

**A Phenomenological Study on Newly Enrolled Undergraduate
Students' Paragraph Writing Skill**

By

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fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

Paragraph writing skill is a prerequisite for any academic writing at the tertiary level. However, many students do not have paragraph writing skill even after successful completion of English as a language course in school and college-level education. This phenomenological study explored students' paragraph writing experiences before enrolling in the pre-university language program at a private university to find out the causes of poor paragraph writing skill and its remedies. Six students were purposefully selected for interviewing considering their struggle in paragraph writing, which were identified in their entrance examination and offered pre-university writing courses. The findings of the study identified several challenges ranging from idea generation, inadequate content knowledge to poor grasp of grammar and vocabulary. Subsequently, students also pointed out causes of paragraph writing problems. Eventually, students also recommend some solutions to overcome these problems, such as learning coherence, vocabulary, grammar and needs of practice.

Keywords: paragraph, challenges, academic writing, rote memorization, pre-strategies of writing, student's perception, cohesion, vocabulary.

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Approval

The thesis titled “A Phenomenological Study on Newly Enrolled Undergraduate Students’ Paragraph Writing Skill” submitted by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The paragraph is the core component of any composition. While writing a composition, one uses words as a primary component to form sentences. Next, sentences link together to make a paragraph and eventually, paragraphs join together to form letters, reports, essays, and other texts (Sattayatham; Ratanapinyowong, 2008). These are different types of texts that students need to master to excel in their academic life. As students are given grade by evaluating different genres of writing. Thus competent paragraph writing skill is an integrated part of academic success.

In Bangladesh, English is taught as a foreign language from primary to tertiary level and paragraph writing is taught as a part to develop the students' writing skill. However, in research at tertiary level students' paragraph writing skill, the results show, "serious weaknesses in several areas from spelling mistakes as the highest number (n-573) to pronoun(n-19). In addition, sentence level mistakes also indicate a poor command of syntactic accuracy (Khan & Akter, 2011, p. 4). It reveals the common paragraph writing problems prevalent among the students ranging from grammar, inadequate vocabulary, spelling to language mechanics and paragraph organization. Thus, lack of proficiency in writing is a common phenomenon among tertiary level students in Bangladesh.

As a result, many students are unable to cope with the demand of academic writing skills of tertiary level education at private university in Bangladesh, where the medium of instruction is English. To solve this problem, pre-university writing course is offered as an aiding tool to those who fail the regular admission test of the university. The objective of the course is to help

the students to become competent enough for the English instructional university. Additionally, these courses are designed to develop a foundation in academic writing of the students, which will enable them to navigate competently the writing they face as they navigate the academic curriculum at the university.

This study aims to figure out students' perspectives on their writing skills, especially paragraph writing skills by interviewing them. This reveals what they think about their paragraph writing skill, the challenges they face and the causes behind this as well it would provide insight into the sources of the problems and how learners identify their inadequacies. The discussions will also try to draw out some probable remedies to deal with paragraph writing challenges as well as what can be done to develop the deficiencies of students' English writing skills. The results of the study indicate that the majority of the students at the pre-university course level are unable to write effective paragraphs. The findings of the study disclosed that the main problems of students' English paragraph writing are - lack of content generation, language, cohesion, grammar, and insufficient vocabulary. Through this study, even university teachers who design curricula and courses would come to know about the paragraph writing problems faced by the newly enrolled pre-university students.

1.2 Problem Statement

Students transition especially from Bangla medium instruction of education to a tertiary level of academia is hindered as they find themselves inadequately prepared for academic writing skills of tertiary level education. As a result, a number of students find it difficult to cope with the writing demands of academia and this impacts on their academic performance. Furthermore, paragraph writing is a crucial skill in university life; however, Bangladeshi students seem to struggle in this writing skills as they face problems in brainstorming, sentence

organization, grammar, and vocabulary. In this study, “Writing Problems of Non-English Major Undergraduate Students in Bangladesh: An Observation,” the researcher (Afrin 2016), says, “students have problems in writing in terms of spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure and organization of ideas.” Considering these issues, this study aims to find out the challenges students face while writing a paragraph.

Despite the importance of paragraph writing skills at university level, there are a few research papers in Bangladesh that investigate poor performance in paragraph writing skills and suggest some solutions for it. Most of the studies on EFL writing skill of Bangladeshi students focus on general writing challenges of students, that explore the challenges the students face while writing a composition ranging from grammar, vocabulary, to the pedagogical approach of the institutes and the government. For example, in “Writing challenges of Bangladeshi Tertiary Level EFL learners,” Karim, Masum and Latif (2017), through quantitative approach, examine the degrees of difficulty tertiary level students face at different stages of paragraph writing and also at different types of paragraph writing. However, none of these papers entirely take the account of the students' experiences and opinions regarding their poor writing skills. Therefore, it is essential to see the problems from the students' point of view and how to overcome the situation.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

A pre-university writing course is offered as an aiding tool to those who fail the regular admission test of the university. According to the newly enrolled pre-university students, some of the most common problems they face are content or idea-generation, grammar, limited

vocabulary, mechanics and correct sentence construction. They also struggle to cope with the demand of the English medium academic environment of the university from composition to presentation of a given topic as they have come from Bangla-medium secondary education. It is evident that they lack the necessary writing skills to write well-developed paragraphs, which are the core elements of writing different types of academic composition. The deficiencies in writing skills make this transition from secondary level to university education is a big challenge for the newly enrolled students.

Through this research, I want to find out writing problems of pre-university students to identify their deficiencies in paragraph writing skills. This study also aims to figure out the reasons behind the lack of paragraph writing skills from students' perspective and to find solutions to overcome these problems. The study will encourage students' opinions on how they can overcome their writing problems by conducting in-depth interviews and discussions. Based on these findings, the study suggests several corrective remedies and appropriate solutions offered by students to approach writing problems.

1.4 Research Questions

Research questions:

1. What is the paragraph writing problems faced by newly enrolled pre-university students?
2. What are the causes behind the problems faced by newly enrolled pre-university students?

3. What can be the remedies for those problems, from the newly enrolled pre-university students' perspective?

These above questions guided the data collection process and the responses to the questions supply a structure for the discussions in the following sections of this paper.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Through this study of students' perceptions of their writing challenges, the teachers would get insight into the sources of the problems and would be able to track learners' learning progress. By applying a qualitative research method and phenomenological data analysis, this study will express students' true feelings about their writing deficiencies and also their personal opinions on how to overcome this situation. This study will also help curriculum developers, material developers, and teachers to know the students' voices related to their paragraph writing problems and their recommended solutions.

Researchers also stress the importance of knowing a student's perception regarding EFL learning. According to Tajino, "Students' perceptions of difficulty can function as an affective factor and determine the development of their expectations for and commitment to L2 learning. A high level of difficulty may decrease their motivation and cause anxiety or negative attitudes toward L2 learning" (Tajino, 2008, P. 3). On the other hand, difficulty may facilitate L2 learning, Prabhu argues that, "Students may exert a greater amount of effort if a task is perceived as moderately difficult" (Prabhu, 1987). Therefore, it is important to understand students' perception of difficulty while learning a language to determine effective teaching practices (Tajino, 2003).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to Paragraph Writing

An effective paragraph writing skill is essential for academic success as students need to write different types of assignments, reports, essays and dissertations to prove their understanding of course work. These different forms of writings also demand well-developed paragraphs, and coherence in the content of the text. Again, the content of the paragraph should show the skills of analyzing information, synthesizing different sources and arranging the argument in a logical way. Moreover, it requires that “the language used in developing the paragraph is correct, formal, systematic and suitable with academic nature” (Wirantaka, 2016). Thus, effective paragraph writing is a necessary academic skill to make the content of different forms of writing meaningful to the readers of an academic text.

2.2 Previous Research

Writing a meaningful paragraph in English is challenging for both native and non-native learners. This is evident as Rass (2015) says that, “writing something notable for reading which is a tough task for native and non-native learners because one has to be careful about several things which vary from spelling to organization of the text.” So, globally in EFL context, paragraph writing poses an arduous task for the non-native learners. This view is established in the context of Saudi EFL students as Alsamadani (2010) relates that the “difficulty and complexity of academic writing,” emerge from the challenging situation because, “writing includes discovering a thesis, developing support for it, organizing, revising and finally editing it to ensure an effective, error-free piece of writing.” These challenges make students have a

“negative attitude towards academic writing,” because, “they often view writing, especially in the form of essay composition, as a tough task” (Ismail et al., 2012).

Other contexts of EFL students’ paragraph writing problems were also established by researchers in this field. Ahmed (2010) reported that Egyptian students encountered problems of cohesion and coherence in their essay writing. This is one of the most common challenges faced by the EFL students globally, which is keeping the unity and coherence of the paragraph. Students fail to create a thematic link between the topic sentence and the rest of the sentences of a paragraph. It is essential that while composing students are “expected not only to convey their thoughts and feelings effectively, but also compose their writing in a coherent manner”(Setyowati, 2016). In one of their studies, Belkhir and Benyelles (2017), reveal that students face difficulties in both coherence and cohesion due to the lack of reading, first language transfer and low writing practice.

Another common challenge EFL students encounter while writing a paragraph is generating relevant ideas about a given topic. Because of poor reading habit, it turns the skills of writing the hardest one as students fail to generate new ideas (Richards and Renandya, 2002). In a recent study in Indonesia, the researchers (Toba, Noor and Sanu, 2019) find that while writing a composition, students encounter difficulties in the content area which arise from “exploring and developing the relevant ideas, containing the comparison of the objects; as a result, the idea of their essay is sometimes unknowledgeable.” Thus, content generation becomes a challenge for the students because it comes through wide reading habit, close observation, thinking and discussing about a topic (Lambert and Wiener, 1994). Furthermore, students also face difficulties in using English language mechanics, correct grammar and appropriate use of vocabulary. In research about Chinese EFL students’ academic writing, the researchers identify

that poor grammar knowledge, inadequate vocabulary and lack of academic language convention also significantly pose a great challenge on the academic writing of the students (Jiang, Lee and Ang, 2022). This view is also echoed in the findings by Nasser (2019), who investigates the writing challenges faced by Iraqi students. His study reveals that students' errors are related with different features of grammar, sentence structures, articles, punctuation and spelling.

Finally, researchers also try to figure out the causes behind these above-mentioned writing challenges and according to these researchers many EFL students do not have much exposure to practice English language writing rather than the limited classroom activities. Lack of a conducive environment to practice English language writing acts as a big factor to hinder the writing development of the students as English writing is considered as a skill that could be developed through enough practice. This hinders the natural progress of the language learner to achieve the competent skill (Hussen, 2015). Thus, lack of active engagement and consistent practice create a challenge for the students to further their writing skill. This passive role of the students with the target language is also discouraged by the theorists, as they say, "The psychology of the learning tells us that students are not merely there to absorb knowledge as sponge takes in water (Halliday, McIntosh and Steven, 1965:139)."

2.3 Educational Context in Bangladesh

Like other EFL countries, the importance of teaching of English as a foreign language is established by the government of Bangladesh at all level of education in the country. Though, Bangladesh is a monolingual country, about 98% of the population use Bangla as a first language (Imam, 2005) and English is used by only 2% of the population (Hossain and Tollefson, 2007); to improve the situation of English language learning, on January, 1989, the

government has introduced English as a mandatory subject in primary, secondary and higher secondary education and also some fields in higher education (Hassan, 2022). At tertiary level, English is adopted as a medium of instruction at all the private universities in Bangladesh; however, at public universities, the medium of instruction is mixed, that is both Bangla and English (Hasan, 2022).

Despite, stressing the importance of learning English and making it a compulsory subject from primary to higher secondary education in Bangladesh, the outcome is not satisfactory. This is evident in Hoque's remarks, "the general proficiency and achievement of the majority of the students graduating from high school is unsatisfactory and disproportionately low (Hoque, 1986, p. 86). In this regard, an investigation on the paragraph writing skills of the students of a private university by Shagia Afrin exposes a dismal picture, as she says, "various kinds of mistakes make students writing weak. Sentence levels grammatical mistakes committed by the students, namely spelling, subject-verb agreement, articles, preposition, capitalization, fragments, punctuation, tense, etc" (Afrin, 2016, p. 107). She also reveals that students don't have idea about organizational skills and transitional words that is topic sentence, supporting details and concluding line (Afrin, 2016).

Again, in a study conducted at a higher secondary school in Bangladesh, the researcher identifies couple of factors behind poor writing skills of the college level students of Bangladesh – which ranges from poor vocabulary, punctuation and lack knowledge in grammar and writing convention (Suvin, 2020). Another important reason is focusing mainly on achieving good grade rather than learning the skills of writing also turn the students' poor English language writers. Like Chinese EFL students, Bangladeshi students also intensely study more for test and exam materials to achieve good results (Zhang and Luo, 2004). Thus,

test-driven English language instruction at secondary and higher secondary level education make the students poor performers at tertiary level academic writing.

Moreover, there is a great shortage of experience and qualified teachers to teach English language text books and syllabus at secondary and higher secondary level of schools and colleges in Bangladesh. Though National Curriculum Board (NCTB) has changed textbooks, the syllabus and teacher's guide to implement Communicative Language Teaching as a substitute for the age-old Grammar Translation Method, lack of qualified teachers and large classroom size have failed the project to achieve success in teaching English as a foreign language. Lack of motivation, practice and proper guidance of an experienced teacher has turned learning English language as a phobia among the Bangladeshi EFL students (Ivan and Jony, 2016).

Researchers also identify traditional teaching method of regarding a paragraph as an end product rather than teaching it as a process has also contribute in the low academic writing performance of the preparatory level students (Hasan, 2011). According to this study, students encounter problem in functional language skills due to memorization and imitation. It also identifies evaluation process as one of the key factors that encourages students toward model centered learning rather than becoming aware of different stages of a paragraph writing.

3.Theoretical Framework

This study employed Nunan's writing theory as a theoretical framework. Drawing from Bell and Burnaby (1984), David Nunan in his book, *An Empirical Approach to Language Teaching Methodology*, describes the development of writing skill as a complex cognitive activity that

necessitates the control of several variables to master the skill. In order to write an effective paragraph, according to Nunan:

At the sentence level, these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs (Nunan, 1984, p.6). This theory sheds light on writing, which involves physical and mental activities at the same time. It also lay out the composition of a paragraph and its component ranging from content, sentence structure, vocabulary to coherence and unity. This mapping will act as a guide to investigate students' performance into these components of a paragraph and to evaluate the factors that cause the students' low performance into getting a mastery over these paragraph writing components. He also stresses the importance of mastering the rules of grammar, content organization, revision as well as selection of relevant genre style for one's academic writing.

Since this study deals with pre university students' transition from secondary level education to a tertiary level academic writing, the current study also applied Schlossberg's (2011) transition theory to identify the factors that contribute to students' transition and low performance in academic writing. According to Schlossberg, "four major categories: situation, self, supports and strategies" (p.160), influence students' transition from high school to college writing. Here in this theory, 'situation' represents a student's circumstances during the period of transition, 'self' refers to student's capability to manage the situation, 'support' is critical during the transition period for a student's success and 'strategies' are the abilities of a student to cope and to manage the outcome of a situation (Schlossberg, 2011). By following this theory, student's perception about their academic writing performance during the transition is also evaluated in this study.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study is grounded on phenomenological study which is one of the qualitative research approaches. Qualitative research methodology is defined as, “inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher’s experience in collecting and analyzing the data” (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 21). Since the core objective of this study doesn’t need to utilize statistical figures, phenomenological studies serve the goal of the study, which is to find common lived experience by analyzing the views of the participants. In this methodology, researchers, “focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience the phenomenon” (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 74). Thus, the study employed newly enrolled pre-university students interviews to gather relevant information to get in depth insight about the factors that reveal the challenges and cause of their poor academic writing skill. It is executed through semi-structured interview, that is open ended or discussion-based questions were asked rather than yes/no questions. Again, the study also tries to elicit students’ opinion about the effective remedies to develop their writing skills. This is supported by previous researchers (Creswell, 2013; Merriam 2009) say that, “if the study aims to reveal the experiences, feelings, and unique views of the participants, phenomenology studies serve that purpose”.

4.2 Participants

Only students who are enrolled in pre university writing course are selected for this study as they form a ‘homogenous’ group by sharing the same experience of poor academic writing skills and have to enroll in a writing course to improve their academic writing. In this study,

all the selected participants are from a private university in Bangladesh. The students have underperformed in their admission test and the completion of the a pre university writing course is a prerequisite to start their regular course in the university. Six students were selected from this pre university writing course and they were from different disciplines and none of them have major in English studies. They were selected from three departments: Microbiology, Computer Science and Engineering and Bachelor in Business Administration. The students were recruited after gaining permission from their preuniversity writing course teacher and they also agreed to share information about their academic writing performance. They weren't coerced to take part in the study and the interviews were taken at their convenient time.

4.3 Data Collection

The current study employed interviewing as a sole method to elicit information from the student participants. Repeated interviews have been taken to get an in-depth view of the participants perspectives, "on their lives, experiences or situations as expressed in their own words (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984, P. 77). Similarly, this study used interviews as a tool to get students perspectives and opinions about their underperformance in academic writing and how to overcome it. Aligning with Yin's (2003) recommendation that phenomenological research interviews should "be guided conversations rather than structured queries" (p. 89). Again, David Nunan says,

In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a general idea of where he or she wants the interview to go, and what should come out of it, but doesn't enter the interview with a list of predetermined questions. Topics and issues rather than questions determine the course of the interview. (Nunan, 1987, p. 149)

Thus, a semi-structured interview is adopted for this study as it provides a conducive space between the researchers and participants to share core information of a study because questions generate spontaneously during the interview process. All the interviews is also audio recorded through tl;dv app and Google Meet.

4.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data of interviews were merged into a single document to analyze thematically. In the current study, I adopted Clark E. Moustakas' (2010) data analysis procedure, which he developed from Van Kaam method of analysis of phenomenological data. After, transcribing all the interviews, I highlight relevant expression for horizontalization, that is by distinguishing 'invariant constituents.' In next step, the data has gone through clustering and thematizing process, as Moustakas (2010) says, "cluster the invariant constituents of the experience that are related into a thematic label. The clustered and labeled constituents are the core themes of the experience (Moustakas, 2010, p. 100). Thus, phenomenological data analysis steps are followed to generate themes, which is formed by creating categories and codes.

Because the interviews constituted the largest amount of raw data and they provided crucial information, I started the data analysis after transcribing the interviews. My analysis focused on inquiring into similarities and repetitious words, phrases and sentences across the transcripts of the individual interviews. I also noticed less frequently occurred phrases and sentences that were relevant for the purpose of this research. These are manually written down at the margin of the transcripts. After reading and re-reading, a frequency table is formed. Then I started writing down initial sub-themes by highlighting key words, phrases and sentences in which

codes were assigned. After that, I grouped them into categories through inductive reasoning. Subsequently, after evaluating the categories thoroughly, possible themes were listed.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 Introduction

To get unbiased and accurate results of students' paragraph writing difficulties, its underlying causes along with how to overcome these problems – from students' perspectives – all the interview transcripts were carefully judged to separate it from their emotional biases. This is achieved by reading and reviewing their responses and its contexts. The results are followed by table that includes keywords, concepts and subthemes as well as relevant direct quotes from the participatory students.

5.2 Challenges of Paragraph Writing

Table 1

Challenges faced by students in paragraph writing:

Quotation	Key Words	Concept	Sub-themes
I faced that I couldn't connect the ideas properly ...I couldn't connect the supporting details	Connection	Organization	Lack of paragraph organization.

My writing was not that structured as I didn't know about how to write in structure.

Disarrangement

Logicity

Orderliness

The problem that I faced was idea generation

Idea Generation

Brainstorming

To generate appropriate ideas.

...I think idea generation is the main problem

Table 01 demonstrates that one of the biggest challenges pre-university students face is paragraph organization. Students find it difficult to organize the paragraph in a coherent way. That is to organize the sentences and ideas in a paragraph should relate to one another from the beginning to the concluding line. For example, one student admits that he faces difficulties in connecting supporting details with the topic sentence as well as in giving relevant examples after writing a statement or generating supporting examples and facts in an argumentative paragraph. Another major problem that students face while paragraph writing is idea generation as they find it difficult to come up with relevant ideas about a given topic. As one student says, "The problem that I faced was ideas generation" (S1). They also mention problems regarding vocabulary, grammar and correct sentence construction.

5.3 Causes of low proficiency in paragraph writing

Table 2

Causes faced by students in paragraph writing

Quotation	Key Words	Concept	Sub-theme
We used to memorize the paragraph that would come in the exam and we could write it.	memorization	Rote learning	Rote learning was encouraged.
“I think back to my school life, they used to teach paragraph like they tell us to memorize.			
first, they tell me to memorize one paragraph they tell us to write in the exam paper”			
No, I didn’t do outlining or brainstorming before coming to the pre-university	Discovering Ideas	Writing strategies	Pre-strategies of writing
Yes, I also have problems with grammar.	Grammar	Poor grammatical knowledge.	Poor grammar skills.

From the transcripts of the interviews, Table 2 exposes some of the major factors that contribute to the low performance of the students while writing a paragraph. Firstly, most of the students distinguish the habit of rote memorization as the sole reason that hinders their writing development. For example, according to one of the students, “I think back to my school life,

they used to teach paragraphs like they tell us to memorize. At first, they tell me to memorize one paragraph, (then) they tell us to write in the exam paper” (S2). Another student also supports this view by saying, “We used to memorize the paragraph that would come in the exam and we could write it” (S1). Secondly, students identify lack of knowledge of pre strategies of writing such as brainstorming, freewriting, and clustering, which they didn’t teach at school and college level EFL classes. This is the reason they don’t know how to generate new ideas and supporting details while writing a composition. Students also identify lack of vocabulary and poor grammar knowledge as the minor causes of their writing deficiency.

5.4 Remedies offered by Students

Table 3

Remedies offered by Students

Quotation	Key words	Concept	Sub-themes
I think if we were taught paragraph writing from childhood how to write a paragraph properly in an organized way. If that procedure can be followed then it should be the remedy of this problem	Poor teaching method	Organization	Teaching Coherence from school.
So, I think more practice...learning new vocabularies which can also help in writing the	Reading and Writing Practice	Lack of Practice	Writing Practice

paragraph...so if we keep practicing and keep reading new books or like watch movies which will help us to enrich our English proficiency

So, I think the main strategy is practicing. I know how to write paragraphs now. So, if I practice more and more I can develop that skill

Table 3, reveals students' perspectives on how to overcome the paragraph writing challenges, which they face at tertiary level. Most of the students recommend that they could develop their present situation by practicing writing. A student suggests, "So I think the main strategy is practicing. I know how to write paragraphs now. So, if I practice more and more I can develop that skill" (S2). It entails students believe that through adequate practicing, they can overcome their writing deficiencies by gaining enough skill on language features and writing mechanics. Another major recommendation that students suggest is that incorporating effective paragraph writing techniques in the school and college textbook would help them to learn correct way earlier which will eventually prepare them to write competently at tertiary level. According to the student, "School college levels (textbooks) should also include a proper way of writing a paragraph" (S 6).

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Summary of Findings

In a pre-university writing class, students face major challenges in paragraph composition which ranges from organization of ideas, idea generation to minor difficulties like inadequate vocabulary, grammar and sentence construction. The underlying causes of these writing difficulties, according to the students, are rote memorization and lack of knowledge on strategies of writing such as brainstorming. Students also mention lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge as factors that hinder their writing proficiency. To overcome these

difficulties, students recommend practicing of paragraph writing as well as incorporating effective paragraph writing techniques in school and college level curricula.

6.2 Comparison with Previous Research

The results of this investigation suggest that the pre-university students face challenge of idea generation while writing a paragraph. The same findings were also observed by globally EFL researchers (Bram & Angelina, 2002; Jian, Lee and Ang, 2022; Toba, Noor, Sanu, 2019) in their research. From these studies, it is generally found that EFL students' writings are fraught with inconsistent organization, lack of supporting ideas, no topic sentence and no usages of transitional words. This incoherent aspect of writing is also reaffirmed by Bangladeshi researchers (Afrin, 2016; Harun and Akter, 2011; Jelane, 2021) in their investigations. Thus, students face challenge in writing a good topic sentence and supporting details to establish a unity in the whole paragraph, which makes their composition difficult to read.

Again, the current study find that one of the major causes of this writing difficulties is rote memorization. This finding aligns with the investigation result found by Bangladeshi researchers, as they say, "The textbook materials as well as the traditional teaching method often encourage students to memorize paragraph rather that to develop writing ability of their own" (Harun & Akter, p. 22). Initially, in Bangladesh in the primary level of EFL classes, students are asked to memorize paragraph to make their writings error free, which make them dependent on memorizing English composition and ruin their creativity from childhood (P.20). Thus, systematically in EFL classes, students gain the habit of memorization and the creativity of writing independently.

Furthermore, the grammatical challenges are also experienced by global EFL students which is relevant to the findings of this study. In composition, according to the EFL researchers (Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017; Hasan & Marzuki, 2017; and Nasser, 2019) students face problem in usages of articles, verb forms, plural forms, subject-verb agreement and preposition. Similarly, Bangladeshi students face these common grammatical errors while writing paragraph. Though students are taught grammar from the beginning of EFL studying and they have gained some knowledge of grammatical rules, their academic writing skills are not competent enough for the university level (Giridharan, 2012).

Moreover, some students also recommend to integrate effective paragraph writing materials in the school and college level curricula, which will eventually help them to become competent writer at tertiary level academic writing. This suggestion aligns with the findings of Bangladeshi researchers Harun and Akter's study on the secondary level students writing skill. The researchers note, "Curriculum of writing components often lacks authenticity of topics and materials that discourage students' thinking for writing creatively (Harun and Akter, p. 21). Similar findings also mention in a study by Jiang, Lee and Ang on a study paper of Chinese EFL students' low proficiency in writing. On incorporating appropriate materials, the researchers say, "students benefited from different writing examples in reference books or textbooks that were tailored to the students' various proficiency levels and backgrounds (p. 113, 2022)

6.3 Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study also reveal some recommendations from the students to develop their poor writing skills, which converge with the contemporary writing theory. For instance, one of the suggestions from the students is practicing of writing as a habit formation to improve their poor writing efficiency which aligns with Langan definition of a writing as a skill. According to Langan, “A realistic attitude about writing must build on the idea that writing is a skill. It is a skill like driving, typing, or cooking, and like any skill, it can be learned (2010, P. 10). Thus, it needs practicing to master the paragraph writing skill by incorporating it as a habit.

Another significant finding from the study is that students identify lack of knowledge of strategies of writing as a factor that hinders them to generate ideas about a given topic. Researchers (Oshima and Hogue, 2007, Langan 2010, and Connelly, 2013) argue that pre-strategies in one of the crucial steps of paragraph writing. It involves brainstorming, freewriting, listing, clustering and questioning. Before writing a composition, practicing these steps help student to come up with new ideas and visual mapping on how to compose a writing in an organized way. It helps students to overcome the difficulties of lack of ideas and to develop supporting details for the topic sentence.

6.4 Practical Implications

The current study gives teachers, students, curriculum developers and policymakers a through picture of the challenges that pre-university Bangladeshi students face while writing paragraphs at tertiary level. Therefore, data obtained from this investigation could provide

significant information to the course designers and higher educational administrators to come up with plan of actions to resolve these writing problems by enhancing their writing efficiency. In this context, it could also help them to take into account students' recommendation to solve this problem while designing a curriculum. For example, incorporation of effective paragraph writing materials with pre strategies of writing could be included in the school and college level textbook to encourage students to write independently. Moreover, English language teachers at school and college level should foster students writing efficiency to prepare them for their academic transition from higher secondary level of writing to tertiary level academic writing.

6.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the current research, the following recommendations are proposed to develop students' writing proficiency and academic success:

1. National education policy makers should acknowledge the prevalent challenges (i.e., rote memorization) of EFL learners and come up with policies on how to avoid rote memorization and encourage creativity of the students in second language learning. In this context, it could reassess its current text books and pedagogies to revise these according to the needs of the students and academic writing of the university.
2. For the currently enrolled pre-university students, the university should provide them with effective writing invention tools and one-to-one feedback session from writing teachers as well as help from writing centers of the university.
3. Since it's generally accepted that developing writing efficiency in a second language is an enduring long-time process, language teachers at all academic level should try to instill and encourage life-long-learning of English. This pedagogical concept is endorsed by writing scholars because writing is an arduous task and it needs years of practice to master the writing conventions in English (Hyland, 2013; Leki 2003).

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Recapitulation

Overall, this study investigates the English paragraph writing problems among the newly enrolled pre-university students and tries to ascertain the challenges and its causes as well as its remedies from students' perspective. By adopting phenomenological research approach, the data was collected through semi-structured interview from six participants of a private university in Bangladesh. After methodological coding, the results of the study reveal that the students face major writing challenges in paragraph composition which ranges from organization of ideas, idea generation to minor difficulties like inadequate vocabulary, grammar and sentence construction. The underlying factors of these writing difficulties are rote memorization and lack of knowledge on strategies of writing such as free-writing and brainstorming. Students also mention lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge as factors that hinder their writing proficiency. To overcome these difficulties, students recommend practicing of paragraph writing as well as incorporating effective paragraph writing techniques in school and college level curricula.

7.2 Contributions

The study has contributed to the literature on undergraduate preparatory students transition from higher secondary to tertiary level academic writing and its challenges. Unlike other research paper, by focusing on the perspective of the students, the current research paper shed light on the gap between higher secondary to tertiary level academic writing. It identifies the lack of writing competency among higher secondary level students and their failure to meet the writing demand of the university placement test. Again, it distinguishes inadequate teaching

materials in the school and college level curriculum, pedagogical policies and inefficiency of the instructors as the factors for the poor writing performance of the high school graduate.

7.3 Limitations

There are couple of limitations in this study. The participants and the context of the research is all from a private university in Bangladesh and from the same institute. Therefore, the findings of this research cannot be generalized for the larger context of all the public and private university students of Bangladesh. Another limitation of the study is that the study data is collected through interviews only with the students, which excludes the teacher's opinion about the challenges faced by the students and how the teachers perform in the classroom to solve these problems. Furthermore, the researchers inability to conduct in class observations and collect data from students' performance in the classroom activities, this paper lacks observational materials and written materials produced by the students in the investigations.

7.4 Future Research

I would suggest future research in a larger scale including students' demographic information, parents' socio-economic position and educational background as well as educational institutes background (i.e., public and private) to get students information from different academic and social background. The proposed research will also include teachers' perspective in this regard. This would provide researchers a larger data set and the outcome of this investigation would reflect a holistic picture of the EFL learners writing ability, its challenges and efficacy of the national pedagogical policy. For this large-scale comprehensive research, I would also suggest "longitudinal" studies (Leki, 2003), to see how these students have improved through time to cope with the writing demands of other courses across the curriculum in their academic majors.

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Appendices

Transcriptions:

1st Interview Transcribe: (Date:11/17/2023) (1st One)

Transcription

Interviewer: How are you?

S1: I am fine. What about you?

Interviewer: Yes, I am good. I am going to conduct your Interview right now for my thesis purpose. Are you ready for this?

S1: Yes, I am ready.

Interviewer: Okay, Thank you. Okay, so tell me something about your English proficiency.

What do you think? are you now at a medium level or do you need improvement?

S1: I think I am not that bad. I am in the middle level because I came from the English version.

So, I have quite a good grasp of speaking in English but not in writing.

Interviewer: Okay, you are a pre-university student, right? Can you please tell me what your major is?

S1: Yes, my major is Microbiology.

Interviewer: Microbiology. Okay, We all know that for admission into BRAC University one student has to sit for an exam. Did you face any writing problem or writing issue there?

S1: The problem that I faced was idea generating.

Interviewer: Okay.

S1: So, I faced a problem where I had to generate ideas while writing the paragraph.

Interviewer: Okay, so why do you think that took place?

S1: I think because I don't have that quite good grasp of backup vocabulary so I couldn't express whatever I wanted to write in words properly. So, I think the idea generating problem happened.

Interviewer: Didn't your teacher guide you properly in your school and college level?

S1: In school and college level, actually we had a syllabus and we used to memorize the paragraph that would come in the exam and we could write it.

Interviewer: Oh. Did you face any assessment issues in writing at school and college level?

S1: Not really because as I said, we could memorize whatever could come in the exam, we had a syllabus.

Interviewer: Oh, okay, before knowing the pre-university writing exam. Did you ever select any topic, brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising by yourself?

S1: No, that idea is quite foreign to me. No, I didn't do outlining or brainstorming before coming to pre-university. I have learned about it after pre-university actually.

Interviewer: Oh, Okay. So, what do you think you should do to improve your English Writing Skills?

S1: To improve my writing skills, I have to practice more, I have to actually learn vocabulary more and I have to gather data about things.

Interviewer: Okay, Thank you for your time and the Interview I took. It will be really helpful for me. Thank you so much, Dear. Thank you for your time.

S1: Thank you.

Interviewer: Okay, I am going to stop the Interview right now. Thank you so much.

S1: Thank you Apu for having me.

Interviewer: Okay Dear.

Interviewer : Hello Dear.

S1: Yes, Hello Apu, Yes.

Interviewer: What do you think about the remedies of the challenges, such as: In your pre-university exam the challenges you faced according to you what can be the remedies of it?

S1: If it is about paragraph writing, I think the remedies that I can suggest is practice as it was our first exam, We were not really aware of the proper writing style and we were not also aware about the question that can come so I think more practice or by with the time we practiced a lot we got instructions from our teachers which really helped us in writing those paragraphs properly , learning new vocabularies, like which can also help in writing the paragraph as most of us have problem to put our thought into words. So, if we keep practicing and keep reading new books or watch movies which will help us to enrich our English proficiency, then it will be easier for us to put our thoughts into words when we are going to write and also generate ideas.

Interviewer : So, what do you think? Do we have any problems in the curriculum as well?.

S1: Yes, Apu, that is one of the biggest problems that I faced because I came from Bangla curriculum and in our schools and colleges. We were provided with a syllabus that we could just memorize and write in the exams and we just sit in the exam but when we came into University we had to do free writing. So the curriculum needs to be changed because when the student migrates from HSC level to the University level there's a huge difference in everything on their own. It is very difficult for us when it comes to the University level.

Interviewer: Yes, I think so. As we are from Bangladesh, English is a second language for us. Bangla is our native language and L1 for us, right?

S1:Yes,

Interviewer: From that perspective, from that situation, from that environment, the challenges you faced, what do you think how you will cope up with this?

S1: Yes, I had some language barriers, but it was less for me because I came from the English Version. So, when I came to the University everything was in English and I also pursued my H.S.C from English versions. So, it was less difficult for me, but it was difficult for me because though I was in the English version, everything was not in English. The lectures were not only given in English. So, it was a different situation for me but not that difficult for me.

Interviewer : Okay, Thank you. Thank you so much, dear. You have helped me a lot. I believe that is going to help me in my Thesis so much. Thanks again. Thank you so much, dear for your time. Thank you.

S1: Thank you for having me.

Interviewer : Thank you. Bye Dear. I am going to off it now.

S1: Okay, Bye.

2nd Interview Transcribe: (11/19/2023)

Transcribe: (1st One)

Interviewer: Hello Dear. I am going to conduct your Interview right now for my thesis purpose and I am asking for your consent. Should I start now?

S2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Are you giving me your consent?

S2: Yes, I am giving you my consent.

Interviewer: Okay, Thank you so much Dear. Can you please tell me something about your English Paragraph Writing Skill?. It needs more improvement or it is okay now?

S2: Okay, my paragraph writing skill is improving like before I was and that much good at paragraph writing but I think I'm improving day by day.

Interviewer: Okay, so you are a pre-university student. What's your major?

S2: My major is CSE.

Interviewer: Okay, what kind of problems you face or challenges or difficulties you face in paragraph writing?

S2: Okay, before my writing was not that much structured as I didn't know about how to write in structure, how to maintain structure while writing a process paragraph or compare or contrast paragraph. But now, as I am a pre-uni student, I'm learning the strategies of how to organize paragraphs. So, yes.

Interviewer: Okay, so as you are a pre-university student, you know that you have to take an exam to sit for a pre-university class. So, in that exam, how was your paragraph writing?. Was it okay or not?. It needs improvement and what types of difficulties and challenges you face there at that time exactly?.

S2: At that time, I felt like my writing was okay as I didn't know about the structure of writing. So, I think later I realized that my writing wasn't that much organized. So, that's why I got a pre-uni course.

Interviewer: Okay, in your school and college level days, did your teachers ever teach you how to brainstorm ,outlining, drafting, revising and editing?. Did they tell you how to do this?

S2: Actually I am a Bangla medium student. Our teacher never said that, they always used to say that to memorize paragraphs or take ideas from paragraphs. If you have any unknown topic, read the paragraph and keep an idea in your mind, but they never mention how to do brainstorming or how to organize the writing. What is first major supporting details or concluding they never taught us that really.

Interviewer: Was it in your books?, books that are provided by our government?

S2: No, no, no, our national curriculum book didn't include these things.

Interviewer: Okay, did you ever try on your own or that such as you choose one topic then you did brainstorming, outlining. Did you try?

S2: Yes, I'm doing it now. But as I mentioned, I didn't know how to write properly. So before I didn't do these things, but now I'm practicing like this. I choose a random topic and I'm brainstorming then I'm following the structure as pre-uni teachers said so. So, Yes.

Interviewer: So you want to say that in your school and college level you didn't know about how to do brainstorming and the teacher didn't mention or taught you these because you are from bangla medium and they only told you to memorize.

S2: Yes, please.

Interviewer: Okay, so what can be done by yourself to improve your paragraph writing skill or what can be the remedies of improving paragraph writing in English?, Right?, What do you think about?

S2: I think the main strategy is practicing. I know how to write paragraphs now. So, if I practice more and more I can develop my skills.

Interviewer: Okay. So you are trying to say that you face some problems to organize the ideas and organize the sentences, right?

S2: Yes.

Interviewer: Did you face any problem in grammar and vocabulary?

S2: Yes, I also have problems with grammar. Vocabulary sometimes I face problems in tense like while I am speaking and writing. Sometimes I got grammatical mistakes and some vocabulary problems.

Interviewer: Oh.

S2: I should use some Advanced words but I am using the basic words right now.

Interviewer: Okay, Thank you so much for your time. That Interview was really helpful for me. Yes, I am going to stop here now. Thank you so much, Dear.

S2: Thank you.

Transcribe (2nd One) Date:02.03.24 (Remedies)

Interviewer: How are you?

S2: Yes, I'm fine. Apu, What about you?

Interviewer: Yes, I am fine as well. However, do you remember what I have asked in your previous Interview?. Can you recall it?

S2: As far as I remember, you asked me about paragraph writing.

Interviewer: Yes, right. I asked you, being a University student, what kind of challenges you faced and the reasons why you faced those challenges in your opinion? Now can you please tell me about the remedies,how can we solve that problem?

S2: Apu, your audio is lacking.

Interviewer: Okay, Okay. What remedies can be taken to solve the challenges you faced?

S2: Okay, Apu from my perspective. I am from Bangla medium Background. So, if I think back to my school life, they used to teach paragraphs like they used to tell us to memorize. At first, they tell me to memorize one paragraph then they tell us to write in the exam paper. So, I think our education system should change the way of teaching paragraphs in Bangla medium schools. So, when we come into University life or if we are trying to give the IELTS exam we are just seeing a different scene. In our college or school life we used to memorize paragraphs and then when we sit for the exam we get an unknown topic, we used to predict some sentences and our writing was not that much organized. So, I think if we are taught paragraph writing from childhood that how to write a paragraph properly in an organized way then it should be a remedy for this problem.

Interviewer: So you want to say that there is some problem in our curriculum, right?

S2: Yes, in our Bangla medium curriculum. But if you look at the English Medium and O level curriculum then that is fine. They used to teach paragraphs in an organized way. But in Bangla medium, they tell us to memorize the paragraphs.

Interviewer: Okay, so according to you, you want to say that you find a problem in the teaching system and you didn't find enough materials for practice. So, what do you think is needed?

S2: Yes, I think practice is needed but enough practice is needed. But if we are practicing in the wrong way then that's gonna be a problem.

Interviewer: Okay, Okay. Thank you so much Ruhana. That was all, I got all my answers. Actually, this is going to be really helpful for my thesis. Thank you so much Ruhana.

S2: Thank you so much. Thank you.

3rd Interview:(12/25/2023)(1st Time)

3rd Transcribe:

Interviewer : Hello Dear. I am going to conduct your Interview right now for my thesis purpose and I am asking for your consent. Should I start now? am I audible? .I am Tasmiah from BRAC University. I am pursuing my Master's degree in TESOL. I am going to conduct an Interview for my Thesis purpose. So, are you giving me your consent?. So you are an undergraduate student in BRAC University, Right? Can you please tell me what your department is?

S3: Yes, yes, Okay, okay. My department is BBA.

Interviewer: Okay, Thank you so much. Can you please tell me your English Writing Proficiency Skills? What do you think needs improvement or is it at a medium level or it is at an excellent or good level?

S3: I will say it is an excellent or good level.

Interviewer : Okay, Good. So may I know that you're from Bangla medium or English Medium your school and college level?

S3: Yes, I'm from Bangla medium from my school and college.

Interviewer: Did your teacher's guide you properly in school and college level as you are saying that your English writing proficiency skills are at a good or excellent level?

S3: Actually when I was in school or college, I will say there was no guidance for how to write a Paragraph or how to write in an organized way in English. After joining BRAC University I have learned so many things and after that now I think that It was really helpful for me how to write anything in English and how to write a paragraph.

Interviewer : Okay. Can you recall please, when you are in school and college level, Did your teacher guide you with proper materials or suitable materials. Did they make you understand how to write a paragraph properly? Did they tell you the difference between process writing and product writing?

S3: They didn't guide us that much. Because they just told me to read and write so they didn't provide these kinds of skills that we need to follow or know or that are beneficial for us.

Interviewer: Did they teach you how to write Topic Sentence ?

S3: No, they just told us to write whatever we read in our textbooks or you know our guidebooks.

Interviewer : Oh, so you just memorize. Such as: one topic is given by our government and you memorize it from a notebook, right? You are saying that your English writing skills are at a good level, so that means that the pre-university course helps you a lot and I believe that you practice writing skill at home, right? . That's why you are saying that your writing skill is at an excellent level right? So can you please tell me about the first written exam before entering a

pre-university course, how was it? . What do you think? . Did you face any problem there such as: sentence organization or in cohesion or in grammar or in vocabulary?

S3: Yes, yes. Actually, I had a big difficulty in vocab and also in sentence structure and so many times I faced some problems in finding the ideas but after some days it became easy for me.

Interviewer: Okay, Good. So, what do you think about why you should focus on writing skills? Why should you improve our writing skills? . Can you mention some of the importance of learning and improving English paragraph writing skill?

S3: I will say that it will be better, if you know these skills it will be better for the admission or for our future it will be beneficial for us.

Interviewer: For our higher studies. Right? . Okay, I am going to stop here. I have asked you all of the questions. Thank you so much for your time and you gave me that information because it was needed for me. Thank you so much Brother.

S3: Yes, yes. Okay. My Pleasure. Bye.

Interviewer: Bye.

2nd One(26/01/24)

S3: Hello, Apu, Are you there?. Sorry, I was disconnected.

Interviewer: Actually, I am extremely sorry my Internet was disturbed. You know, I am facing a huge problem with my Internet connection. Yes, Should I start now?

S3: Yes Apu, Could you please share the question again?

Interviewer: Yes, sure. Can you recall Brother? what I asked you in the past Interview for my Thesis purpose?. I asked the problems and the challenges you faced in English Paragraph Writing Skills? in your first exam of BRAC University? Today I am going to ask what you

think. What can be the remedies?, how can we solve that problem according to your perspectives?

S3: Yes. Okay, so if I talk about the remedies so it could be a student should practice more vocabulary but if I talk about myself earlier I used to watch movies and I used to practice unknown words. I searched for the meaning online and also in the dictionary. So, I think it could be a remedy.

Interviewer: So, what do you think brother that we have any problems in our Bangla medium curriculum? and in teaching style?. Brother, did you get enough materials for practice?

S3: No exactly not. If I talk about so-called Bangla medium schools, yes, there is a problem in curriculum. Every teacher used to talk in Bangla so we are. You know, we're not capable of talking in a fluent way in this way.

Interviewer: Okay, Oh, I see. So you face problems in the curriculum right? You didn't get materials to practice and teachers always speak in Bangla. Did you face any problem in writing Brother?

S3: Yes. They asked us to memorize paragraphs.

Interviewer: Okay, so teachers didn't teach you the difference between product and process writing and they just gave you one topic and told you to memorize from the guidebooks. Right Brother?

S3 : Yes

Interviewer : Yes, so any other problems you want to mention Brother? in writing?

S3 : No, I don't think so.

Interviewer : Okay. Thank you so much Brother. I got my answer. I believe that it will be really helpful for my Thesis.

S3 : Okay, Thank you Bye.

Interviewer : Bye.

4th Transcription: Date:16/03/2024

Interviewer : Hello Zawad , How are you?

S4: Yes, I am fine. What about you Apu?

Interviewer: I am good as well. I am asking for your consent to conduct an Interview for my Thesis purpose. I am asking for your consent.

S4: Yes, I am giving you my consent.

Interviewer: I am going to record that audio after that I am going to transcribe it for my thesis purpose. Okay?

S4 : Okay.

Interviewer : So , let's start it . Okay , so let's start it . Can you please tell me the situation , can you please describe the situation of your English paragraph writing?

S4 : Okay.

Interviewer : The current situation.

S4: Yeah.

Interviewer: Please, just tell me the current situation of your English Paragraph writing?

S4: Okay, in our English paragraph writing in the pre-university we have faced.

Interviewer : Yeah.

S4 : We are given some brainstorming in the first stage and then outline then there is a paragraph writing . So , I will tell you step-by-step where I faced some problems.

Interviewer : Yes , tell me where you face some problems. Tell me your problems.

S4 : Okay so in the brainstorming and outline I faced that I couldn't connect the ideas properly.

Interviewer : So you face some problems in idea-generation and in brainstorming , right?

S4 : Yes , I couldn't connect the ideas properly and secondly we needed to find two supporting details of the major supporting but in that to

Interviewer : Yes.

S4 : But in order to support details we needed to give one explanation and another one was an example. It was really hard for me to connect those two.

Interviewer : Okay , do you understand what is called a Topic Sentence?

S4 : Yes , it is the main theme,main line of the paragraph.

Interviewer : Yes , Okay Good . So you face problems in supporting sentences , right?

S4 : Yes , in the brainstorming and....

Interviewer : Give examples in supporting sentences...

S4 : Like I couldn't connect the supporting details. Like If I tell you how we can be better in paraphrasing? Then? I have to give one explanation and another one is an example. There I couldn't connect the explanation part and the example part. How can I give an example without generating ideas?. So, I think idea generation is the main flaw here.

Interviewer : Okay, tell me another thing. What do you think, according to your perspective, what are the causes behind those problems?

S4: I think idea generation is the main problem and the other one is...

Interviewer: Yes, but what are the causes?

S4: Sorry, I couldn't hear.

Interviewer: What are the causes? What's the reason behind it?

S4: Okay, so I think that the study structure was really good but we couldn't focus on the course because a lot of pressure was on our head because it went really fast . The course was really fast. It couldn't give us really time to study on our Topic, on our paragraph.

Interviewer: So, you didn't get enough time for practice. Right?

S4: That's the main thing. Yes.

Interviewer : Okay, you are from Bangla medium or English medium Brother?

S4 : I am from Bangla medium.

Interviewer : Okay, so you are from Bangla medium and you have switched to English medium where the medium of instruction is in English right in Brac University.

S4 : Yes, yes.

Interviewer : So, did you face any problem here?

S4 : Firstly, I was in Bangla medium, I was in the English version at the time from Nursery to class six. After that I switched to Bangla medium and when I entered BRAC University, I faced

many problems. Like, how can I write structured paragraphs? How can I write structure anything so I couldn't make a structure properly.

Interviewer : Okay , so you face a problem in sentence organization right? coherence and cohesion right?

S4: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, so what do you think can be the remedies for it? How can you solve the problem?

S4: I think that we have to generate good ideas and experiment with different brainstorming techniques. For example, mind mapping can be a solution to bullet points and free writing can be a solution as well. Also ensuring logical progression in outlining. I think those are the solution and remedies for me.

Interviewer : Okay. Thank you so much brother. Did you face any other challenges here?. Can you tell me did you face any other challenges here in studying?

S4: Also, I have this, yes. Yes, I have faced rephrasing issues like in the conclusion or concluding sentence. I couldn't rephrase the topic sentence to write it down.

Interviewer: Oh.

S4 : It was really hard for me to write the rephrasing sentence.

Interviewer : Okay. Thank you so much Brother. That's all I am going to end here. Okay.

S4 : Okay, Thank you.

Interviewer : Thank you so much.

5th Transcription: Date(16/03/24)

Interviewer : Hello Dear, How are you?

S5: Hello Sister, I am fine. How are you?

Interviewer: Yes, I'm good. Okay. I am going to conduct an Interview right now for my thesis Purpose.

S5: Okay.

Interviewer : I am asking for your consent as well. And after that I am going to transcribe that. I am going to record that audio. Okay, After that I am going to transcribe it. Okay?

S5 : Okay.

Interviewer : Okay, so let's start now.

S5: Yes, you can.

Interviewer: Are you giving me your consent?

S5: Yes, please.

Interviewer: Okay. According to you, right now at which stage is your English paragraph writing skill? currently? Can you please describe?

S5: Medium level.

Interviewer: Okay, we all know that in BRAC University in undergraduate we have to sit for a writing exam then we can admit here. So, what kind of challenges did you face there?

S5: Yes.

Interviewer: at that time in English Paragraph Writing?

S5: In the BRAC University exam the English paragraph writing was very important because as I know that my chances of admission into the University. They always prefer the paragraph writing skill. So, in that area in the examination, I faced the challenges with the topic as all of them were unseen, so I had to take preparation for writing the paragraph properly.

Interviewer: Okay, so what kind of challenges you faced can you please repeat again? You mean that questions were unpredictable, right?

S5: Yes, the challenges were an uncommon topic. So I have to think first then I have to write the paragraph properly. So, the challenges were uncommon topics.

Interviewer: Did you face any problem in idea generation?

S5: Yes, I face the problem of idea generation. As I said, it was an uncommon topic. So first I got a little bit nervous as I am practicing at home and I knew that the question would be unseen. After some time I overcame it.

Interviewer: Okay, did you face any problem in any sentence organization or paragraph organization, or cohesion, grammar, vocabulary? Cohesion?

S5: I do not face any problem in sentence organization, but yes, I face problems in grammar because I made some mistakes in grammar. So yeah, that's all.

Interviewer: Okay, another thing, So what do you think?. According to you, what is the reason behind this?

S5: The reason behind these is that in our school life and college life. We did not get much priority in the paragraph writing but in the admission test, Brac always prefers or gives priority in the paragraph so I face the problem here that I have to give more time in my paragraph and how can I overcome it?. I have to practice at home. Also, I can do my group study with my friends which I did in my University.

Interviewer: Okay

S5: Before that with some tests.

Interviewer: Okay, good. Okay. Another thing is that at your school and college level did teachers teach you what the topic sentence is ?

S5: No, not to be honest. The teachers didn't teach me what is a topic sentence or what is the concluding sentence . And I have no idea about it .

Interviewer: So, just they give you one....

S5: Yes, they gave me the paragraph names in my syllabus and I have to read it by myself.

Interviewer : You need to memorize it, right?

S5 : Yes, I need to memorize it.

Interviewer : Yeah, Okay. So, what do you think? How can you solve that problem?. What can be the remedies of those problems?

S5: According to me if one who is thinking University, I think they should do practice more and more also they can do a group study if he or she can not study alone or can not give concentration then they can do one thing, example: That he or she write a paragraph and then showing his class teacher or the writing teacher his paragraph and he can give a feedback about his paragraph.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you so much dear. That Interview was really fruitful for me . Thank you for helping me in my Thesis.

S5: Thank you so much sister. Thank you.

Interviewer: Okay.

S5: Okay, Bye.

6th Transcription Date:(18/03/24)

Interviewer : Hello Brother, How are you? Am I audible? Hello Brother? Hello, am I Audible?

S6: Hello, Hello, Am I audible?

Interviewer: I cannot hear you. Yes. Am I audible?

S6: Hello.

Interviewer : Hello, yes. Can you hear me?

S6 : Hello

Interviewer : Yes.

S6 : Wait, wait a minute. I think I have some issues with my iphone.

Interviewer: Oh, Okay.

S6: Hello

Interviewer: No Issue. Yes, you are audible, Brother.

S6: Am I audible now?

Interviewer: Yes.

S6: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes, you are audible. I can hear you.

S6: Oh, Thank you. You can start now.

Interviewer: Wait a second. sorry for that.

S6: No Problem.

Interviewer: Yeah.

S6: Yeah

Interviewer: Yes, Am I audible?.

S6: Yes, yes you are audible.

Interviewer: Okay, so I am asking for your consent that I have to take an Interview with you for my thesis purpose. Are you giving me your consent?

S6: Yes, absolutely.

Interviewer: I am going to record that audio and after that I have to transcribe it. Okay, so yes, should I start now?

S6: Yeah, you can start now.

Interviewer: Okay, Brother. Can you please tell me can you please describe on the net in which situation your English paragraph writing skills are right now?

S6: I am currently on my online one course in English and I am currently learning process essay.

Interviewer: Okay.

S6: I just learned about it today.

Interviewer: Okay, so we all know that to be admitted in BRAC University undergraduate students have to go through a sitting exam, in that sitting exam they have to write a paragraph, right? . So can you please remember or recall and please tell me what kind of challenges you faced there?

S6: When I gave my admission test there was a paragraph which was about artificial intelligence. And when I was writing that paragraph....

Interviewer: Okay

S6: I actually didn't understand didn't know about. The steps that should be followed to write an essay because I was quite new to that, apart from that I think I have made some mistakes in the way of climax or in the way of rising. That is it so like I didn't include enough positive and negative sides. That's why I think those are the problems I faced.

Interviewer: Okay, so what do you think about what kind of challenges you faced there?

S6: I think the reason behind it probably is my early academic time when there was no instruction. No, instructions given to how to write a proper essay like.....

Interviewer: oh tell me one thing you came from Bangla medium or English medium.

S6: I am from the English version.

Interviewer: English version. Okay. So yes now tell me the reasons or the causes behind that you face those challenges.

S6: I think like when I came to University. I learned that when writing a paragraph or an essay, you should follow some certain steps like.....

Interviewer: Yeah.

S6: including the topic sentence or expanding the idea.....

Interviewer: In your school and college level did the teachers teach you what is called a Topic Sentence?. How to write a process paragraph? but not a product paragraph writing. The difference between process paragraph and product paragraph writing? . Did any teacher teach you this in school and college level and concluding sentences as well? What supporting ideas have anyone taught you about this?

S6: Ah, sadly. No, they only told you to write as much as you can.

Interviewer: oh, okay. So in your school and college level teachers gave you any title or topic you could memorize from a notebook or a guidebook. Is it like this?

S6: No, I didn't memorize. I just write what came to my mind.

Interviewer: Do you know what is free-writing?

S6: yeah, it is when you write what actually you understand from the topic and don't take any help like Chat GPT or any other books.

Interviewer: Yes

S6: I memorize it.

Interviewer: So what can be the remedies of those challenges you face there? According to you, what can be the remedies?

S6: I think the school college levels should also include a proper way of writing paragraphs in essays. Actually going to university they would understand like, okay, I would write, I've tried like this then I would get a proper marking and that would be a remedy and it can also be like the that are like both textbooks that can be bit rich. On this rules and regulations of writing a paragraph or an essay. I think it can be a remedy.

Interviewer: Okay, so you want to say you faced challenges in cohesion, coherence, sentence organization, right?

S6: The most of the time I face the challenge of spelling mistakes.

Interviewer: Spelling mistakes, okay, okay. Anything you want to share with me any other challenges you faced there?

S6: Like in school college level or University level paragraph writing.

Interviewer: When you are admitted in BRAC University at that time you need to sit for an exam right?. Any other challenges remain. Please share with me.

S6: Ah. Hmm. Let me think for a while. There can be another challenge that I faced personally. It was like including proper examples that I didn't know, like I have to include proper examples

well, writing a paragraph or giving facts and opinions about certain paragraphs. So, coming up with facts and opinions. Well writing a paragraph or an essay was a challenge.

Interviewer: Okay Brother. Thank you so much. Thank you for the time. I believe that is going to help with my thesis. I am going to stop here.

S6: You're welcome.

Interviewer: Bye. Thank you.

S6: Okay, Bye, Thank you.