

An Evaluation of Teaching-Writing in the English Language Classroom in Bengali-Medium Schools

*Md. Ziaul Haque**

*Sabbir Ahmad***

Abstract

It is supposed that writing is an essential but difficult skill for EFL students to accomplish. This study aims at investigating teaching and learning strategies followed by teachers of English and secondary Bengali-medium school students concerning writing practice inside the classroom. It further concentrates on identifying English language teachers and students' attitudes towards teaching and learning writing and finding out the problems faced by the secondary students when they start writing anything of their own. This paper also explores how writing is taught and practiced in the English classes of Bengali-medium schools. Because of the complexity of the aims, mixed method has been followed. Secondary level students and their teachers have been randomly selected as the subjects for this research activity. This investigation reveals that teachers in Bengali-medium schools mostly follow the Grammar-Translation method although there is an arising tendency to follow the Communicative Approach. In case of evaluating the piece of writing of the learners, the teachers are completely product-based.

Introduction

Learning the processes of writing is a difficult skill for students to learn and develop the competence in a language, especially in EFL context, where exposure to English is limited to a small fraction of their total class hours per week and where they rarely need performing the task of writing outside the classroom too. Students, learning English as an ESL or EFL, struggle with many structural issues including selecting proper words, using correct grammar, generating ideas, and developing ideas about specific topics besides the lack of the knowledge of the world. Traditionally, the teaching of writing in the EFL context has focused on expository (non-fiction) writing especially creative writing. It is possible to conduct creative writing even in the EFL classroom, and it has been seen as an important writing task to develop all language skills to increase self-esteem and confidence, and thereby fostering motivation among the learners to go further in exploring the language. It is academically valued because it opens up the

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, Asian University of Bangladesh

** Lecturer, Department of English, Bangladesh University of Business and Technology

imaginative faculty of learners. And it has positive spin-off value for more factual kinds of writing. In the current English syllabus of our secondary level, there is scope for teaching writing English in a creative way. In this perspective, the purpose of this study is to find out the approaches, methods and techniques applied by the teachers to teach writing at the English language classroom of national secondary level in Bengali medium school in Bangladesh and the effects of the mentioned on teaching-learning processes.

Bangladesh perspective

Bangladesh is small country with densely populated citizens; many of whom are still uneducated and consequently not fit for this global arena. However, the government of Bangladesh in association with national-international organizations and other countries is working hard to develop the education level of the people in terms of language use, technology use etc. For this purpose, the communicative approach has very lately been introduced in the education system of Bangladesh though the researches on the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are very pessimistic about the outcomes of this approach in Bangladesh. Though the syllabus of English in our secondary level is based on communicative language, the students in our country have very little competence and production of functional language, such as proper natural language use in different social and interpersonal contexts in creative ways. They mainly rely on memorizing the rules and grammar translation practice. As a result, if they forget any chunk, they don't have any clue of reconstructing it. They can write only what they have memorized and what their memory has been able to sustain. Consequently, there is very little room for creative writing or group discussion in the writing classes whereas the process approach to teaching writing treats all writing as a creative act which requires time and positive feedback to be done well. So, process writing seems to be absent in our EFL classes. As a result, they cannot use and develop their creativity as well as their writing skills do not develop properly. It is even possible to find out students memorizing lessons without understanding. Therefore, teaching writing has been a very tough job for teachers of Bengali-medium schools. This is not due to the lack of enough linguistic competence of the teachers only but the application of the effective teaching approach appropriately for non-native students also. Here, the students studying in Bengali medium schools especially in classes III – X, usually find writing, guided or free-hand, problematic and hence, frequently make mistakes in vocabulary items or words, structures, formats or styles, genres, etc. To draw an inference to the observation, it has been found that the major problems of writing instruction by the teachers in Bengali-medium schools are heavy emphasis on grammatical form, overemphasis on the final product, lack of genre-specific

writing across the curriculum, the need for more diverse types of feedback. These factors tend to inhibit students from improving their classroom interaction and keep them aloof from developing more active learning in writing. Therefore, this study intends to go for an in-depth search for the approaches/methods, techniques, aids/materials used by the teachers in the Bengali - medium schools while teaching writing in English language classrooms. Then there have been suggestions to develop the methods followed by our teachers. This paper is an attempt to find out the general picture of teaching *writing* in English classes of Bengali-medium schools in this regard. The paper has provided emphasis on finding out extents to which the studied schools follow communicative approach which is considered to the latest and most effective way in teaching writing in a foreign/second language.

Problem statement

In most of the cases, students in our country especially in Bengali-medium schools memorize their lessons. In the present syllabus of secondary level, there are some topics on writing paragraph, letter, application, report writing and essay. But it is seen that students memorize these topics even in some cases teachers also suggest their students to memorize it. Their goal of writing is examination oriented. As a result, they are less active in creative writing. Now a days, various trainings for teachers are being conducted. Modern teaching programs are also available in multi-media. The syllabus in our schools has also been changed. But still now teaching writing English in Bengali medium school is not being effective and many teachers emphasize on Asian Review Vol. 3, No. 1, 2014

memorizing the task and students are not able to come out from the tendency. So what the present condition in teaching-learning situation is a matter of investigation for looking forward to developing our educational system.

Research objectives

- To find out how the teachers teach writing in the English language classroom in Bengali medium schools.
- To find out what approaches/methods, aids/materials and techniques are usually used by the teachers of the Bengali-medium schools to teach writing in the English language classroom.
- To evaluate whether these methods/approaches, aids/materials and techniques are compatible to the CLT approach of teaching writing in the English language classroom of the Bengali-medium schools.

Significance of this research

The significance of the present study lies in its attempt to shed the light on the teaching and learning strategies EFL teachers and learners utilize when producing an extended piece of writing. Its implications may help instructors to rethink and take steps from the findings of the study. The researchers also hope to open an avenue in the research area due to its importance to EFL specialists in Bangladesh.

Literature Review

The teachers and students in our country face certain problems in teaching and learning writing English. As many teachers of English have noted, acquiring the writing skill seems to be more laborious and demanding than acquiring the other three skills. Writing has been observed by many as both physical and mental activity the purpose of which is both to express and impress. In fact, David Nunan (1999, 271) considers it as an enormous challenge to produce “a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing” in one’s second language. This is magnified by the fact that the rhetorical conventions of English texts—the structure, style, and organization—often differ from the conventions in other languages. It requires effort to recognize and manage the differences (Leki, I, 1991). Most of the Bangladeshi learners are strongly rooted in their mother tongue and hence require translating their Bengali thoughts into English for failing to write directly in the target language.

In many countries, education systems emphasize writing for taking tests. For many students, the only reason to practice writing is to pass examinations or to get a good grade in the class. This focus on writing to pass examinations reduces writing to producing a product and receiving a grade from the teacher. This is not likely to make students interested in writing, which becomes decontextualised and artificial, giving students no real sense of purpose or perspective of a target audience.

Even though these problems will persist, there are ways to improve the teaching of this skill to benefit all writing tasks and prepare students for the writing they will have to do after they graduate. Three main approaches to teaching writing have been advocated and used in the past few decades of English language teaching. A brief survey shows that they have had their advocates and detractors over the years and that they are still under active discussion and debate.

The product approach

With the product approach, teachers focus on what a final piece of writing will look like and measure it against criteria of “vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical considerations such as spelling and punctuation,” as well as content and organization. The primary concern of this approach is the ‘correctness’ and form of the final product. The normal procedure is to assign a piece of writing, collect it, and then return it for further revision with the errors either corrected or marked for the student to do the corrections. The teachers do not usually intervene with the writing though they guide during the time of writing without emphasizing much on the correctness at the initial stage of writing. In this stage, instead of worrying about the form of writing, the learners are required to concentrate more on the conveying of messages. There is the description of this approach to be consisted of four stages.

The process approach

In the mid-1970s the process approach began to replace the product approach. The process approach identifies four stages in writing: (1) prewriting, (2) composing/drafting, (3) revising, and (4) editing. Writing is considered process through which meaning is created. Students are first asked to go through such processes, trying organizing, analyzing the ideas clearly. The process approach emphasizes revision, and also feedback from others, so that students may produce many drafts with much crossing out of sentences and moving around of paragraphs. The correction of spelling and punctuation is not of central importance at the early stages. The organization and general coherence are taught primarily in this approach of teaching writing. Many language teachers suggest the implication of both the process and product-based approach towards writing.

The genre approach

In the 1980s the genre approach became popular along with the notion that students could be benefited from studying different types of written texts. As Nunan (1999, 280) explains different genres of writing “are typified by a particular structure and by grammatical forms that reflect the communicative purpose of the genre.” By investigating different genres, students can perceive the differences in structure and form and apply what they learn to their own writing. Even in the classroom, where academic writing usually predominates, writing tasks can be introduced that are based on different genres with roots in the real world, such as the genres of essays, editorials, and business letters.

The roles of teachers, students, and materials need to be adjusted in order to fit the processing writing

Traditional roles of students as receiver, teachers as transmitter, and material as static authority of knowledge should be changed into the center, facilitator, and fluid set in and out of the classroom. Students should not be treated as passive receivers of grammatical, and different detailed skills of language reception and production. Because, they are the real hero of the class. To some extent, they should be allowed to decide which method to be used in the class, which textbook to use, and what to write about. More importantly, they should change the situation that only the teacher is giving the lecture while there was rarely any participation, communication and response of the students. After making clear their roles in the classroom, students will take more responsibility of learning and acquiring, in writing's case, of writing. Teachers should not be the single speakers anymore. Instead, their main role becomes facilitator and things that writing classes need, such as classrooms, (round) tables, typewriters or computers, paper of different colors, and other necessary office supplies. This is sometimes very important since if everything is available, students tend to feel the willingness and urgency to write. Teachers also have the responsibility of coordinating with the school authorities and other departments as well as students' parents. Without the support from the school to the society, there will no ambient atmosphere for successful group writing, which really needs a good community.

Writing instructors must also provide students with dictionaries, ample reading materials, writing models and other useful manual books of practical methods of writing. With all these sources ready at hand, or put at a certain corner, thus, students can always conveniently go to the reference desk for what they are not very sure or they desperately need, when they come to a sudden stop and look for specific and clear details while they are talking or writing.

But the most important aspect of a teacher as a facilitator is to promote students while they are in the process of talking or writing. For beginning writers and writers who are fresh in groups, it is always difficult to grasp the main idea or appropriate opinion to discuss when put in a bunch.

In addition, textbooks are no longer regarded as authorities. Instead, any material that can help develop students' writing and thinking skill can be brought into the classroom. Ideally, the materials should be authentic, such as editorials, advertisements, movies, scientific instructions, maps, travel information, and so on. Students can also be brought into real situations of communication of role-playing or making pen pals with foreign students. Topics are not restricted by textbooks. All interesting, useful, academic or nonacademic topics are allowed.

Teaching Writing: Strategies

The most important factor in writing exercises is that students need to be personally involved in order to make the learning experience of lasting value. Encouraging student participation in the exercise, while at the same time refining and expanding writing skills, requires a certain pragmatic approach. At first the teacher needs to be clear about the target area which depends on some factors; 1) levels of the students, 2) average age of the students, 3) purpose of their learning English, and 4) future intentions for the writing. Again what the students should be able to produce at the end of this exercise and what the focus of the exercise is, are also to be included. The second strategy is to focus on the means which can facilitate learning the target area. For example, if formal business letter English is required, it is of little use to employ a free expression type of exercise. Likewise, when working on descriptive language writing skills, a formal letter is equally out of place. After that the teacher needs to consider how to involve the students. This will consider; what types of activities are interesting to the students? Are they preparing for something specific such as a holiday or test? Will they need any of the skills pragmatically? What has been effective in the past? A good way to approach this is by class feedback, or brainstorming sessions. Finally, it is important for the teachers to consider which type of correction will facilitate a useful writing exercise. In this case considering the target area is again important. Here, after taking a test, perhaps teacher guided correction is the most effective solution or, maybe the best approach would be to have the students work in groups thereby learning from each other. By pragmatically combining these objectives, the teacher can expect both enthusiasm and effective learning.

This review shows that there is a series of ways to prepare students in developing their writing skill. This paper will seek to enquire into the continuing teaching method of writing in English in such schools.

Methodology

Research Design

In this research mixed method was followed. Both 'observation' and 'survey' were needed in this research to have an authentic result. That's why both qualitative and quantitative investigations are here interwoven.

To address and explore the research questions, there were two questionnaires, one for the teachers and the other for the students. The questionnaires were designed on the basis of using various methods/approaches and techniques for teaching literacy skill especially writing skills at the Bengali-medium schools of secondary level in

Bangladesh. There were 6 questions for teachers among which 5 were open-ended questions and 1 was yes/no question in which teachers had to tick. There were 9 questions for students. 5 of them were a mixture of yes/no questions, 3 were open-ended questions and 1 was a question with a list of options. Responses to the questions were analyzed by means of frequency and percentage. Besides eight English classes of six teachers in 3 Bengali-medium schools were also observed. Classroom observation was done on the basis of some criteria.

Subjects

The primary subjects for the study are 10 (ten) English language teachers from public and private schools in Bangladesh. The secondary subjects for the study were 50 (fifty) students ranging from class VI to class X of those schools.

Materials

To address and explore the research questions the selected teachers and students were given questionnaires to answer. The questionnaires were designed on the basis of the different levels of the students of different classes using various approaches/methods and techniques. Each of the questionnaires consisted of items related to the research problems stated in the problem statement. The teacher observation schedule is based on some criteria to observe English classes of the selected teachers. Interviews of some students and teachers were also taken.

Procedures

With the permission of the teacher English classes were observed sitting at the back bench. There were eight observations which took 6 days. After observing the classes, questionnaires were given to the teachers and students and collected on the next day. During their lunch break both teachers and students were taken interviews.

Data presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

1. Data found from teachers questionnaire

1. How many students are there in your class?

Table 1: Frequency of teachers dealing with different class size

Class size	35-40	41-55	56-65	66-70
No. of teachers	4	3	2	1
%	40%	30%	20%	10%

Comment: The 40% teachers of our Bengali-medium take classes of 35-40 students.

2. If/when you use 'writing' in the classroom, what are the teaching objectives?

Table 2: Teaching objectives of different teachers

Response	No. of respondents	%
To make students pass exam	2	20%
To make students learn to write independently	7	70%
To help the students write accurately	4	40%
To practice the given content material	3	30%

The table shows that 20% teachers think that to make students pass in the exams is very important, 70% teachers give importance on making students learn to write independently, 40% teachers are for accuracy in writing, 30% teachers give importance on practicing the given content material.

Comment: The majority of Bengali-medium schools teachers, following the CLT approach, now believe that it is important to encourage students in creative writing rather than only passing in the exams. Writing accurately and practicing the given content materials are also given much but a considerable portion of teachers teaches only to pass in the exams

3. Which writing activities do you normally do in your classroom instruction?

Table 3: Percentages of teachers who tick these boxes

Writing Activities	Most Important	Important	Not so Important	Not needed at all
a. Composition	60%	40%	0%	0%
b. Short answer	30%	70%	0%	0%
c. Dialogue	60%	40%	0%	0%
d. Story writing	20%	70%	10%	0%
e. Rearranging	0%	50%	40%	10%
f. Informal letters	10%	60%	30%	0%
g. Application	20%	70%	10%	0%

According to the above table 60% teachers think that composition is most important for developing writing skill, 40% think that it is important; in case of short answer 30% think that it is most important, 70% think that it is important; in case of dialogue 60% believe that it is most important, 40% believe that it is

important; in case of story writing 20% believes that it is most important, 70% believes that it is important and 10% believe that it is not so important; in case of rearranging 50% thinks that it is important, 40% thinks that it is not so important and 10% thinks that it is not needed at all; in case of informal letter 10% thinks that it is most important, 60% believes that it is important and 30% thinks that it is not so important; and in case of application 20% thinks that it is most important, 70% thinks that it is important and 10% thinks that it is not so important.

Comment: Generally in Bengali-medium schools, the majority of English teachers give most importance on composition and dialogue writing. In case of rearranging there is 0% teacher who thinks it most important. Moreover there is a portion of teacher who believes that it is not necessary at all. But rearranging is very important to have understanding for narrating something maintaining various sequences.

4. How do you ensure that the students know something about the topic for writing?

Table 4: Different ways to reveal student knowledge

Response	No. of respondents	%
By discussion and answering questions	2	20%
By pair work/group discussion	1	10%
By testing students' writing	6	60%
By checking students given clues	1	10%

The table shows that 20% teachers think that students can know about the topic by discussion and answering questions; 20% by pair work/group discussion; 60% by testing their writing observing their mistakes, vocabulary knowledge, speed of writing and whether their answer is adequate or not and 10% by checking them giving clues.

Comment: In Bengali-medium schools most of the English teachers emphasize on taking test to reveal what their students know about some specific topics.

5. How many writing classes do you take in a month?

Table 5: No. of writing classes taken by different teachers

No. of classes	No. of respondents	%
0-5	1	10%
6-10	2	20%
11-16	6	60%
Not fixed	1	10%

The table shows that 10% teacher takes 0-5 writing classes, 20% takes 6-10 writing classes and 60% takes 11-16 writing classes. 10% teachers have answered the number of their writing classes is not fixed.

Comment: The majority of English teachers take 11-16 writing classes in a month.

6. How do you give feedback on student writing? Please write in detail.

Table 6: Teachers feedback on student writing

Responses	No. of respondents	%
By giving marks, correction, comment and telling to write more and more	8	80%
By correcting their errors during their writing activities moving around the class	1	10%
By letting students for peer correction	1	10%

In Bengali-medium schools English teachers 80% generally conduct feedback session on student writing by giving marks, correction, comments on their written copies.

Data found from students questionnaire

7. Does your teacher correct your written work?

Table 7: Teachers' feedback on students writing activities

Response	Yes	No
No. of respondents	48	2
%	96%	4%

The table shows that 96% students have responded as their teachers correct their mistakes. Some of them more or less have written that their teachers correct their mistakes especially in 'spelling' and 'grammar' by circling or underlining those ones after their writing, some have responded that their teachers orally correct their mistakes in writing walking through the student rows, again some of them have written that their teachers first tell the correct answers then write those on the board. From there the students correct their mistakes. On the other hand 4% students have responded that teachers do not correct their mistakes.

Comment: Majority of the students have responded that their teachers correct their mistakes especially in 'spelling' and 'grammar' by circling or underlining those

ones after their writing. According to second large portion of the students teachers correct their errors orally. Some students have written that their teachers write the correct answers on the board and at that time they correct their mistakes. There is a very small portion of students who have written that their teachers do not correct their mistakes.

8. Do you think writing is a difficult skill?

Table 8: Students attitude towards writing skill

Response	Yes	No
No. of respondents	20	30
%	40%	60%

The table shows that 40% students think writing as a difficult skill. They feel it difficult as it is to be written in a foreign language. Some are afraid of grammatical mistakes. On the other hand 60% students do not think that writing is a difficult skill.

Comment: Although majority of the students do not think writing as a difficult skill, there is a large portion of students who are yet afraid of writing.

9. Does your teacher give you homework on writing?

Table 9: Students response having homework on writing

Response	Yes	No
No. of respondents	41	9
%	82%	18%

According to the table 82% students opine that their teachers give exercises more or less on paragraph, application, grammar exercises, composition, dialogue story writing etc. as homework, some of them have written that their teachers give some ideas on a specific topic and then ask them to write it at home on their own, some have responded that they are given homework on which they have just done their class work, and very few of them have responded that they are hardly given homework. On the other hand 18% students have responded that their teachers do not give homework.

Comment: Most of the teachers give students exercises as homework.

10. Does your teacher tell you to memorize compositions?

Table 10: Students response on memorizing composition

Response	Yes	No
No. of respondents	30	20
%	60%	40%

The table shows that teachers in Bengali-medium schools tell their students to memorize compositions as responded by 60% students. Among these students the highest number of essays they have memorized is 20, lowest is 10 and majority of the students have written that they have memorized 15 essays while 40% students have responded that they are not asked to memorize composition in schools.

Comment: This is a common picture of our Bengali-medium schools that students are used to in memorizing compositions. But CLT does not approve this method as it harms students' creative writing. But it seems that days are changing as there is also a portion of students who claim that they only take ideas on different compositions and their teachers don't influence them to memorize rather than they give instruction on writing freely.

11. How many compositions do you memorize before any exam?

Table 11: No. of compositions memorized by different students before any exam

No. of composition	0	2-10	6-10
No. of respondents	8	36	6
%	16%	72%	12%

The table shows that 72% students memorize 2-10 compositions and 12% students memorize 6-10 compositions.

Comment: This picture shows that majority of the students of Bengali-medium students memorize 2-10 compositions before any exam. On the other hand, there are very few cases where the students use their creativity to write compositions only taking some ideas.

12. Do you like writing classes?

Table 12: attitude towards writing classes

Response	yes	No
No. of respondents	41	9
%	82%	18%

The table shows that 82% students like writing classes. According to them, writing skills in English can be developed through writing several times. They think that there are no ways but effective writing classes to develop their handwritings. Some of them have written that writing classes are like fun for them. On the other hand 18% students do not like writing classes as they do not feel that English writing is so easy and classes are enjoyable. That's why they do not like writing classes.

Comment: According to this picture most of the students of Bengali- medium schools feel interest in writing classes, but there are also a portion who do not like writing classes.

13. How many writing classes do you have in a month?

Table 13: *No. of writing classes in a month in different classes*

No. of classes	0-5	6-10	11-20	21-25	Not fixed	In almost every classes
No. of respondents	6	8	17	1	10	8

Comment: Although in different English classes of different Bengali- medium schools the number of writing classes varies to a great extent, majority of the students have responded for 11-20 classes as the number of their writing classes

14. Which writing activities does your teacher make you practice in the class?

Table 14: *Writing activities practiced in classroom responded by different students*

Writing activities	Frequency of respondents	%
• composition	20	40%
• short answer	36	72%
• free dialogue	42	84%
• story	36	72%
• Rearranging sentences	27	54%

Comment: In Bengali-medium school teachers give major importance on free dialogue, the second emphasis is on short answer and story writing. On the other hand rearranging has the lowest frequency in writing classes.

Data found from class observation

Eight English classes in 4 Bengali-medium schools were observed. Here are details of those observations.

Teacher-1

Class-vii

It was a very large class of about 65 students. The teacher used a microphone in this class. She was with a smiling face and a very good personality. She read out a passage and made questions out of it on the board. The students were asked to write answers of those questions. She gave 10 minutes for the answers. She was monitoring her students moving throughout the classroom and providing vocabulary for their answers when they felt difficulties. Then she asked one of the students to read out the answers and at other students to correct their mistakes.

Teacher-2

Class-x

The teacher started his class with a good facial expression. The teacher asked the students to do dialogue writing. He gave the students purpose for dialogue writing. It was a guided writing as the students were supposed to read a dialogue from their text, then they wrote a new dialogue on some given clues and in the light of the previous one. The teacher conducted group work to write the dialogue. He asked the students to do the whole process within 15 minutes. The students were sharing their ideas. The teacher was circling the classroom to monitor student activities. He was providing with vocabulary whenever they face word finding problem. They were asking for words in Bangla and he was giving translation of those ones. Dialogues, they were writing, were of long sentences. He was instructing them to write small and easy sentences that is used in real life situation and also asked them to make a good conclusion for their dialogues. The students crossed the given time and they took almost 25 minutes to finish their task. The teacher checked two copies and gave feedback. He could not check all of their copies.

Teacher-3

Class-vi

The teacher tried to keep a friendly look towards his students and read out a comprehension from the text. He translated each and every line into Bengali. There was no class work. His strategy was to make his students understand the passage in their mother language then they would be prepared for answering any type of questions out of the passage. His method is totally grammar-translation method.

Teacher-4

Class-ix

The teacher explained in short how to maintain the sequence of sentences and then asked the students to rearrange some sentences. There was no pair work or group in the class. He did not mention any fixed time for their exercise. After about 15 minutes he asked one student to read out the answers and others had to correct their errors.

Teacher-5

Class-viii

The teacher started the class with a clear and cordial voice expression. He then wrote the title of a paragraph on the board. He let the students to think about the topic, extracted ideas on it from them and helped them to organize their ideas. Then he gave some hints for the paragraph. After that he asked them to write on it within 15 minutes. He was moving through the student rows to monitor their activities. At the same time he was providing them with proper vocabulary. He managed to check their written works within the class time. He underlined their grammatical mistakes

Teacher-6

Class-vii

The teacher asked the students to write a paragraph which they had already memorized. He provided them with appropriate vocabulary when it was necessary. Then he checked out most of their copies. He underlined their grammatical and spelling mistakes.

Teacher-7

Class-x

In this class the students had to do a passage narration. The teacher first discussed some rules on writing narration. Then she wrote an exercise on the black-board and asked them to do it. She did not mention any fixed time for this task. She was moving around the classroom while they were doing their exercises. The teacher took all of their copies to check during her free time.

Teacher-8

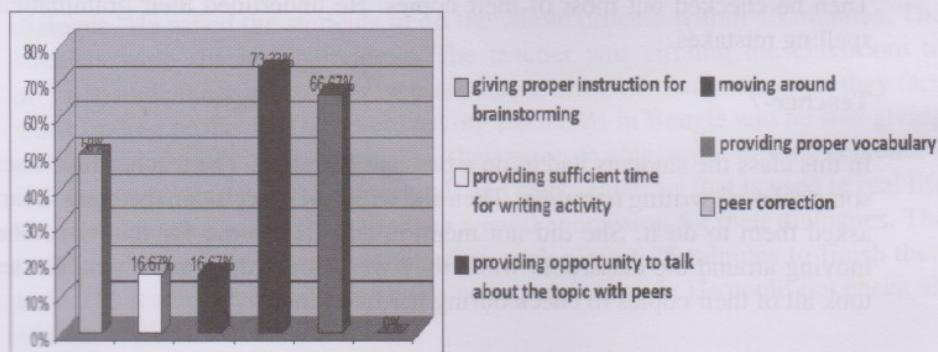
Class-ix

The teacher asked the students to read a passage from their text. Then he made questions on the board. He explained how to organize ideas to make answers. He was facilitating his students when they were in problem and provided necessary vocabulary. He was correcting their mistakes moving around the class. The students had to write from their understanding of the passage. After they had finished their tasks the teacher checked their copies and underlined their writing mistakes.

So, it is found that three of the teachers have given the students proper instructions about brainstorming before writing on a specific topic and how to organize ideas. One of them has provided the students with appropriate timeframe for their writing activities. One of them has instructed the students to talk about their thought before writing. In other cases, there has not been pair work or group work; although the teachers have said that they often conduct these in their classes. According to one teacher, students are hardly let to do free-writing as they are not developed enough to do so. Some teacher said that their students are weak at the base, that's why they had to rely on memorization. Five of them have provided the students with proper vocabulary that may be useful in the particular assignment while they were writing. Five of them have circulated around the class to monitor their class work.

It is seen from school observation that the average students are around 49. It is time consuming and almost impossible to check all of the copies during class time. The teachers would have conducted the very effective method peer correction. But there was no peer correction in those classes. Instead of that most of the teachers corrected 3/4 copies among students' class work. Then they have discussed the mistakes that are commonly noticed.

Figure 1: Percentage of school teachers maintaining different principles of writing



The chart reflects the percentage of Bengali-medium school teachers maintaining different principles of process writing advocated by CLT. Taking the three schools as representative picture of our Bengali-medium schools it is found that 50% of our English teachers give proper instruction about brainstorming before writing, 16.67% provides the students with appropriate timeframe for specific writing activity, 16.67% provides with the opportunity to talk about the topic with

peers, 73.33% circulates the class while the students do their writing tasks, 66.67% provides with proper vocabulary and 0% teachers conduct peer correction.

Results

The findings present that there is a rising tendency to follow CLT approach. But teachers in our country still cannot come out from the circle of the traditional method. Teachers are giving importance on composition and dialogue writing which are seen to be dependent mostly on imagination. Teaching is here completely product-based as there is evaluation session at the end of any term. 40% students are afraid of writing. It is because they bear the feeling that learning a foreign language is difficult especially grammatical items. On the other hand the larger portion does not think it difficult. Students' attitude towards writing is mostly positive as 82% says that they like writing. In these schools genre-specific writing is not having adequate importance as we see sequencing/rearranging is at ignorance level.

It is found that communicative approach is almost not in action in Bengali-medium schools. But it is a matter of hope that there is a sign that perhaps in future our teachers would follow CLT approach in teaching English language as more or less they are seen to be aware of CLT, although they are yet not prepared to maintain it. In case of genre-specific writing the picture is almost negative and grammar-translation method (GTM) is hugely at work in our teaching-learning situation.

5.2 Limitations

For this research 10 schools were visited and from their 10 English teachers and 60 students were supposed to be selected as participants for primary data collection. But all of them did not submit the questionnaires in time. The quantity of subjects narrows the scope of authentic study. Again the questionnaires filled by the learners might not fully accurate as they consulted one another while filling it up.

5.3 Recommendations

The statistics in the previous depicted tables carry significant implications for English language teachers. It has clearly been proved that there are significant differences between teachers with respect to procedures of teaching and techniques of correction. In our country teachers are being given various training

on various teaching techniques, but when they are in action, most of them surrender to the traditional method. So, at first it is important to change our teachers' view of teaching. If they themselves are not motivated how can they bring change in their teaching system? Secondly, they have to present English in such an interesting way that all of the students feel attraction to it and love to write in English instead of getting afraid of it. Teacher can use various diagrams, pictures, videos for different creative writing. Thirdly, to make the students able to write on different types of writing, it is very important to give emphasis on genre-specific writing and our teachers need to be careful about it. Fourthly teacher's motivation to the students should be given more emphasis. English teachers can develop their students' writing by teaching them various writing styles/techniques, making them to write on topics which are not in their syllabus, arranging writing competition, increasing writing classes, giving more homework, giving more emphasis on grammar, vocabulary, phrase and idioms, making them read beyond textbook.

Finally, English teachers in our country have to heartily feel the significance of writing skill to develop students writing activities in English that would at the same time stimulate learning this foreign language.

Conclusion

As writing skill plays a vital role to accelerate learning a foreign language like English, teaching writing should be treated with much care and emphasis on real-life needs of writing. The spread of technology-based knowledge has already facilitated the learning-teaching of language a lot. It has also contributed to the decrease of the grammatical and structural needs in writing. In the same way, there have been emerging needs of quality writing. So, the need for developing ideas through much cared organization is still much awaiting among the learners of Bangladesh. The crises faced by the learners during their journey of study and during the period of their professional life are really deep rooted, mostly due to the lack of proper implementation of the writing processes discussed above. We strongly believe that the exact implementation of any of the processes as applicable depending on the learners must be helpful to make the learners able to write properly using their own knowledge of the world and of the language too. The present paper tried to find out some limitations in this regard in Bengali-medium schools. To wipe out these limitations our teachers need to break the traditional method in the teaching system of writing which would ultimately lead to the development of teaching-learning situation of our English classes.

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