

English composition writing skills of class five students: Teaching and Learning practices at government primary schools in Dhaka

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations used:

CLT.....	Communicative Language Teaching
GTM.....	Grammar Translation Method
ELT.....	English Language Teaching
EFT.....	English For Today
ESL.....	English as Second Language
PSC.....	Primary School Certificate
JSC.....	Junior School Certificate
SSC.....	Secondary School Certificate
NCTB.....	National Curriculum Textbook Board of Bangladesh
FGD.....	Focus Group Discussion
C.W.....	Class Work
H.W.....	Home Work

Declaration

I declare that the dissertation titled: English Composition Writing Skills of Class Five Students: Teaching and Learning Practices at Government Primary School in Dhaka is submitted to the BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL), BRAC University in partial fulfillment of the MA degree in TESOL. This paper is the result of my personal investigation; it has not been presented and submitted wholly or in part for any other degree.

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Abstract

The research intends to find out the English composition writing skills of class five students and present condition of teaching and learning practices at government primary schools in Dhaka. This paper investigates the current scenario of teaching and learning practices and challenges in writing skills at government primary schools. The data have been collected through research instruments like survey questionnaire, interview, focus group discussion and classroom observation. After through analysis in both qualitative and quantitative methods, a recommendation has been made for the learners through references, teachers, ELT practitioners and all the people involved in the teaching and learning English in Bangladesh.

Chapter-I

Introduction

Writing provides a permanent record of information, beliefs, arguments, feelings, explanations, theories and so on. Through writing we communicate our ideas not only with our contemporaries but also with our future generations. Even knowledge or information of the past years is also transformed to the future generations through writing.

The primary education is crucial for students to learn, to write and to improve this skill. Students' perceptions about writing developed during this period are very important for their success in writing (Tolga and Ozge, 2012; p.348). Therefore at this stage the students who develop positive perception about writing, they are more likely to be successful writers in future.

The aim of this paper is to investigate English composition writing skill of class five students, in an attempt to find out the present condition of their writing and teaching-learning practices at government primary schools in Dhaka.

Now-a-days English is one of the most used languages in the world. In Bangladesh, English is taught as a compulsory subject at primary level and continues till tertiary level. However, after ten years of schooling most of the students can not write correctly. Even a good number of students fail in the PSC (Primary School Certificate), JSC (Junior School Certificate), SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examinations. They follow a specific syllabus provided by their teacher and try to memorize readymade compositions from commercial guides and notebooks. As a result, although somehow they pass the examinations but can not demonstrate their proficiency in writing in academic and other communicative context.

The text books (English For Today, for Classes (I-V) are written with communicative goals and ideas, and the syllabus is also designed with communicative language teaching contents and items include all four language skills. The education sectors are trying to develop all the four skills. The educational policy of the government is also giving emphasis on all the four skills as well. But the real scenario is different. Still many of the primary graduates are failing to master language skills that they can use effectively.

In the field of English language teaching in Bangladesh, it is generally seen that students memorize some common short compositions and write them down in the examinations. Consequently proficiency in writing skills is relatively poor.

In my study, I will try to find out the current teaching and learning practices of composition writing class five at primary schools in Dhaka.

1.1 : Necessity of writing skills at primary level: Primary education is crucial for students to learn to write and to improve this skill. Student's perceptions about writing develop during this period which is very important for their success in writing. If a positive perception grows in their fresh mind, writing becomes joyful for them. Therefore students need to develop a positive perception about writing at this level. Student's positive perceptions help them to be a successful writer.

1.2 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Writing Practices at Primary Level: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is considered as one of the best approaches in language teaching. Primarily, in Bangladesh CLT was first introduced in class VI in 1996. According to CLT, learning a second language is not a matter of knowing about that language only, rather it requires regular practice of the four skills of the target language. The present aims of NCTB (National Curriculum and Textbook Board) are to enable the learners to use English properly not only in the classroom but also outside of the classroom in real life. It focuses on student centered class not teacher centered classroom. More motivation from the teacher is expected here. For teaching writing skills teacher may ask learners to write on any interesting topic they wish or whatever comes in learners mind. It requires practices of free writing skills. CLT approaches also prescribe more practices of pair work, group work and more interesting activities which engage the students with each other. Memorization is completely discouraged. In contrast, students from government primary schools are not practiced the English language as regular communication. Students do not practice composition writing at school or at home. Most of the students try to memorize compositions for their examinations. For practicing writing, teachers role are very important. Teacher should follow CLT which is practice and performance based.

1.3 Outcome of writing skills at primary level: At the primary level of education in Bangladesh, English is taught for five consecutive years (one to five) and students have to sit

for a public examination at the end of the fifth year. However after five years of schooling, most of the students fail in English at the PSC examination. Even if they pass, they get poor marks. Some students get good marks but they can not reflect their achievement in real life. Most of the students can not write correctly and properly. Somehow students pass the examination but they are unable to use the language properly.

1.4 Problems students often encounter with writing at primary level:

Primary level is the most important level for students as it prepares the base of the students for their future. Still primary level students face enormous writing problems in English. There are some problems which are students often encounter with writing at primary level are discussing below:

1.4.1

Lack of motivation: Though CLT talks about student centered classroom but in our country classroom procedure is mostly teacher centered. Students do not get any chance to write at their own will. They have to write as their teacher says. Students feel bored. For the writing skills teacher may ask them to write on any interesting topic as students interest. In this way students get motivated towards writing.

1.4.2

Time Constraints and large classroom: It has been seen that both teacher and students are constrained by time. In our country, it is a wrong perception by the teachers that writing can only be done in one lesson. Students need time to think about the topic, time to write and re-write, until one becomes satisfied with the final product. On the contrary to this view, students of our country do not get adequate time for thinking. As a result they try to memorize essays and paragraphs written by others and write it them down verbatim. Another problem is large classroom where teacher do not get time to check all scripts and give feedback within a limited time.

1.4.3

Students Inability to Compose: Students face difficulties with surface level errors such as spelling, punctuation etc. In fact most of the primary level students fail to communicate in any effective ways in writing. It happens because of students lack of understanding their topics. Besides, students are limited in their use of vocabulary. As a result they are not able to compose any creative writing correctly.

1.5 Problem Statement:

Writing is one of the basic language skills that should be taught to the students at early ages of basic education. But the real scenario of our country is different. It has been observed that many students of Bangladesh are facing difficulties while using English as a foreign language in writing. English is a compulsory subject in the curriculum from primary level. Though the learners learn English from very early age, they can not achieve satisfactory level of fluency and accuracy in writing.

1.6 Purpose of the study:

This study is intended to find out teaching-learning practices and challenges in writing skills at government primary schools. It also tries to find out the present condition of the students writing skills, how teachers help them to write composition and what kind of challenges (teachers and students) while dealing with writing skills.

A number of studies have been done in the field of ELT (English language teaching) to ensure the better teaching and learning of the learners. As a result positive changes have occurred in this field. But in the field of writing skills at primarily level in Bangladesh, we have found very few studies. Though CLT has been introduced and NCTB is trying to develop materials and textbooks according to CLT approaches, in most of the cases, lack of classroom implementation is one of the reason for the failure. Research based study helps to find out actual causes and solution. This is why I have chosen this area of study hoping that this study will be helpful in getting insights for the development of writing skills at the primary level.

1.7 Significance of the study:

This study is significant since it covers an important skill among four skills of English language. For meaningful education, it is very important to improve the writing proficiency of the learners in English. Primary education is very important for a child. It is very important to improve writing proficiency of learners in English. Still students are trying to memorize some paragraphs and composition and write them down in the examination. Although CLT (communicative language teaching) prescribes free writing and creative writing. To improve this situation some measures should be taken to identify problems, address them to improve the situation. This study is an attempt to do so.

1.8 Research Questions:

1. What is the present condition of learning and teaching practices of writing at government primary schools?
2. What are the difficulties and challenges in teaching writing skills at primary level?

1.9 Limitations of the study:

1. This study is confined to class five only.
2. Only Dhaka (urban area) based primary schools are selected. It could be better if rural schools are included in future research.
3. It focuses only on short composition writing.
4. Students had their annual examination's time while everyone was busy with the exam preparation. This might have affected the research findings.

Chapter-II

Literature Review

The teaching of writing has changed over the years. In the past writing was not taught; it was signed and corrected. Teacher emphasized the final product of writing, not the process which it is produced (Calkins, 1989; Willis, 2001). By the late 1970's, the shift in emphasis had been changed and the process writing movement began (Willis, 2001). The process writing approach, first developed by Graves in 1983, focused on instruction, which allowed teachers to help students brainstorm ideas, elicit feedback, revise their work, then edit and proofread the final product before publishing (Calkins, 1986; Graves,1983; Willis,2001). This type of writing provided children with numerous opportunities to practice and internalize what goes into a piece of writing just as a professional author does (Wong-Kam & Vasquez,2003).

The main purpose of using language communicates one's feelings, thoughts, needs, necessities and ideas to others is (Banu, 2009). Experimental studies show that many of the primary graduates are failing to learn language skills that they can use efficiently (Ahmed & Nath, 2005). To learn a language student need to value in the classroom. Children need to learn different writing strategies to solve writing problems.

Now NCTB (National Curriculum and Textbook Board) has followed CLT (Communicative Language Teaching Method) for writing. On the other hand teachers of government primary schools are still follow Grammar transitional method. . Here researcher is going discuss about two popular methods in Bangladesh and its effect on writing.

2.1: Two popular teaching methods in Bangladesh:

As English considered as second language, most of the government schools of primary level use bangle as the medium of instruction and teacher introduce English as a compulsory subject that students have to pass. Though communicative language teaching method has been introduce in the primary schools but real scenario is different

2.1.1: Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in writing:

Grammar Translation Method was called Classical Method since it was first used in the teaching of the classical languages, Latin and Greek. Grammar Translation Method is a very traditional and typical method in our country. In this method teacher is the main communicator in the classroom. All the activities and classroom tasks are given by the teacher and students just memorize those and reproduce in the examinations. This method helps students to improve their ability to read a literary text. Main task of GTM is to ask students to learn grammatical rules and items of vocabulary from dictionary which sometimes make them bored.

In the field of the writing, students learn grammar rules and then practice the rules by doing grammar drills and translating sentence to and from the target language. Here more attention is paid for sentence being translated than to their content. This method pays very little attention on communicative aspects. As a result students do not get opportunity to use their creativity.

2.1.2: Communicative Language Teaching Method (CLT) in writing:

English teaching has created huge demand around the world for its growing communication skills. So the demand for an appropriate methodology is strong as ever. Perhaps the majority of the language teacher today, when asked about methodology-they simply talk about communicative language teaching. Even most of them do not know what CLT is. However according to Jack C Richards , CLT can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitated learning and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom.

Communicative Competence is the main goal of CLT. Communicative competence includes aspects of language learning. Such as:

1. Knowing how to use language in different situations
2. Knowing how to maintain communication
3. knowing when use formal and informal language

Language learning has changed in the last 30 years and CLT is partly a response to these changes (Richards, 2006). Earlier view of language learning has changed a lot. Students controlled their mistakes through memorizing dialogue and performing drills. Language learning was viewed as a process of mechanical habit formation.

In recent years, however language learning is viewed as different perspective differently. It is seen as resulting from the following kind:

1. Student centered classroom.
2. Interaction between student and teacher.
3. Creating meaningful and purposeful interaction.
4. Learning through real life situations.
5. Different types of classroom activities
6. Students motivation and encourage them to join different activities.

These criteria help students to use their creativity and they can develop their writing level.

CLT discourage memorization. For writing composition students get some hints or clues and they have to use those. Students do not need to memorize compositions.

2.2: How teacher can use CLT for their students in writing:

English is not our mother tongue and we have to learn this language to communicate with others. We have to read, write, speak and listen in this language to communicate with different people in the world. Overall we have to learn this language. In this research, researcher presents the writing skills which an important skills of learning a language and communicating with others.

Jacobs and Farrell (2003) suggest that the CLT has eight major changes in approaches to language teaching. These changes are:

1. Learner Autonomy: Teacher should gives learner greater choice over their own writing. The use of group work is one of example of this, as well as the use of self assessment.

2. The social nature of learning: Learning is not an individual private activity but a social one that depends upon interaction with others. This interaction helps students interact with their classmates in speech and writing.

3. Curriculum Integration: The connection between different strands of the curriculum is emphasized, so that English is not seen as a stand alone subject but is linked to other subjects in the curriculum.

4. Focus on meaning: Content-based teaching reflects this view and seeks to make the exploration of meaning through content the core of language learning activities. For example, when teachers interact with students or students interact with students, they know some new words. If students also know the meaning it may help them for writing.

5. Diversity: Languages are learned in different ways and have different strengths. It increases awareness among students. This awareness helps them to become a confident writer.

6. Thinking Skills: In language teaching this means students do not learn language for its own sake but in order to develop and apply their thinking skills in situations that go beyond their language class. Through the CLT, students get chance to increase their thinking level. Students can think more and it helps them for free writing.

7. Alternative assessment: New forms of assessment are needed to replace traditional multiple-choice and other items that test lower order skills. Multiple forms of assessment (such as observation, interviews, journals, portfolio etc) can be used to build up a comprehensive picture of what students can do in a second language. For example: teacher can tell them to write journal everyday and check it out. New forms of writing assessment can help students to improve their writing.

8. Teachers as Co-learners: Teacher viewed as a facilitator who is constantly trying out different alternatives like learning through doing. Traditionally we find that teacher always order their students to do something and students follow it as machine. On the other hand in the field of CLT, teacher can act as co-learners which make students free to share their views and ideas with teacher. When students can share their ideas about writing (composition, paragraph etc.), it increase their interest for writing.

2.3: The roles of teacher and students in the classroom:

The scenario of classroom has changed. If we think about earlier stages of language learning, teacher is the speaker and students play minor role in the class. But the present scenario is different. Now learners have to participate in classroom. According to CLT, classroom should be learner center. Learners have to join in the different types of classroom activities that based on a co-operative rather than individualistic approach to learning. Now students feel comfortable with their ideas with their peers or through group works rather than relying on teacher for a model.

2.4: Emphasis on pair work and group work for improving writing:

There are different types of activities which help to improve writing skills: information gathering, task completion, opinion sharing, information-transfer activities etc. According to Richards (2006), through completing different types of peer and group works, learners will obtain several benefit:

- They can learn from hearing the language used by other members of the group.
- Their motivation level is likely to increase.
- They will share their idea among them and other can learn new vocabularies.
- They feel free to produce free hand writing.

If we check today's textbooks and teaching materials, we will find a wide variety of pair and small group activities.

2.5: Approaches to teaching writing:

Different types of writing approaches can increase learners' interest towards writing. If teacher arranges some different process of learning, it motivates students towards writing.

2.5.1: Writing Workshop:

Writing Workshop is a student centered approach in the classroom by implementing peer conferencing to assist in the organization and practice of writing (Calkins 1986). Calkins' writing workshop included extensive modeling by the teacher during whole group mini lessons, time for children to work on their own writings, constructive feedback in the context of teacher and peer conferences, and sharing and celebrating through various forms of publishing (Calkins, 1986 ; Rhodes & Dudley, 1996; Pinnell & Fountas, 1998).

There are three components of writing workshop:

1. Mini-lessons: The mini-lesson is a brief 5 to 10 min lesson which is taught at the beginning or at the end of the process. Mini-lesson focuses on improving one aspect of writing such as classroom procedures, prewriting strategies, revision strategies, editing and writing skills (Calkins, 1986).

2. Writing Process/Conferencing: Calkins (1986) divided the writing process into four subtopics:

Rehearsal: Teacher must guide the students and involve them in the forms of rehearsal such as brainstorming, creating lists and outlines, reading and conversing with their peers.

Drafting: The second step, is the time where writers focus on putting thoughts on paper.

Revision: it is the third step and is a continuous process. In this stage teachers should encourage students to focus on the contents of their first draft.

3. Sharing: The final component of writing workshop is sharing. During author's chair, the author sits in a special chair and the entire class gathers to listen as he/she shares the writing piece (Parry & Hornsby, 1985). This is the time to help students improve writing while they listen and respond through a purposeful dialogue (Atwell, 1987).

2.5.2: Process oriented writing: Process oriented writing is concerned with how ideas are developed and formulated in writing. Process oriented writing follows a number of steps: - pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Learning the writing process is important for the students as it enables students to express their thoughts, knowledge and feelings efficiently (Nasir, Naqvi & Bhamani 2013)

2.5.3: Product oriented writing: The product oriented writing emphasizes mechanical aspects of writing such as focusing on grammatical and syntactical structures.

2.5.4: The free writing approach: Students in this approach are assigned large amount of free writing. Sometimes teacher selects topic for them or they choose their own topic. The purpose of this writing is to achieve fluency in writing. The underlying belief teachers have in using this approach is that once a certain degree of fluency is established and all fear of writing is eradicated, accuracy and organization will come.

2.5.5: The communicative approach: Here students are expected to act like writers in real life situations. As a result real-world types of writing tasks are devised. Students benefit from doing activities and practice which has as its goal a communicative event.

2.6: Some Basics of Writing:

A teacher should know some basics of writing. In the context of Bangladesh, teacher needs to know some basics of writing. Through these basic beliefs of writing, they may help their students to become a spontaneous writer.

Janturbil and Wendy Bean(2006) think there are strong links between teachers basic beliefs and their classroom practice. In what follows they share some basics of writing with their reader. They suggest four basics of writing for the classroom:

1. Writing is a language act:

In Classroom teachers should give time for talking and listening before, during and after writing. Students need to talk about their topics before they start to write. Talking and listening, before writing helps students to focus on and get initial idea for their writing. During writing, listening and speaking can help students clarify and check for meaning which helpful for their revising and rewriting.

There is a link between writing and reading. Teacher takes every opportunity to make link between reading and writing. This might be during modeled writing lessons or when we read to students.

2. Writing is worth learning:

Effective writers need to be confident writers. They need to understand that writing is life empowering and therefore worthy of learning. In classroom this means, teachers give the opportunity to write everyday in a supportive and risk-free environment. Teachers value students' writing explicitly through sharing and meaningful feedback. Teachers should provide many opportunities for students to reflect on their writing and to share their writing with peers.

3. Writers need to understand the roles of audience and purpose:

Teacher should read aloud to students (at all grade levels) as often as possible. When appropriate, teachers discuss the author's perceived purpose for writing and its intended audience.

Teachers should always give opportunity to talk about the purpose of their writing before they begin writing

4. Writers need to understand the writing process:

Teachers should use modeling and teacher talk to demonstrate to students all the processes of writing, including focusing, composing, editing, and proofreading. Teacher modeling is not just about the surface features of writing but is concerned with control of the process, even with beginning writers. Engagement in all the processes requires a range of skills, so teacher modeling and instruction are important to ensure the development of these skills.

Teachers should remind these processes of writing regularly and they can display an outline chart in the class regularly.

2.7: Advantages of early stage writing:

Writing is one of the basic literacy skills and it should be taught at very early stage of education. Writing helps to improve understanding and narration skills. Writing is significantly affected by our position, our experience, our feelings and our sense. Writers need to see, listen to, feel, smell and taste. Writing helps the students to make their ideas clear and to organize them. Writing is a flexible tool in that it also helps them to remember and share something (Graham & Harris 2005).

According to Tolga & Ozge(2012, p. 347), writing is one of the basic literacy skills that are taught to the students beginning by early years of basic education. These periods of early years are very crucial and critical for students to develop a positive thinking toward writing.

Early stage of education is very important for students to develop their positive attitude towards writing and this is high time to make a habit of writing. Here in Bangladesh, practices of writing are very poor. From the very early stage of education, students are not eager to write. If students have negative perception about writing from early academic years, they are more likely to be unsuccessful at writing.

According to Paquette (2008), children at the pre-school period or at the first year of basic education mostly like to read and write but when they are at four grades, their positive attitude towards reading and writing become less positive. Merisuo-Storm (2006).thinks teacher should give interesting topics for writing and students find joy in writing. Here I assume in the context of Bangladesh teacher gives some list of writing and students memorize. Students do not find any joy in writing and writing become monotonous to them.

2.8: Teacher's role in the writing class:

Teachers have very important roles to play in improving the student's perceptions about writing. At the very early stage, a good writing instruction starts with supporting the students' interest in writing. Therefore, teacher should play a role of a guide and reinforce in this process. Teachers should share their ideas with students to produce self confident.

2.9: History and present condition of writing English in Bangladesh:

The objective of writing in a foreign language is to get learners to acquire the abilities and skills to produce different kinds of written text. In Bangladesh, from primary level to higher secondary, majority of the students study through bangali medium. Though now a days their books are written in CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) approach. But real scenario is different in the class. Most teachers still follow traditional method.

According to Shahidullah (1998), "An appropriate method of ELT should be based on the socio-cultural variables of learners. In Bangladesh, as testing is memory based, so language tests do not reflect the students' actual language proficiency. A country can not make a progressive mode of

teaching and learning system without changing the traditional evaluation system”. So the present scenario can not be changed if traditional method goes on.

Writing problem is one of the major problems in the classroom. It is a combination of abilities and difficulties which affect the learning process. It is generally accepted that primary students are gradually move step by step. In this stage of education, students do not write fluently. Success depends on some issues such as teacher motivation, use of right method in proper way, learning environment etc.

Through this chapter we find some basics of writing, some aspects of writing and some approaches of writing also. These can conscious our teachers towards their students as well as it make students impulsive for writing.

Finally it can be said, learning to write is a complex process for all young children and most likely English Language Learner will need additional instructional support (Goldenberg 2011).

Young English Learners need some clear instructions, a friendly learning environment and as well as teacher’s help to acquire necessary knowledge and skills to be able to write properly and correctly.

Chapter-III

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction: This chapter presents the methodology of the study and discusses issues of the research design, sampling, setting, and data collection methods and data analysis procedures.

3.2 Research Design: The present study has investigated the present status of teaching writing in primary level classroom in Dhaka. The study has evaluated the current scenario of primary level students writing skills in Dhaka. It has also evaluated current practice of teaching writing composition in primary schools. Therefore the present study aims to respond to the research questions of qualitative and quantitative nature.

3.3 Setting: The data collection took place in formal setting. Data have been collected from the students and teachers during the school hours. Both types of data have been collected from two government primary schools in Dhaka (urban).

3.4 Sampling: For the research purpose data have been collected from two government primary schools. Data were collected from 60 students (class V) from two schools through questionnaire. The researcher took permission from the school authority in order to conduct this questionnaire survey. Six English teachers of class five have selected from these three schools.

Furthermore there were interviews of four teachers. Along with this I had conducted one Focus Group Discussion (FGD). In addition, I have observed three classes from two different schools to collect the data.

3.5 Research Instruments: The instruments used in this study include:

1. Students survey questionnaire
2. Teacher survey questionnaire
3. Focus Group Discussion
4. Teachers interview
5. Classroom observation

3.5.1 Questionnaire design process: To conduct this research two types of questionnaires have been prepared: one is for the teachers and the other is for the students. The questionnaire did not include any ambiguous words or any sensitive query. To obtain the information, questions were designed in simple way to elicit the authentic data. While designing questions for the questionnaire survey, level of respondents' intelligibility and their level of vocabulary have been considered.

In the student questionnaire there are eight close ended questions and two open ended questions. Six close ended questions have been given in the teacher's questionnaire. In addition, there are three open ended questions for teacher to know more about their teaching of writing. The close ended questions have been designed in multiple choice question patterns (two-four options) so that students do not face any problem to answer the questions. On the other hand open ended question had no option and therefore the participants had an option to provide their opinion. The format of the questionnaires is shown in Appendix C and D.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion:

To get the qualitative data I conducted one focus group discussion with students from two different schools. There were 12 students who took part in the discussion. The numbers of questions were five and I took 35 minutes in one school and about 45 minutes in another school. In both school I used Bangla language to conduct the FGD.

3.5.3 Teachers Interview:

Four teachers from two different schools attended the interview. I gave questions for answering. They were very busy because annual exam of the schools were very near. So they could not give long time for interview. It took 20-25 minutes. The total number of the questions for interview was 5.

3.5.4 Classroom observation: Class observation is another research instrument used for data collection. The teachers were arranged as their everyday so that class did not become artificial one. The study required data to document and analyses the real scenario of English Language

Writing class. The researcher prepared a checklist to aid the observation and notes were taken during the class room observation. The checklist included the followings:

1. Methods
2. Materials
3. Classroom environment
4. Teacher and students interaction
5. Feedback
6. Classroom activities (Group work, pair work)
7. Use of Rubrics etc.

I observed total three classes from two different schools. Through the classroom observation real scenario of writing practice in government primary school came out. The outcome of this observation helped to shed light on the research questions.

3.6 Data collection procedure:

Data was collected through questionnaire, FGD, Teachers interview and classroom observation. This study was conducted in formal setting of three classes which took two weeks. Researcher showed them a formal letter which was collected from her institution and explained the purpose of the research to the school authority. The questionnaires consist of open ended close ended questions for teachers and students. Researcher explained questions for better understandings and in some cases she used Bangla to make it easier for students to understand. The administering of the questionnaire took about 40 minutes.

After the students survey, teachers were interviewed in the office room. The researcher distributed questionnaires among teachers. This took about 30 minutes.

For the FGD, a friendly and cordial environment was maintained so that the students feel free to respond.

3.7 Data analysis procedure:

The researcher meticulously examined the data. After analyzing the data quantitatively percentage of different variables in the form of chart is shown.

3.8 Ethics

I have maintained a strong ethics while and after collecting data. I ensured that the responses of the participants are kept strictly confidential and data from this survey is used for this research purpose only.

Chapter-IV

Results:

This chapter presents analysis and results of the close- ended and open-ended questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and teacher interview data.

4.1- The findings of close ended questionnaire.

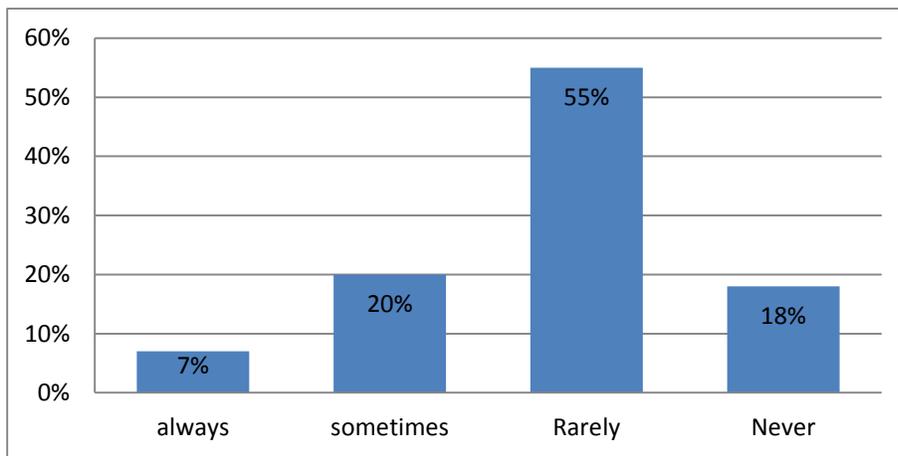


Figure 4.1.1: Enjoyment of composition writing classes.

See figure (4.1.1), it is evident that 55% students rarely enjoy their writing classes and 18% students said they never enjoy their composition writing classes. Where 7% students affirmed that they always enjoy their composition writing classes and 20% students sometimes enjoy their composition writing classes.

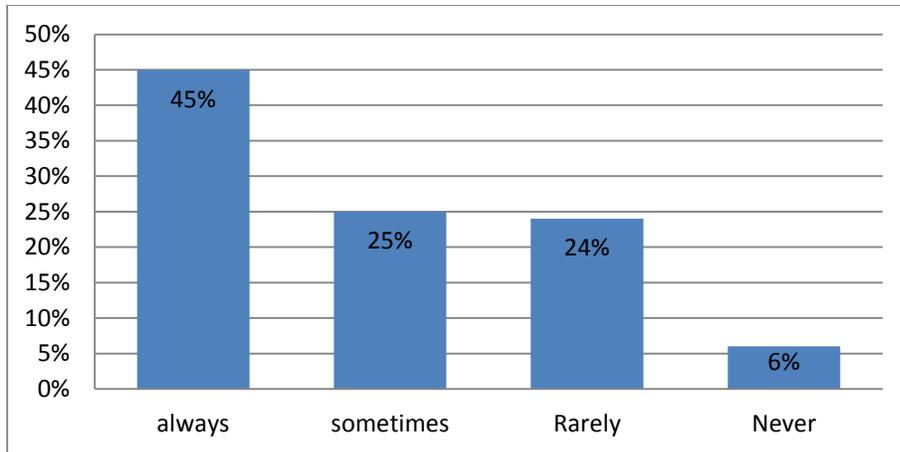


Figure-4.1.2: Improvement of English writing.

This figure is about students' improvement of writing through composition. Here, 45% students think that composition writing help them to improve their English writing. 25% students think sometimes composition writing help them to improve their English writing. On the other hand 24% students think rarely and 6% students think composition writing helps them to improve their English writing.

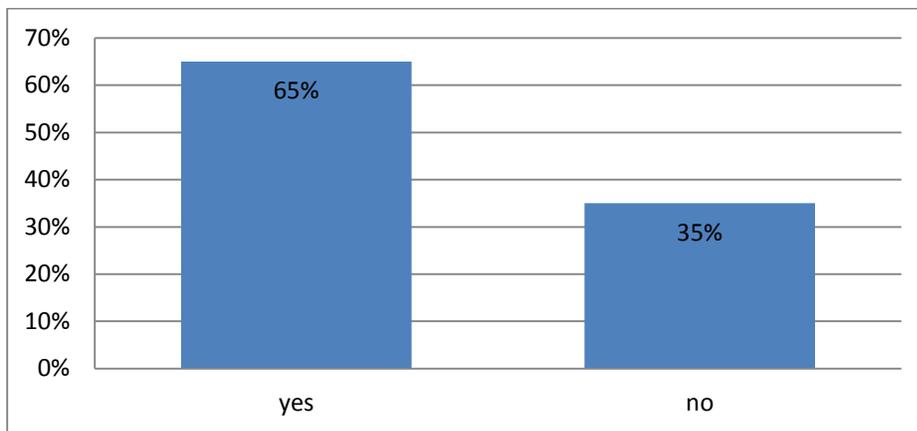


Figure 4.1.3: Sufficiency of composition writing classes.

The result of this figure shows that 65% students think the number of classes on composition writing is sufficient while 35% students think the number of classes on composition writing is not sufficient.

4.1.4: Please mention some topics (at least four) that you have covered recently in your writing classes:

- A visit to a place of interest
- Your Favorite Poet
- Winter Morning
- Your School
- Your Friend
- A Memorable Day in My life
- Last Eid Vacation
- An accident
- Your Favorite Game
- Your Daily Life
- Your new story book

First four compositions had been written by 20 students and 18 students mention last 4 compositions (An accident, Your Favorite Game, Your Daily Life, Your new story book). 22 students mentioned three topics (Your Friend, A Memorable Day in My life, Last Eid Vacation).

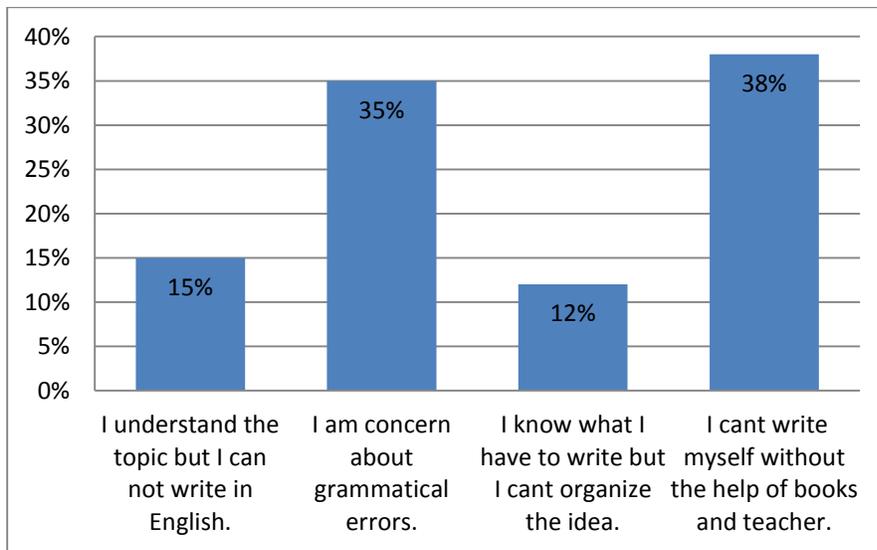


Figure 4.1.5: Choice statement

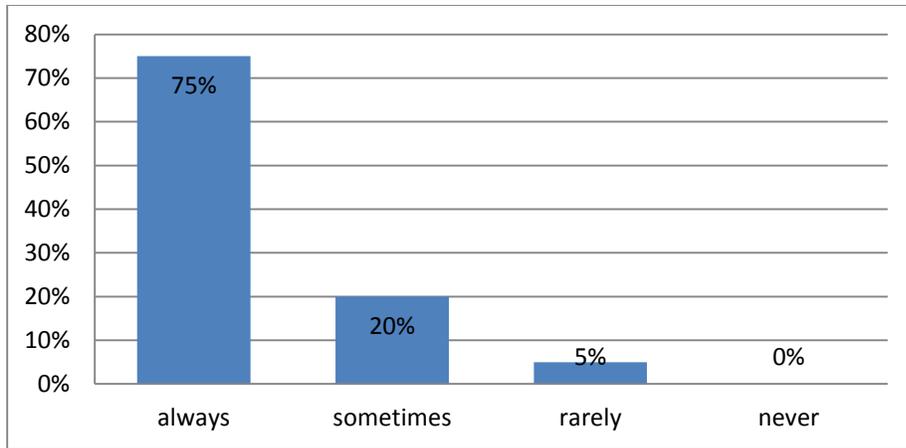


Figure-4.1.6: Teacher preferences for choosing writing topics for students.

The participants were asked to inform about teacher preferences for choose their writing topics for students. Here, 75% students said that teacher always chooses writing topics for them and 20% students said that teacher sometimes chooses writing topics for them. On the other hand 5% students said rarely teacher chooses their writing topics. It is surprising to know 0% (no one) students mark on option “never”.

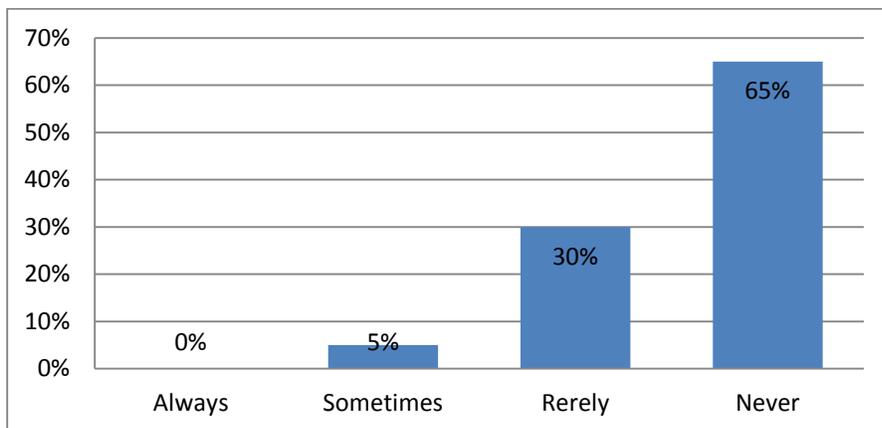


Figure 4.1.7: Use of rubrics.

Among the respondent students 65% said that their teacher never use rubrics for marking and 30% students said that their teacher rarely use rubrics for marking. 5% students said sometimes their teacher use rubrics for marking. . It is surprising to know 0% none reported “always”.

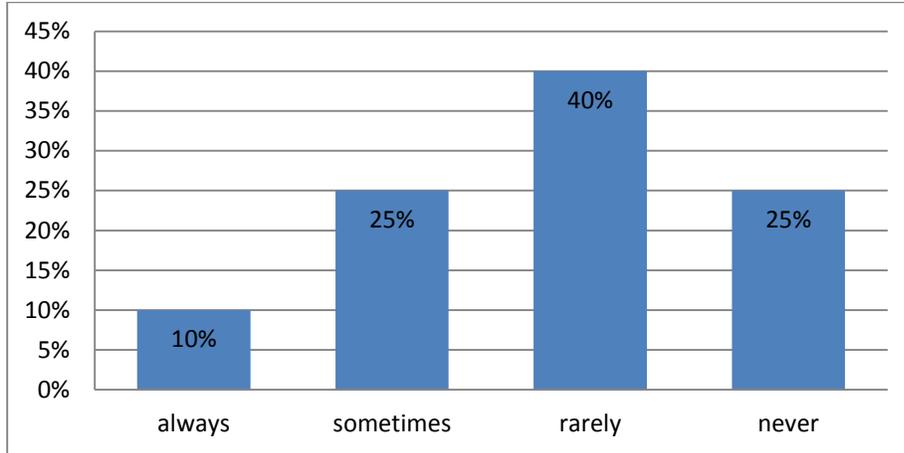


Figure 4.1.8: Teacher encouragement for students writing.

This figure shows 40% students said their teacher rarely encourages writing by themselves. Here ‘sometimes’ and ‘never’ option is equal.25% students mark both of these options. 10% students mark ‘always’ option.

4.2-Teacher Questionnaire:

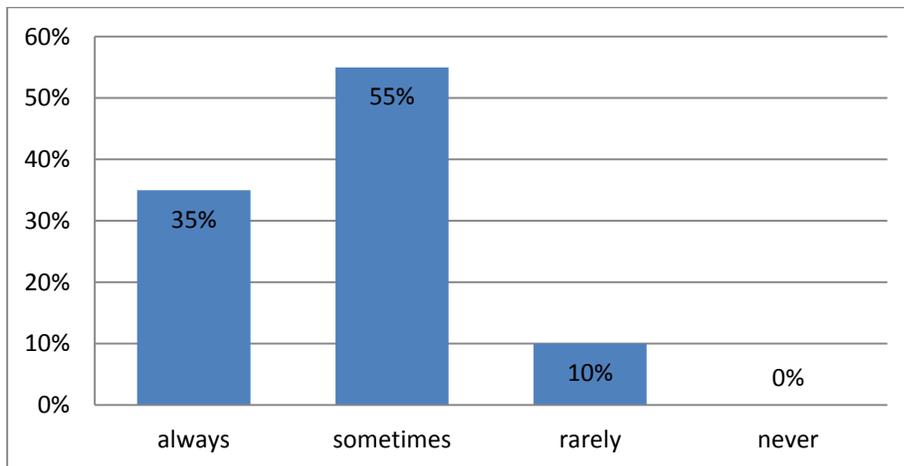


Figure 4.2.1: Students enjoyment of writing tasks in the classroom.

Among respondent teachers 55% stated sometimes students enjoy writing tasks in the classroom and 35% teachers' response was- students enjoy writing tasks in the classroom. 10% teachers said students rarely enjoy their writing tasks in the classroom. None opted for “never”.

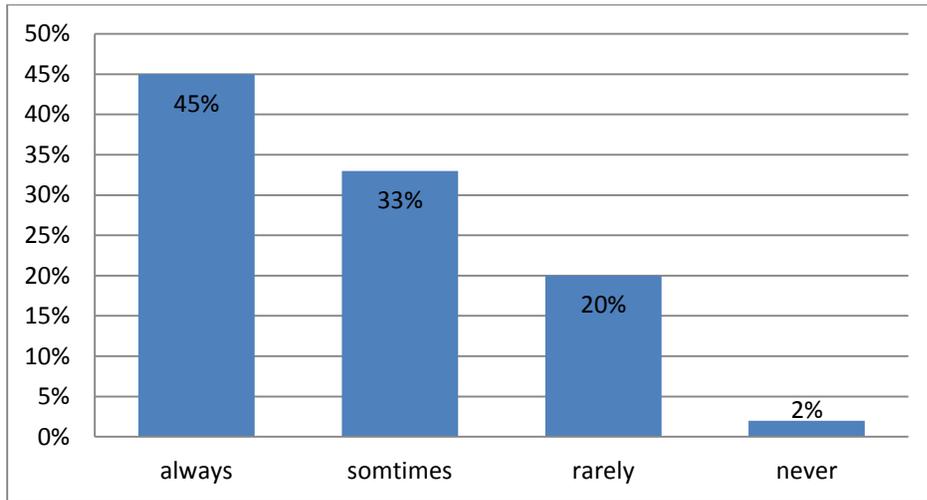


Figure 4.2.2: Students enjoyment of writing short composition on their own.

This figure shows 45% teachers said that their students always enjoy writing short composition on their own and 33% said that their students sometimes enjoy writing short composition on their own. On the other hand 20% teachers said their students rarely enjoy short composition their own and 2% teachers mark the never option for this question.

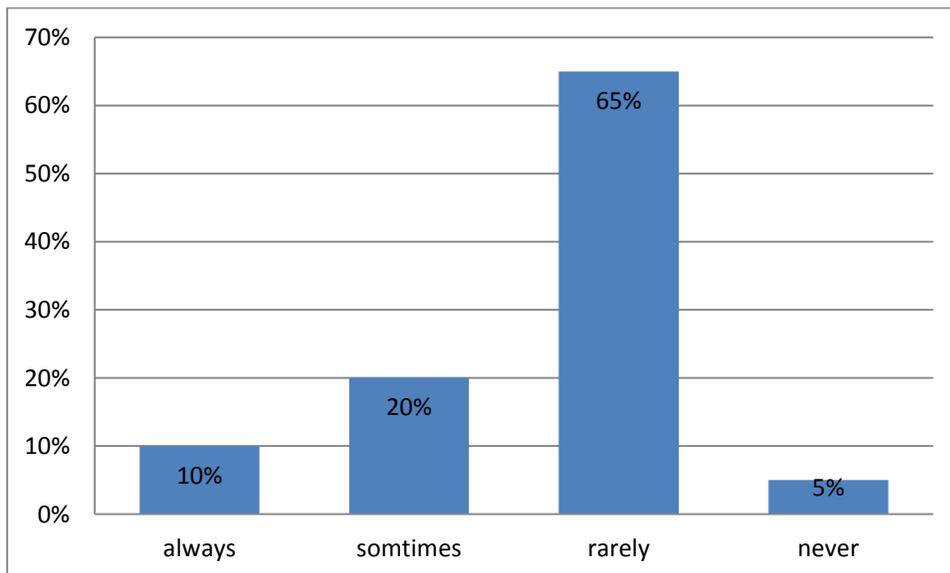


Figure 4.2.3: Sharing ideas, experience and thoughts with other students.

The figure shows 65% teacher said that students rarely enjoy sharing their own ideas, experience and thoughts with other students and 20% said that they sometimes enjoy sharing own ideas, experience and thoughts with other students. 10% mark ‘always’ option and ‘5%’ mark never option for this question.

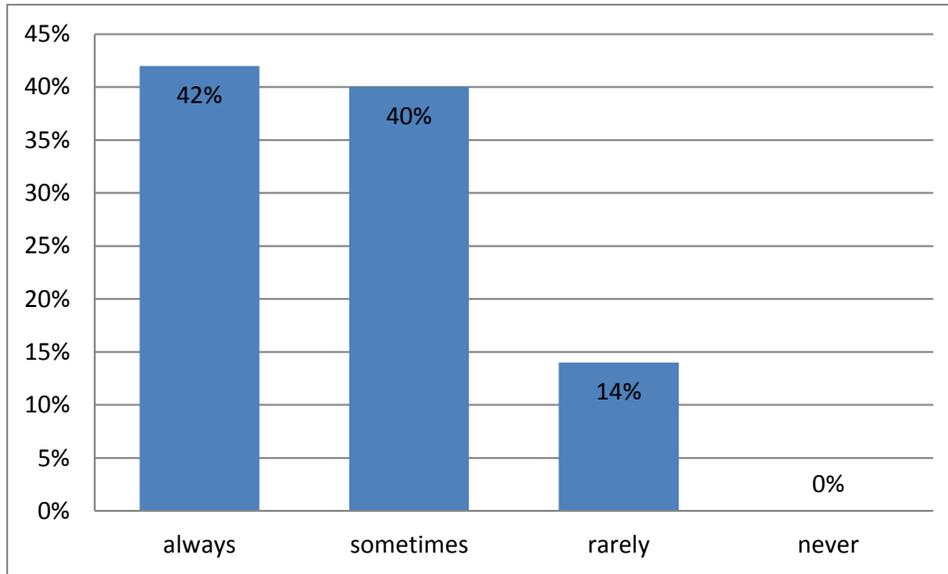


Figure 4.2.4: Students Class work/Home work

Here, 42% teachers said that they always give C.W/H.W that they can write based on their own thought and 40% marked sometimes option for this question. 14% teachers rarely give C.W/H.W that students can write based on their own thought and no one (0%) marked ‘never’ option for this question.

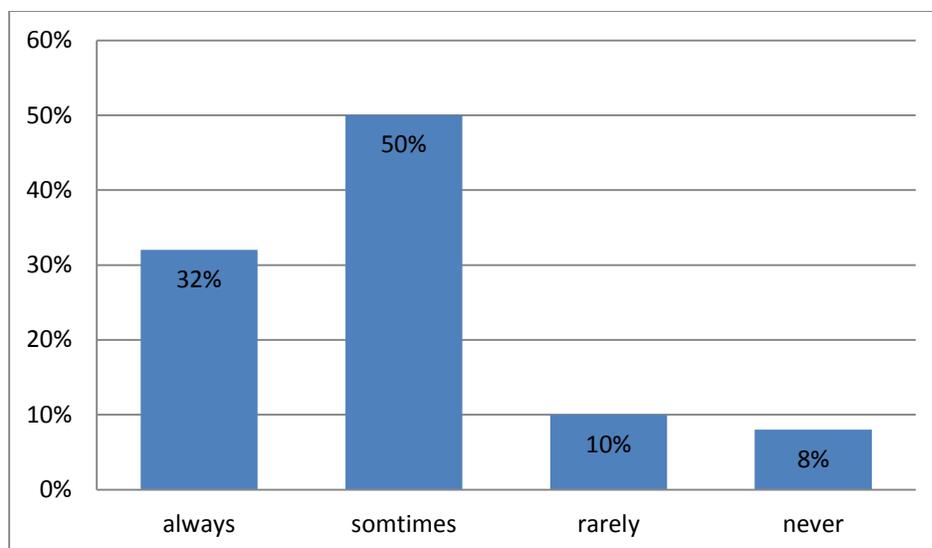


Figure 4.2.5: Use of rubrics.

This figure presents that the highest 50% teachers sometimes use rubrics for marking and 32% teachers always use rubrics for marking. On the other hand 10% teachers rarely use rubrics for marking. 2% teachers marked never option for this question.

Results of the open-ended questions:

Two open-ended questions (Students Questionnaire):

There are two open-ended questions for students, the first one is about their preferences of writing practices. Here most of the students are in favor of regular writing practices, free hand writing and writing by themselves. Some students mentioned some writing practices for their composition writing:

- Interesting topic like last cricket/football match, any interesting movie etc.
- Writing about their daily life, holiday or short trip.
- About their personal likings/disliking.
- From students responses it is clear that they like to write as their own interest. When they think writing will be marked by teachers, they get scared of writing. Students also want instant feedback on their writing but they do not get it always.
- The second one is about their involvement in different activities by teachers (like: group work, pair work, role play, presentation etc.) and effectiveness of different types activities. Most of the students think it is effective for their composition writing. They

also think, they can share their ideas through different types of activities and it is helpful for free writing. Students feel bored when they have to memorize some short listed composition for the exam. Students have to think when they will finish their syllabus. Some are very anxious about their scores and they memorize composition as their teacher say.

Three open-ended questions (Teacher Questionnaire):

The first question is about students involvement and teachers steps for it. Teachers take feedback from students. Most of the teachers read the composition first and translate it in Bangle. They also mark the hard word. Sometimes they write hard words on the board. Most of the teacher thinks if they understand Bangle meaning of composition they will get involved in the writing practices in the classroom.

The second question is about students mistakes. Here most of the teachers mentioned about students' grammatical mistakes and spelling mistakes. Some teachers also mentioned mistakes in punctuation.

The third one is about challenges which teachers face to improve students writing skill. All teachers face challenges in improving students writing. Teachers have to maintain a large class and lots of students. So it is very difficult for them to check all writing scripts. As a result, they can not always give feedback because of time limit. On the other hand they can not communicate with all parents. There are some students who need extra care at home but parents are not conscious about it.

4.3: Findings of FGD (Focus Group Discussion):

4.3.1: Students practices at home and school for writing:

1. How much do you practice at home and school for writing?

Among 12 students, 4 stated that they practices at home and school and they spend at least one hour for writing at home. Rest of the students said that they practice at school most of the time and if teacher gives home work, they practice at home.

2. What types of mistake do you make in writing composition?

Four students mentioned that they make few mistakes as they practice at home. If they make mistakes it may be in spelling. Four students mentioned most of the time they make grammatical mistakes if they do not memorize the composition. Rest of the students mentions grammatical, punctuation and spelling problems also.

3. Do you think teacher's motivation is needed for improving writing skills?

All students agreed here. They think if teachers motivate them and give positive feedback, it will be helpful to improve their writing. They also think if teacher motivates them for free writing, it helps them a lot.

4. What type of challenges do you face in writing?

They mentioned several challenges. Such as:

- There is no classroom discussion.
- Lack of vocabulary
- Lack of practices
- Time constrain
- Lack of teachers feedback

5. What do you think about classroom environment? Is it supportive for writing?

Most students think, classroom environment is not always supportive. They think, as it is government primary schools, they do not get proper environment of learning as private schools do. Sometimes their classrooms are full of students especially before exam. They can not concentrate properly because of large number of students.

4.3.2 Findings from Teacher's interview:

1. What are the strategies do you follow to teach writing skill?

Two teachers said that they do not follow any specific strategies to teach writing skill.

2. How much willingness do your learners have in learning?

The participants from one school said that all his students are not same. There are very few students who have willingness for learning. He said, sometimes they write their own and shows me. Another teacher said he has also some students sometimes who write their own and give it to him for feedback.

3. How do you correct/give feedback to them when students make mistakes?

Teachers can not give proper feedback because of time constrain. There is large number of students and it is very difficult to check all scripts in the class, all participants said. One teacher said, sometimes I take scripts and check it in my free time. He also said, I correct the sentences/words and write it down below the scripts.

4. How much time do you spend in class to teach writing composition?

There is no fixed time schedule for all classes in all schools. Teachers divided their class time by themselves (30-45minutes). The participant said that they spend one class of 45minutes because it is first class of the day. Another teacher said that he get 35 minutes as it is 2nd period of the day.

5. Is CLT is more effective than GTM to improve writing?

All participant teachers agreed that CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) is more effective than GTM (Grammatical Translation Method).

4.3.3 The findings of classroom observation:

<u>Number of class</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Materials</u>	<u>Classroom environment</u>	<u>Teacher & Students interaction</u>	<u>Feedback</u>	<u>Classroom activities</u>	<u>Use of rubrics</u>	<u>Decoration & seating arrangement</u>
<u>Class-1</u>	<u>No specific</u>	<u>Text book</u>	<u>Noisy</u>	<u>Less interaction</u>	<u>Less feedback</u>	<u>No group work/pair work</u>	<u>no</u>	<u>Well decorated</u>
<u>Class-2</u>	<u>No specific</u>	<u>Text book</u>	<u>Excessive noise</u>	<u>Less interaction</u>	<u>Less feedback</u>	<u>No group work/pair work</u>	<u>no</u>	<u>Decorated</u>
<u>Class-3</u>	<u>No specific</u>	<u>Text book and test paper</u>	<u>Excessive noise</u>	<u>Less interaction</u>	<u>Less feedback</u>	<u>Class discussion</u>	<u>no</u>	<u>Decorated</u>

Chapter-V

Analysis of the findings and discussion

In this chapter, the findings of the study are discussed and explained keeping coordination among the research questions, findings and literature review.

The study is about English composition writing skills of class five students and their teaching and learning practices at government primary schools.

Students enjoyment is very important for learning. But in my study I found only 7% students enjoy their composition writing classes. On the other hand 35% teachers think their students enjoy their writing classes. This gap is clearer to the researcher when she observed real classroom scenario. Here most of the students were inattentive in their class.

Students think they need a supportive environment for improving their writing. In the FGD all students said that if they get a supportive environment in the classroom, it helps them to write. Through the classroom observation it has been seen that the classes are extremely noisy and students are inattentive. The classroom size and students ratio is not equal. In one class the researcher found 56 students. According to the study conducted by Basir and Ferdousy(2006) a class having 45-91 students can be regarded as large classroom.

45% students think composition writing helps to improve their writing skill. They think their text book is well suited for this purpose. They get some hints for writing short composition there. They think if teachers follow this rule(hints for writing) and if they do more practices according to text book, composition writing will help to improve their writing skill. Students need to understand the writing process. Here mainly they indicate to follow CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) exactly. In teachers interview they also said that CLT is more effective for composition writing. One of the participants said that now a days text book is enough for improving their writing but sometimes for better marks students follow some test paper/model books.

In a question regarding students mistakes, the students have said in the (FGD) that they make different types of mistakes. Such as-

1. Grammatical mistake (subject-verb-agreement, punctuation, tense etc)
2. Spelling
3. Ambiguous idea etc.

Grammatical mistakes are very common mistake among them. Teachers also gave same opinion for this question. Most of the time they find these types of mistakes. It is true that, they are early stage learners and making mistakes is very natural. Here, students think lack of practices and teacher's help are main reason behind it. It can be assume now, more practices and supportive environment make them good at writing.

Students also think, they need some supportive activities for writing practices-such as group work, pair work, class discussion etc. Through the close-ended question, we found that most of the students want different types of activities in the class and they think it is effective for their writing. Through different types of classroom activities learners will obtain several benefits such as they can share their idea, their motivation level will increase, they feel free to write more etc.

75% students do not get chance to write themselves where teacher choose topics for them and only 10% students respond that their teachers always encourage them to write themselves. On the other hand 42% teachers said that they always give C.W (class work)/H.W (home work) write based on their own thought.

Regarding practices and strategies questions (close ended), students said that they do like free writing and write on their own. Teachers do not follow any specific rules to make students involved in the writing practices. Teachers take feedback from students. Most of the teachers read the composition first and translate it through Bangla. They also mark the new words. Sometimes they write in the blackboard. Most of the teachers think if they understand Bangla meaning of composition they get involved in the writing practices in the classroom.

According to NCTB (National Curriculum Text Book Board 2015), there are two composition writing (Q num-4 and 8) one seen and another is unseen. There is a guideline for marking which is provided by NCTB. Guidelines for marking are given below:

Points	Marking Guidelines	Number
Content	For content one mark should be given for each sentence written to the topic (total of 5 marks). In this marking section punctuation, spelling and handwriting should not be marked. Mark only whether the student is able to express his/her ideas so that the marker understands what is written.	5 marks
Sentence Structure	All sentence have correct structure (noun, adjective, verb)	2 marks
	Up to two sentence incorrect	1 mark
	More than two sentence	0 mark
Spelling	All words are correctly spelt (up to 5 incorrect words allowed)	1 mark
Capital letter and punctuation	All correct	2 mark
	Up to 5 mistakes	1 mark
	More than 5 mistakes	0 mark
	Total marks	10 marks

65% students said that their teacher do not use any rubrics for marking. They give a mark in an average. On the contrary, teachers said (32%) that they use rubrics for marking. Another

important thing is that teachers are concentrating on grammatical mistakes but according to NCTB guidelines content should be considered first. Even teachers do not count the spelling mistakes for marking.

Students and teachers both have to face different types of challenges at writing. All teachers face challenges in this field (close ended question 5). Teachers have to maintain a large class and lots of students. So it is very difficult for them to check all writing scripts. As a result they always can not give feedback because of time limit. On the other hand they can not communicate with all parents. There are some students who need extra care at home but parents are not conscious about it. Students have still fear towards the foreign language and for this fear, their tendency towards memorization. Teachers are still giving priority on grammatical mistakes and they are very concerned about that.

From the classroom observation researcher found noisy environment. There is less interaction between teacher and students. Those who are sitting in the last bench, make noise and fun among themselves.

Some common mistakes while students write composition (classroom observation): Through classroom observation I have collected some writing samples. There are some common mistakes I have found in students composition writings are listed below:

Limited vocabulary: Most of the students have limited vocabulary and they struggle to express their ideas. Students use same words again and again.

Grammatical mistakes: Most of the students have problems in choosing right verb form in sentence. They have also problems in use of articles and spelling. Some students mix tenses in the same sentence. For example: He visit the zoo yesterday.

They finds some different types of trees.

When we bring some leafs for animals, they looked very excited.

Here, most the students make different types of mistakes. As they early stage of education, this is the proper time to make them correct.

So, from all discussion it is evident that the present conditions of teaching-learning practices of writing at the government primary schools are not satisfactory.

Chapter VI

Recommendations and Conclusion

6.1. Recommendations

This part of the study presents some possible recommendations that may pave on effective ways to think about present condition of teaching-learning practices of writing at the primary schools and possible solution to overcome the situation.

- According to Kemboi, Andiema and M'mbone (2014), writing contests can be organized and best writers and instructors can be rewarded. Teachers should encourage learners to write regularly, by giving them tasks that motivate them and guiding them through the topics given. Here, I agree with them. If teachers of our country encourage learners to write regularly they will be good at writing.

- Toga Erdogan and Ozge Erodogan (2013) think a positive and supportive classroom environment should be provided to motivate the students properly. They negative perceptions and attitudes toward writing seem to be lack of motivation for writing. From the classroom observation I found that when teacher use any positive (good, very good) words, students become confident. As they are early stage of education, they need stress free classroom environment. I think a supportive classroom environment remove students negative perceptions toward writing.

- Ainy S (2001) suggests that to provide the students with the maximum benefit in an atmosphere where English is a foreign language, teachers should involve them in a variety of activities e.g. pair work, group work, discussion, project etc. She also added that student participation should be given priority over teacher participation as the basic skills of language can best be practiced through learner centered activities and so tasks should be interesting and relevant to the learners' life and environment. So for the writing practices learners' autonomy in the classroom is essential. I think learners autonomy is the key which is develop learners thinking level towards learning. If students can express

their own thinking, it stimulates themselves for participating different types of classroom activities. Different types of classroom activities (pair work, group work, discussion, project etc) are important for improving writing skills.

6.2. Conclusion:

The classroom can be an effective place for practicing and improving writing skills for the students. As primary students are very early stage learners, they need more motivation and supportive environment for their writing. Regular writing activities can build students confidence and remove their fear towards writing. They think 'English' as a subject only to memorize and pass. If this misconception can be removed from their mind at very early stage, it will helpful for their future education life. For this purpose our educationist, teachers as well as parents should be conscious. They should work together to make supportive and appropriate atmosphere to practice writing. Teachers and students also have to work together to overcome the difficulties and challenges.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire for the focus group discussion (FGD).

1. How much do you practice at home and school for writing?
2. What types of mistake do you do in writing composition?
3. Do you think teacher's motivation is needed for improving writing skill?
4. What type of challenges do you face at writing?
5. What do you think about classroom environment? Is it supportive for writing?

Appendix B: Questionnaire for the Teacher's interview.

1. What are the strategies do you follow to teach writing skill?
2. How much willingness do your learners have in learning?
3. How do you correct/give feedback them when students make mistakes?
4. How much time do you spend in class to teach writing composition?
5. Is CLT is more effective than GTM to improve writing?

Appendix C: Questionnaire for students.

1. Do you enjoy composition writing classes?

a. always

b. sometimes

c. rarely

d. never

2. Do you think composition writing help you to improve your English writing?

a. always

b. sometimes

c. rarely

d. never

3. Do you think the number of classes on composition writing is sufficient?

2. Does your teacher involve you in different activities (like: group work, pair work, role play, presentation etc.)? Is it effective for your composition writing?

Appendix D: Questionnaire for teacher.

1. Do your students enjoy writing tasks in the classrooms?

a. always

b. sometimes

c. rarely

d. never

2. Do your students enjoy writing short compositions on their own?

a. always

b. sometimes

c. rarely

d. never

3. Do you think your students enjoy sharing their own ideas, experience and thoughts with others?

a. always

b. sometimes

c. rarely

d. never

4. Can your students correctly write their own sentences in English?

a. always

b.sometimes

c. rarely

d.never

5. Do you ever give your students a C.W/H.W that they can write based on their own thought?

a. always

b.sometimes

c. rarely

d.never

6.Do you use any rubrics?

a. always

b.sometimes

c. rarely

d.never

Close ended Questions:

1. What do you do to make students get involved in the writing practices in the classroom?
2. What kinds of error do you find in their writings?
3. What type of challenges do you face for improving your students writing skill?

Appendix E: Class Observation Sheet.

<u>Number of class</u>	<u>Method</u>	<u>Materials</u>	<u>Classroom environment</u>	<u>Teacher & Students interaction</u>	<u>Feedback</u>	<u>Classroom activities</u>	<u>Use of rubrics</u>	<u>Decoration & seating arrangement</u>