to create an essay on a given topic" (McDonoughn et al., 2013, p. 185). It is pre-writing techniques in which a person writes continuously for a set period of time, often without regard to spelling, grammar and other accuracy. It is assumes that learners will gradually and slowly learnt grammatical accuracy, organization and other qualities of written text. It produces raw, unusable material, but helps the students to overcome blocks of apathy and self-criticism.

Sometimes, this technique is used to collect initial thoughts and ideas on a topic, often as a part of language examination in a formal writing.

**2.10.7. Self-Writing:**

This type of writing is done "only the self in mind as an audience" (Brown and Lee, 2015.p. 439). The most common type of this category in classroom is note-taking, where the students take notes during a lecture for the purpose of later recall. Dairy and journal writing, personal data (names, ages, address, family details, hobbies, etc.), making lists of possessions or like or dislikes preparing or making notes also falls into this category.

**2.10.8. Real Writing:**

In real life, people are writing more frequently to communicate, to survive. People write to make a shopping list, to put down a cell number, to give location or direction, but, "some classroom writing aims at the genuine communication of messages to an audience in need of those messages" (Brown and Lee, 2015, p. 440). Diaries, personal letters, post cards, notes, personal messages, genuine directions for some location, conveying genuine information, filling up actual forms can be useful categories for real writing tasks.

**2.11. Writing in the Classroom:**

L2 students are language learners rather than writers and they need help in their writing practice. L2 instruction should include time for planning both content, form and generating ideas while teaching writing in a formal class. During teaching of writing the teachers should the following things.

**i. Classroom Consideration:**

L2 instructor can organize and control the ways in which students behave, move and interact during a writing lesson. The teacher deals with the "procedures for grouping students for different types of classroom activities, use of lesson plans, handling for equipment, aids, etc, and the direction and management of student behavior and activity" (Richard and Schmidt, 2010) to enable teaching of writing most effectively. (Cited in McDonough et al., 2013, p. 228)

The writing activity in a class can be influenced by academic curriculum, number of students, lecture duration, students' proficiency level and other staffs like electricity, computer-mediated classroom and so on. Such co-existing of these factors impacts the students' learning experience and should be considered during teaching of writing in a formal setting.

**ii. Writing as a cooperative activity:**

The teacher should not buy the myth that writing, like reading, is a solitary, alone activity. We should remember that our students are language learners and it would not be particularly helpful to have them spend all their time writing alone. Their writing skill should be carried out through 'communicating' and 'composing'. Although students will be given own space and time to operate their own writing. But the classroom can be designed in such a way where the students can have enough opportunities to work in pairs or groups to generate and exchange ideas for research, discussion, and peer evaluation. Jeremy Harmer (2003, p. 260) finds, group activity highly beneficial in case of giving feedback. It allowed the teacher to give more detailed and constructive feedback

since the teacher is dealing with a small number of groups rather than many individual students.

Teacher should need to bear some points in mind when designing of pair or group woks. Such as:

- relationship of teacher and students
- relationship of students with each other
- nature of the school
- educational environment, system
- socio-cultural context
- group-size

### **iii. Computer- Mediated Communication (CMC):**

Over the last decade, computer-mediated communication (CMC) has gained wide popularity in formal writing class. The computer specially the internet has made it possible for the students to interact not just with their classmates but also with vast range of native speakers or other non-native speakers around the world. Where educational institutions have computers which L2 students have access to, there are many good reason for using them for writing, as the following list shows: (Jeremy Harmer, 2001, p. 261)

- stimulate and motivate students to learn L2
- removes the problem of poor handwriting
- editing can be done at great speed and with great facility
- provide correct spelling
- lead to improved inter-cultural competence

- a computer screen can be far more visible to the whole group than a piece of paper might be

In order to reap these potential benefits, teacher need to design CMC tasks that are appropriate for his/her students and well integrated with the overall syllabus.

#### **iv. Improving Writing Skill:**

A very good way to improve writing is to read. Several studies had shown that readers are marvelous writers because reading widens vocabulary as well as introduces people to new ideas all the time. So, reading and writing works side by side and writing comes out of a superior devotion of reading.

Another suggestion is to always use simple words and use short messages. The longer the message is, the more difficult it is for a reader to misunderstand or become bored with it. Using complicated words did not make a person credible and only lead to confusion on the part of the readers.

Lastly, writers must not forget the proofreading. Proofreading is important to eliminate errors and mistakes; no matter how carefully the written is done. So, before submitting the final product, the final version must go under proofreading.

#### **v. Writing Ethics:**

When students write they are expected to write from their own competence. They are not supposed to copy from other's writing. If they do so, they will be accused of plagiarism. On the rare occasion a student may cheat by doing any of the following:

- copying someone else's work

- copying from a piece of literature
- using an internet
- submitting a text written by someone else

While cheating is not acceptable in writing, sometimes students are unaware of the differences between plagiarism, citation and paraphrasing. Within the bound of the institution, the instructor may ask the students to write their paper under careful supervision to avoid such incidents.

### **2.12. Writing outside the Classroom:**

As a part of teaching language, a teacher can take the opportunity for setting or suggesting writing work that students can do outside of their lesson time. The works they do outside the classroom forms an important part of their learning programs. Types of work that students can do outside the classroom are listed below. (Suggested by Gower et al., 1995, p. 122):

- practice new language items from course books or workbooks
- process writing
- research paper
- project work
- pre-writing tasks

### **2.13. Principles for Designing Writing Tasks:**

When designing a writing task the instructor should follow these simple steps,

- Writing activities should reflect plausible, real-life communication.
- L2 writing should have the same wide range of purposes as L1 writing.

- L2 writing should teach systematically with effective exercises.
- Assignments should be appropriate for the learners' language level.
- Instructor should decide whether writing is for main skill or for support skill.
- Students should be able to identify sub-skills in order to complete the writing task.
- Teacher should guide properly through pre-, during-, and post-writing activities.

Scholars like H. Douglas Brown and Heekyeong Lee (2015, p. 442-447) in their book *Teaching by Principles* put forth the following suggestions for teacher of English language while designing writing tasks.

The teacher should,

- incorporate practices of good writers.
- balance between process and product writing.
- take account for cultural/literacy background of learners.
- connect reading and writing.
- provide as much authentic writing as possible.
- carefully design pre-writing, drafting and revising stages of writing.
- act as a facilitator, not a judge, in responding to students writing.
- explain rhetorical, formal conventions of writing properly.
- use techniques that are as interactive as possible.

#### **2.14. Feedback:**

Feedback means, giving any comments on someone's performance. Besides a motivator, a facilitator, the teacher also has to play the role of a judge to evaluate his/her students' writing performance.

Feedback in writing has in recent years attracted the attention of an increasing number of writing researchers. Unlike Jeremy Harmer, who believes "...feedback is a part of learning process" (2000, p. 112), Hayland observed, "while feedback is a central aspect of L2 writing programs across the world, the research literature has not been equivocally positive about its role in L2 development, and teachers often have a sense they are not making use of its full potential." (p.83)

Despite of all controversies, it is an important responsibility for a teacher to provide effective feedback to the learners, in a classroom or in a formal setting. There are many ways to give feedback like, "giving praise and encouragement, correcting on spot, setting regular tests, having discussions about how the group as a whole is doing, giving individual tutorials etc" (Gower et al., 2004, p. 163). The language teacher should careful and "systematically identify the various options available for correcting students' writing ....." (Ellis, 2008, p. 97).

Language researchers like Ferris (2006) (cited in McDonough et al., 2013, p. 195-196), points out some influential factors that make feedback effective.

Such as:

- Learner's proficiency
- Manner of feedback (e.g. direct correction or indirect correction)
- Kind of errors (e.g. treatable or untreatable errors)
- Timing of feedback (e.g. formative feedback during the writing process, post-feedback)
- Amount of feedback

Penny Ur (2003, p. 242) distinguished feedback into 2 main components:

- **Correction:** in correction, the teacher should provide some specific information about the students' performance whether he/she did right or wrong.
- **Assessment:** in assignment the students is simply informed how well or badly he/she has performed. A percentage grade on an exam would be a perfect example.

#### **2.14.1. Correcting Written Work:**

The most common role for the teacher in traditional writing classes is to be a judge and job is to corrects or indicates the errors of the finished product with the help of the legendary 'red pen'. This system is helpful or not, it is still an ongoing debate in Second Language Writing research. Truscott examines such belief and asserts, "correction is harmful rather than simply ineffective" and thus "error correction should be abandoned" (Cited in McDonough et al., 2013, p. 195). The 'red pen' method is inherently negative, but there is no reason why written feedback should not be positive as well. But before correcting students' written Work, the teacher should introduce the set of correction symbols and what they mean. The teacher should not provide the correct version straight away, rather should let his/her students to correct themselves eventually. The struggles to get it right also help them to understand why they were wrong. Moreover, the teacher should not just draw attention to the errors but should use positive signs as well to show approval of good work. The following is a list of correction symbols that a teacher might want to use.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sp = spelling mistake</li> <li>• G = grammatical error</li> <li>• WW = Wrong Word</li> <li>• Cap = Capital letter</li> <li>• ! = read again and correct this one yourself</li> <li>• √ = good sentence, expressed well</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T = tense error</li> <li>• WO = word order</li> <li>• P = punctuation</li> <li>• Prep = wrong preposition</li> <li>• Δ = word omitted, insert a word</li> </ul>
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**Source:** Paul Lindsay, *Teaching English Worldwide*, 2000, p. 195.

**2.14.2. Assessment of Writing Work:**

Writing assessment can be done through various rating, checklist or grids that can indicate to students their areas of strength and weakness. In maximum cases such taxonomies are scoring through a development of a rubric. A rubric is a scoring grid that elaborates the element of writing that is to be evaluated. This rubric should outline the weight of grammar and mechanics in relationship to content and ideas, as well as other features of writing that a teacher or an instructor may find important.

David Nunan ( 2003, p. 94-95) mentioned three general types of rubrics that can be developed for writing assessment.

- i. Weighted Rubric
- ii. Non-weighted Rubric
- iii. Holistic Rubric

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Research Design**

#### **3.1. Objective:**

To find out what could be the possible reasons behind the poor writing skill of secondary level of Bangla medium students'.

#### **3.2. Significance of the Research:**

I would like to figure out the efficiency of our Bengali medium students' in case of creative writing. After studying some research articles, it comes to my mind that our secondary level of students performs comparatively poor in English writing tests. Although they are introduced to English Language from the very elementary level, their writing skill is dissatisfactory. They cannot produce something properly without memorization. It seems that they only focus more on passing examinations with a good result than developing their skill in English language. Therefore, I would like to find out the main reasons behind the poor writing skill of Bangla medium students' in compare to English medium students'.

#### **3.3. Participants:**

This study involved 4 Bengali medium schools and 1 English medium school, and two target groups have been eligible for this research: students and teachers. The students were given a sudden test to perform and the teachers of 4 Bangla medium schools were taken participate in my written interview questions.

#### **3.4. Procedure:**

In order to conduct my research, first I observed a regular composition class of std ix (higher intermediate level) then, I studied their NCTB syllabus of learning English of

Bangla medium school. After two (2) weeks later, I examined the writing ability of the students on a given topic. In this regards, I checked their performance through a test. The test was a sudden test to test their writing ability. In this case, students were never aware about the topic before writing. However, the topic was very much appropriate considering the level of proficiency of the students'. For this particular test, students did not get any chance to memorize and they had to produce by their own. Meanwhile, I also did the same with the English medium students' and gave them a similar test to check their creativity on the same topic. After collecting their papers, I made a comparison between the Bangla medium students' and English medium students' on their writing skill. Based on the result, I did conduct my further research.

### **3.5. Interview:**

Beside the tests, the teachers were allowed to share their viewpoints about the reasons of poor writing performance through answering and writing the interview questions. The questions of the semi-structured interviews were for some specific information regarding the research that as missing or inadequate in the test. As a result there were 20 open ended questions for the teachers of Bangla medium schools.

### **3.6. Limitations:**

The study was conducted among only the students of 4 Bangla medium and 1 English medium school in Dhaka city. Although, many other schools inside and outside of Dhaka city are available, but it was not possible to make contact with the students and teachers of those schools because of time constraints.

**3.7. Method of Analysis:**

The methodology used in this paper includes:

1. A sudden test on a same topic for both the students of Bangla medium school and English medium school.
2. Teachers from 4 Bangla medium schools participated in written interview.

The researcher presents the result of the test and interviews in a summative manner, using Microsoft Word, 2007.

## **CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

This part of the research will discuss, analyze and interpret from the results obtaining from the classroom observation, test and interview.

### **4.1. Findings from the classroom observation**

I observed one composition class of std. ix which is a secondary level of class (higher intermediate level) of Viquarrunnisa Noon School. First the teacher and I entered the classroom and she introduced me to the students and show me a space to seat down. Then the teacher began her usual class. As I mentioned earlier, that it is a composition class and according to their schedule and syllabus they were about to do a paragraph writing on “Environment Pollution”.

Another class I observed was St. Peter’s School of London, which is an English medium school and the students were O’Level students. There were 23 students. After the introduction part the teacher began her class. Their topic was “The Last movie I have enjoyed”.

Before entering into two of these classes I studied their books, syllabus of English Language, class routine and then after observing the two kinds of composition class I present my findings in a comparative manner

<b>Bangla Medium School</b>	<b>English Medium School</b>
<p>1. The teacher – students ration was unpleasant, it was a big class with 72 students. The teacher was using microphone to give her lecture.</p>	<p>1. The ratio was satisfactory and it had 23 students and the teacher was talking in her normal voice.</p>
<p>2. Their syllabus is fixed and they practice within syllabus. The teachers do not attempt to do anything outside the syllabus. Even in exam, the writing part is known.</p>	<p>3. Though their syllabus is fixed, the teacher has the complete freedom to practice any topic that is interesting and appropriate to the students. The students are not aware about the topic before exam.</p>
<p>4. Their syllabus includes letters, formal letters, e-mail writings, paragraphs and compositions.</p>	<p>5. Their syllabus includes article writing, news writing, speech writing, report, letter writing.</p>
<p>6. The topics are artificial, imitative and un-natural. For example, ‘A Bus Stand’ and ‘Academic Life’ and so on.</p>	<p>7. Their topics reflect creativity, interesting and everyday life issues. Like, ‘If I were a Pilot’ or ‘Last Year of My School Life’.</p>
<p>8. To generate ideas from students</p>	<p>9. The ‘Brainstorming’ procedure</p>

<p>the teacher use ‘Brainstorming’ procedure.</p>	<p>is more or less same.</p>
<p>10. During Brainstorming only the front students take part in the discussion.</p>	<p>11. All the students involve in the discussion.</p>
<p>12. Though the interaction was happening in English from the teacher’s side, but often students were presenting their thoughts by producing their L1.</p>	<p>13. The interaction was happening in English and the students were using L2 very confidently.</p>
<p>14. When students start writing, teacher walk around them for observing their progress and try to offer her towards her students. However, because of large class, she cannot give equal attention to all her students.</p>	<p>15. The teacher was able to offer her help or guidance to all her students equally.</p>
<p>16. It was a teacher-centered classroom.</p>	<p>17. It was a student’s-centered classroom.</p>

**4.2. Findings from the test**

To examine their writing ability I choose a common topic for both medium. The topic was “The Effect of Traffic Jam in Our Daily Lives”. The findings are:

<b>Bangla Medium School</b>	<b>English Medium School</b>
<p>1. Most of the students start their writing with, <i>Traffic jam is the common problem in Dhaka city</i> , which does not go with the title at all. The starting sentenced is superficial and represents the imitative types of writing. It is showing that students are not thinking critically.</p>	<p>1. Different kinds of writing are found which are the proves that the students are writing their own, such as, <i>As citizen of Dhaka city we are facing many challenges for traffic jam , Traffic jam means a long line of vehicles that cannot move or move very slowly.</i></p>
<p>2. After the first sentences, the students mentioned the causes of traffic jam in detailed, which seems irrelevant for the title. They were supposed to write about the negative effect of traffic jam in our daily lives.</p>	<p>3. There was little mentioned about the cusses of traffic jam,</p>

<p>4. When writing about the effect, they just write <i>Because of traffic jam we are wasting our valuable time and money</i>. But few could write how they are suffering.</p>	<p>5. Here, students write <i>To avoid traffic jam I have to get up early, dressed up early and leave my home early</i>. Seems, they are interpreting and presenting the message correctly.</p>
<p>6. Sentence structure is artificial and bookish, like <i>The indiscrimination plying of rickshaw ..... , Haphazard parking....</i></p>	<p>7. Natural and varites of sentens are found like, <i>the tendency of the truck drivers..... people need to be more conscious...</i></p>
<p>8. The use of vocabulary is very limited, tough some used very few high-frequency words but they were recall from rote-learning.</p>	<p>9. There was no use of high-frequency words.</p>
<p>10. The uses of cohesive devices were limited as well. They should have used <i>therefore</i> instead of <i>that's why</i>.</p>	<p>11. There were some uses of such devices, like <i>meanwhile, as a result, moreover,</i></p>

### **4.3. Findings from the Interview Questions**

In this part I will try to show the various responses of the teachers regarding the poor writing performance of the students. Fifteen (15) teachers have participated in this interview and all of them have experience in teaching, especially English language as the second language for Bangla medium students'. These teachers are from Viqarunneesa School and College, Moghbazar Girls School, Isphani Girls School and College, Sheddwashawri Girls School and College. The interview questions sample is given in the appendix section at the end of this paper. Each teacher wrote and shared their thoughts according to their suitable time and I collected them later. Also, some of them wrote additional comments about the question I have asked in face to face conversation. Based on the comments, I have tried to compile them below. All of them are native of Bangladesh, have years of experiences of teaching English language in the class for intermediate level of students (from std. v to std. x).

#### **Q.1. Do your students feel confident about their writing ability to write?**

Among the interview teachers, all of them agreed that their students do not feel confident about their creative writing ability. Most of the students feel anxious about creative writing. They try to avoid composition class. In practices writing class, most of the students do not complete their writing pieces and submitted the incomplete works.

#### **Q.2. Can they effectively plan a large writing assignment?**

Most of the teachers agreed, that their students do not complete the large writing assignments. They lack of imaginative, creativity and will power for which they just don't try to write their own. They have the tendency to complete their writing with the help of their home tutors or parents. Also, they copy from others' works and copy from books. Sometime they avoid the creative writing part in examination.

**Q.3. Can they write effective sentences and paragraphs, using correct grammar, punctuation and spelling?**

Most of the students are good at spelling and punctuation using. But while creative writing students are too much concerned about the use of grammar, especially the use of tenses. Sometimes too much concerned of these areas are hampering their writing speed and ability.

**Q.4. Can they use well-defined structure (introduction, body and conclusion) in their writing, as appropriate?**

Most of the teachers agreed, that the students of higher intermediate level, have the knowledge about the introduction, body and conclusion part of writing and most of them can use well-defined structure. But sometimes they got confused and don't have any clear idea to put which information in which part.

**Q.5. Do they revise their writing to make it clear, correct and consistent?**

All of the teachers agreed that they trained their students from very beginning to revise their piece of writing after finishing it whether it is rote learning or creative writing.

**Q.6. What are the sources of their ideas and facts?**

Among the teachers all of them agreed that in Bangla medium schools, they do not get the chance to come up with new ideas for writing. Though they get the chance but they do not get that much help from their teachers because of large number of students. So, mainly the students who want to develop their writing follow more than one book and come up with ideas from that for writing.

**Q.7. Can they give equal attention to both the language (e.g. spelling, grammar, vocabulary) and the content (e.g. ideas, organization)?**

Most of the teachers agreed that, their students are good at language part and weak at content part. The students are more concerned about the ‘rules of writing’ rather than form. Because in their previous stages of learning, they “spent a great deal of time in copying models rather than expressing their own ideas creatively” (Nunan, 2003, p.89). That’s why in this stage of learning they are still performing poor in generating and organizing ideas properly. They also need to develop their writing skill in sequencing information in a correct order.

**Q.8. On a topic of interest to them, can they generate lots of words fairly quickly and freely?**

Most of the teacher agreed that their students have limited amount of vocabulary knowledge, which is another problem they face while creative writing classes.

**Q.9. Again, on a topic of interest to them, can they come up with ideas that they had not thought before?**

This is most common problem that every English language teachers are facing. Their students just cannot come up with new idea and information, which is leading them to 'have nothing to write' position.

**Q.10. Can they write or produce clear and catchy sentences?**

All of the teachers are working on this particular criterion to develop their students' creativity and production of meaningful sentences. When students are writing their own, often the sentences become artificial, bookish and meaningless.

**Q.11. Do they face any problem while building an argument?**

All the teachers agreed that their students face difficulties during building an argumentative statement.

**Q.12. Do you think the prescribed syllabus is suitable for their writing practice?**

Majority of the teachers believe that the syllabus is suitable for writing practice, writing practice should be done in general rather than seen and specific topics.

**Q.13. What kind of responses are helpful for your students while they are writing?**

All of the teachers agreed that the guidance they provide during writing is the most effective one. But due to large class it is hard to carry this procedure.

**Q.14. What types of writing task are enjoyable for them?**

All of the teachers agreed that, students feel easy and comfortable on application and letter writing part. They also find paragraph, summary writing, and essay writing easier compare to story writing which is unseen for them. Except story writing, and summary writing, students just memorize them from available books

and pour that out in exam copy. Whereas, in story writing they have to think and come up with ideas which seems very difficult for them to write and build up the argument.

**Q.15. As a teacher can you notice the problems in their writing and figure out what the causes are?**

The main problem are rote – learning system and when they are thinking for writing, first they think in their L1 and then translate the line in L2 and then write. For which the sentences become artificial, long and complicated.

**Q.16. Do they enjoy writing?**

Whether it is for creative writing or for imitative writing most of the students does not enjoy writing at all. They just do not have kind of aptitude or interest for writing. They just write to get score in their exams.

**Q.17. Do they think themselves as a writer?**

None of the students considered themselves as writer, they cannot produce their own. They just study a model of writing and imitate that one in examination. Except passing and scoring they do not have any purpose to write their own. So, there is no chance to think themselves as writers.

**Q.18. Can they write fluently in their L1?**

All the teachers agreed the Bangla medium students cannot even in their mother language. This seems very disappointing.

**Q. 19. Do they use or write in English outside the classroom while they communicating with each other?**

For academic purpose they do not write outside their classroom, except assignments or research papers, but for everyday life they might write in English.

**Q.20. What are the key challenges that you face as a language teacher during teaching writing?**

Every Bangla medium teachers' are facing some common problems while teaching L2 writing such as large number of students, seating arrangements, educational background, and fear for L2 subject, no interest for L2 writing and so on.

## **CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION**

This section is about the main reasons of poor writing performance of secondary Bangla medium students' with a detailed discussion of the researcher's findings along with the literature review.

The researcher first object was to find out the reasons of poor writing performance of secondary level of Bangla medium students'. For this reason the researcher first observed a regular composition class and had collected a test sample of Bangla medium school and English medium school.

### **1. The exposes (input) of English (either written or spoken) is so limited for which students cannot produce new languages.**

The student of Bangla medium school has only one English class per day in their routine. Their English classes are divided into two parts – First part and second – part. The First part is based on writing and the Second part is based on grammar and formal writing practice. On the other hand, in every English medium school all the subjects except Bangla are taught in English. They also divided their English classes into different parts like – Composition, literature, English Language, Spelling – Dictation. . As a result the English medium students get good amount of English language input from their classroom environment. Whereas, Bangla medium students do not have enough source to expose (input) English. For which they are weak in producing English in their writing. As Krashen stated, that, the students who are exposed to extensive comprehensible input do

achieve high level of proficiency in the second language acquisition. (Lightbown and Spada, 1999, p. 39). The richer in input, the more success in producing, either spoken or written.

## **2. Pedagogical setting of teaching and learning**

Teacher centre classroom, which is the old traditional method, is the common feature among all four schools. In Bangladesh, it is the most used methods of all ( Siddique, 2004, para.4). Though CLT method which is students centre classroom was introduced 1998 in Bangladesh, but the teachers cannot use this method because of their “traditional beliefs, negative attitudes and lack of proper training” (in Sinha, 2006, para.5). As a result in Bangla medium school the classes are mostly teacher oriented class. The students are mostly dependent on their teachers.

## **3. The pattern of teaching creative writing**

The delay practice of creative writing is another reason for poor performance. The Bangla medium students are exposed to rote-learning at the beginning of academic life. Thus encouraged by the environment, they continue to imitate and practice memorization patterns until they form ‘habits’ of correct language use (Lightbown and Spada, 1999, p. 9). Likewise this statement, the Bangla medium students’ cannot produce their own. When creative writing is introduces and practices in class, they still drag their memorization aptitude during writing; even they might not want to.

Recently, in Bangla medium school, the students are suggested not to follow the memorization pattern. The teacher writes down the title on the top of the white board and interacts with students to get important key points. Here, teacher tries to generate ideas from the students and involving them in an open discussion to get more and more valid points. In literature this term is called ‘Brainstorming’ which means ‘opening your mind and letting ideas pour out’ (Scrivener, p. 239). During brainstorming the ideas are start flowing and after that the teacher invites her students to select ideas they like and start the writing. It is the most helpful process for creative writing, through which every students can have something to write with.

#### **4. Too much drilling practice of grammar and rules**

A decade ago, in Bangla medium, “writing was done from a set of rules and principles, the teacher’s duty was to relate these rules, and students then wrote in response to selected written texts, following the rules of good writing. A student essay was then graded for its grammatical accuracy and correct organization as well as content” (Nunan, 2003, p.89). But now the scenery has changed. The students are encouraged to write without the thought of ‘the rules’ of writing. In my observation period, I have witnessed such action in Bagla medium school. Teachers now discourage Bangla medium students’ to follow the rote-learning method in writing classes and also students tend to enjoy creative writing and avoid memorization technique.

### **5. Attitude towards to L1 writing**

Research shows that a good foundation in the child's L1 (first language) has a strong commitment to maintaining and developing the L2 (second language) learning ( Lightbown and Spada, 1999, p. 164). So, before writing freely in English the students must learn to write freely in their L1, which is Bangla. Even the student belongs to Bangla medium; their writing skill in Bangla is not satisfactory.

### **6. Translation patterns from L1**

The transfer pattern from the L1 is undoubtedly one of the major reason of poor performance. The students just think in Bangla and then translate it in English and then write it in their paper. They should be aware of interference of their L1 while writing in English. They should think in English and then write that thought in their paper.

### **7. Way of correction**

The way the Bangla medium teachers give feedback or correct student's writing is another reason of poor writing performance. Because of large class teacher just point out some major errors and discuss them in class, and sometime some students remain in confusion zone. They just don't know where they are wrong and how to correct themselves, which leads to anxiety towards creative writing. Meanwhile, when a teacher gives feedback, responses and positive praises, students feel motivated to learn new things. As a result English medium students' feel more confident

about their writing ability than Bangla medium students'. According to behaviorism theory, positive reinforcement helps the students' to learn a language.

## **CHAPTER 6 RECOMMENDATION**

After observing the classroom, examining the test and analyzing the results, the researcher found some problems in teaching and she came up with the following recommendations:

- ✓ As it is mentioned in the above section that Bangla medium students get only one English class per day, in which they do not get enough expose (input) to English language. The amount of L2 exposes (input) is so less, for which they cannot produce much verities in their writing. So, the teacher should encourage them to enrich their L2 knowledge through watching English TV series, movies, listening songs, little everyday writing in English.
- ✓ Studies showed that, Bangla medium students' think in Bangla and then translate it English and then write in paper. In this case, from very beginning the teacher should motivate students' to think in English critically before writing. Though this process may take longer time but for the students' better future the teachers must adopt and practice this process with patience.
- ✓ The teacher should introduce free writing before rote-learning. Scholars said that, rote-learning is only for poems and historical dates or events, and for other academic writing students should practice their own writing.
- ✓ Likewise English medium school, Bangla medium school should divided their English composition classes into narrative writing, descriptive

writing and argumentative writing. These varieties will give them more opportunity to input and produce L2 more frequently.

- ✓ The teachers should encourage students to develop their creative writing even in L1, which is Bangla.
- ✓ Though Bangla medium students read a lot which associated with their paragraphs or essay writings, but they should also read some other books beyond their academic purposes, to enrich their knowledge. The schools or teachers should instruct or guide them to read more varieties of books. Because in *Writing* Eudora Welty observed, “Indeed, learning to write may be part of learning to read. For all I know, writing comes out of a superior devotion to reading” (cited in Hedge, 2005, p. 56).
- ✓ It is a big challenge for the teachers to complete The NCTB syllabus within given time, so teachers usually do not modify or adopt any other tasks to make students’ writing better. But teachers should practice pair-, Group-, project-works where students showed highly enthusiastic to take participate. Also, through these kinds of works teacher can solve the issue of large amount of home works. Instead of checking pile of works teachers can reduce the number and give feedback in groups.
- ✓ Likewise English medium schools, the teachers of Bangla medium schools should avoid legendary red pen while checking creative writing in composition classes, especially for young learners. Truscott examines such belief and asserts, “correction is harmful rather than simply

ineffective" and thus "error correction should be abandoned". (Cited in McDonough et al., 2013, p. 195)

- ✓ In Bangla medium school the teachers use the GTM for teaching the target language. Though recently CLT is introduced in Bangladesh but because of negative attitude among Bangladeshi teachers towards to CLT and lack of proper training the teachers from Bangla medium school cannot adopt this method effectively. Though we cannot discard the GTM totally from our educational system. Sinha (in Sinha, 2006, para.8.) therefore, suggested a synthesis of CLT and GTM for optimum success in English language teaching in the mainstream context of Bangladesh. For which the government should set up some training classes for English language teachers, so that they can use these two methods successfully.
- ✓ Because of large number of students and traditional seating arrangements, it is difficult for teachers to go to every students and helped them with missing words, guided them with appropriate language. In such case, the teacher should offer help with a rotation manner and have to very concerns that no students should left behind from his/her help.

## **CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION**

Writing is difficult, even in native language. “If there are few real-world reasons for writing in our L1, there are even fewer for doing so in a foreign language (McDonough et al., 2013, p. 183). In Bangladesh, writing has always been seen as an important skill in English language acquisition. This importance is due to the fact that it reinforces grammatical structures and vocabulary. It is the area in which learners need to be offered adequate amount of time to develop their writing skill. Therefore more time should be devoted to it in classrooms containing ELLs so that they will be prepared to communicate effectively in real life as well as academic life (Ismail, 2007). Additionally, writing skills can be developed when the learners’ interest are acknowledged and when they are given frequent opportunities to actually practice writing (Ismail, 2007).

The aim of this study is to find out the main reasons of poor creative writing performance of Bangla medium students. It can be seen that students are less confident in case of free writing. They just cannot produce a piece of writing without memorization, without the help of the books. The reasons are lot, still Bangla medium schools use traditional rote learning method for any kind of writing. Therefore, the students of Bangla medium are always anxious about the grammar, tense, spellings, and their writing become artificial. Teachers’ way of teaching is also responsible for this type of situation. Moreover, students’ response towards the creative writing is not that much satisfactory, which suggest that, the teacher should give them more opportunities to practice different types of

writing. If the teacher encourages his/her students to write themselves as well as explores their creativity during the classroom context, students will be able to have high confidence for writing.

This paper concluded that though in Bangladesh, the Bangla medium school and English medium school follow different methods, techniques, different strategies for composition writing class, but the aim of both schools is same and that is to improve students' creative writing in the target language.

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## Appendix

- Q.1. Do your students feel confident about their writing ability to write?
- Q.2. Can they effectively plan a large writing assignment?
- Q.3. Can they write effective sentences and paragraphs, using correct grammar, punctuation and spelling?
- Q.4. Can they use well-defined structure (introduction, body and conclusion) in their writing, as appropriate?
- Q.5. Do they revise their writing to make it clear, correct and consistent?
- Q.6. What are the sources of their ideas and facts?
- Q.7. Can they give equal attention to both the language (e.g. spelling, grammar, vocabulary) and the content (e.g. ideas, organization)?
- Q.8. On a topic of interest to them, can they generate lots of words fairly quickly and freely?
- Q.9. Again, on a topic of interest to them, can they come up with ideas that they had not thought before?
- Q.10. Can they write or produce clear and catchy sentences?
- Q.11. Do they face any problem while building an argument?
- Q.12. Do you think the prescribed syllabus is suitable for their writing practice?
- Q.13. What kind of responses are helpful for your students while they are writing?
- Q.14. What types of writing tasks are enjoyable for them?
- Q.15. As teacher can you notice the problems in their writing and figure out what the causes are?
- Q.16. Do they enjoy writing?

Q.17. Do they think themselves as a writer?

Q.18. Can they write fluently in their L1?

Q. 19. Do they use or write in English outside the classroom while they communicating with each other?

Q.20. What are the key challenges that you face as a language teacher during teaching writing?