

Research Trends in English Writing Skills: Analysis, Insights and Reflections

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ABSTRACT

English writing skill is one of the most important skills of English language as it is an integral part of life and the social need of the contemporary society. Today it is considered to be every individual's need to master English writing skill because it helps in assessing ones progress made individually, socially, culturally, philosophically, scientifically and through all sorts of behavioural activities. Though English writing skill was not the one which was on limelight in India since decades and not mentioned by any educational committees explicitly, yet there were few references made about the importance of writing skills by few educational commissions and reports such as NCF, (2005) and NCERT Synthesis report, (2012). These reports emphasised in inculcating English writing skills as an integral part of the curriculum by teaching this skill using different methods of teaching and appropriate instructional materials. Though there had been drastic changes in the text books, syllabus, curriculum and teaching methodologies from time to time, yet there found no much changes in the teaching and learning method of the English writing skills. During every time frame there were scholars and researchers who showcased the underlying negligence shown towards this skill in their various studies, yet teaching of writing skills found no much changes. Hence, this paper is a sincere effort to reflect on the trends in the English writing skills to identify the reasons for the low attainment of the learners in writing skills that has been hindering learners to master proficiency in English.

Keywords: English writing skills, errors, research trends

Education plays a pivotal role in getting an individual equipped with skills and competencies essential for a successful life. It is a determining factor for his economic and social development and is necessary for every individual to have access to education so as to increase the quality of their own individual and social life. In recent years, education has been one of the key issues addressed on the global development agenda because it is a potential catalyst that equip individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to become productive parts of society, enabling them to realise their potential and to live a life they value.

The manifestation of the potential of education is only possible with the aid of a language. English

language is the mass instrument of education, the tool of empowerment, the way of bringing about equity and a means for global reach. English language is the polestar that aids each individual to attain the fruits of learning. Whichever the subject area, the learners absorb new concepts when they listen, speak, read and write about what they are learning. This was also recognised by the NCF (2005) and the committee recommended that the four linguistic skills such as reading and writing, listening and speaking should be the basis for curriculum planning as they contribute to the progress of an individual in all curricular areas.

Though the four linguistic skills are considered as the four pillars of the language structure, the most

neglected and difficult English language skill is the writing skill. Rivers & Temperley, (1978), while analysing the four linguistic skills found that adults devote 45% of their energies to listening, 30% to speaking, 16% to reading and 09% to writing. Hence, it can be rightly said that writing is the most neglected skills.

Most of the linguists like Swain (1995) and Lapkin (1995) have identified that there is a close relationship between the input and output language learning. They claim that when an individual works on reading, his writing does get better. However, language learning being a complex process, it is so very possible that the individual who has attained proficiency in reading comprehension still have a hard time maintaining a live conversation or writing a short paragraph coherently. This specifically shows that even though all language skills are interconnected, it is also very important to work on each sub skills specifically. Hence, today the linguists and educational researchers assert that isolating a specific skill and its sub-skills for focused attention will help the language teachers in honing the learners' specific language skills to perfection.

Writing is one of the most important skills for the production of language. Vivacious writing skills always helps an individual to express his thoughts victoriously as it is the 'hard copy' of one's intellectual level or the level of one's own expression. Across time and space, writing has been visualised as the extension of the language used by the humans. According to Carroll (1990) Writing saw its beginning due to the political expansion in the ancient cultures. The reason for this was that it was a necessity to have a reliable means of communication to hand on information, to maintain financial statements, preserve historical records and so on. So, it can be rightly said that writing is one of the important invention in the human history due to its nature of help provided in maintaining permanent record of information, opinions, beliefs, feelings, arguments, explanations, theories, etc.

From a long run the importance of English writing skill in school curriculum was recognised by the linguist and researchers. The NCF (2005) recommended to focus on the development of writing skills in learners claiming that it plays the foundational role in children's construction of knowledge right from elementary levels through

senior secondary level. It claims that the mastery of English writing skill with others becomes the key factor that affects success at school for the learners as writing is one of the important and generalised skills of English language. However, The NCF (2005) claimed that though the importance of writing is well recognised all over the country, it felt the curriculum needed to attend to its innovative treatments.

Chakravarthy and Dwivedi (2015) states that English writing skill was the most neglected skill by the teachers. However, it is also the skill neglected by learners and by the researchers or linguists as it was considered to be the last skill and the most difficult skill. Although English writing skill of the learner determines his scholastic or academic achievement, no much emphasis is laid for the development of this skill in the learners. It is surprising to note that in the Indian scenario, very limited studies were conducted on English writing skills. Whatever studies had been conducted, it only focused on the limited areas of writing skills. There are also hardly few references as recommendations given by the education commissions on the writing skills of the students.

Although, there were few suggestions from the researchers and the recommendations by the educational commissions about bringing in improvement in the English writing skills, yet the condition of this skill remains almost unchanged. It is believed that the recommendations and the research findings help in bringing new reforms in the educational field, but how far it is true in the case of English writing skills is a question to ponder. So this is a sincere effort by the authors to focus on the reasons why English writing skills of the learners have not seen many changes.

Research Trends on Level of Achievement in English Writing Skills

Academic achievement is one of the most important factors that hold paramount importance in the present socio-economic and cultural contexts. The effectiveness of educational system is measured based on the achievement rate of the students. Here is a synoptic view of the researches which were conducted to find the achievement of the learners specifically in their writing skills. Sharma & Chawla (2013) and Sarma, (1989) found that

with regard to the achievement in English writing skills, a large number of students were found to be poor in written English in comparison to their proficiency in the other language skills resulting in no much development in their communication skills in English. Raj (1980) claimed that the lack of possession of sufficient knowledge of English, affected the learners in such a way that they were unable to express themselves adequately through writing. According to Singh (1984) the lack of proficiency in the writing skills in the learners in turn also hindered the other subjects as the writing ability of the learners in most of the subjects was also found to be inadequate. Gadgil (1978) expressed that comprehending and understanding is a determinant factor that helps build ones writing skills but the students were found to be poor in the comprehension and understanding of the language which in turn led for poor writing skills. Ramkumar (1982) also asserted that writing of even one single sentence was found to be difficult by the students in many schools.

Vocabulary, the tool for English language learning develops greater fluency and expression in communication skills. Insufficient vocabulary hinders students understanding of others ideas and handicaps them to express their own too. It is rightly said by Wilkins (1972) that while without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. With reference to the vocabulary attainment of the learners, Ramkumar (1982) and Jayashree (1989) found that in the Indian setting the vocabulary attainment of the learners was very low. Every individual learner's vocabulary knowledge is very personal and this helps him/her to widen the knowledge of English. A child who has a hold in vocabulary will surely be able to organise a paragraph coherently but the findings of various researches proved that the paragraphs written by the learners revealed their limited knowledge of subject, limited idea substance, and inadequate topic development. According to Thakar (2005) the paragraphs written by the learners showed non-fluency, disconnected ideas which lacked logical sequencing and development. This shows that all the aspects of English writing skill is interconnected. Shanmugam (1977) also found that most of the students were good in spoken English rather than in the written form. From all these studies it can be

concluded that, as Bhattacharjee (1984) mentioned the overall English teaching of writing skills in classroom was between poor and satisfactory and the students were found to have no attainment in vocabulary.

The above studies focused on the level of the achievement of the students in their writing skills. However, there were no studies found by the authors that focused on the components of the writing skills or the types of writing skills. If more emphasis were laid on those areas it would have given a clear picture of what types of writing skills the students found difficult and which types of writing task topics needed more emphasis.

Research Trends on the Correlates Determining the Achievement of English Writing Skills

The studies that focused on the achievement of the learners also pointed out the factors that hindered the academic performance of the students in English writing skills. Various studies found that there were various correlates that determined the achievement of the students in writing skills. The major correlates found by ample researchers are locality, sex, medium of instruction, and economical background of the students.

The linguists found that the variables such as location played an important role in determining the performance of the learners. The acquisition of second language proficiency has been always a challenge because of the learning difficulties and their impact on performance of second language learners. The difficulties here refer to the 'barriers to learning' that eventually shrinks educational opportunities. There are studies that found reasons why the learners find it difficult to acquire English writing proficiency to pursue learning in the second language. Dey (1991), Sharma & Chawla (2013) and Joshi (1984) mentioned that one of the factors that deter English writing proficiency is location. The studies found that there have been wide gap between the attainments of the students in terms of English writing skills based on the locality. The students from urban schools performed better in writing assignments than that of their rural counterparts. The reason behind this disparity is that the learners in the rural areas had no much exposure to English language as such areas inclined

to be linguistically, educationally and economically isolated leaving the learners in dearth of proficiency. In addition, according to Sharma & Chawla (2013) the students who are enrolled in private schools had better communication skills in comparison to the students studying in government schools. The medium of instruction found to have played an important role in determining the standard of the writing skills of the students. Although most of the students from schools that had English as the medium of instruction were good in spoken English, rather than in the written form. However, Shanmugam (1977) found that when compared to the students with the vernacular medium, the English medium students performed better in their writing assignments. It is also interesting to note that Joshi (1984), Chandra (1988) and Govind (2006) found that the writing skills of the students were affected due to their economical background, caste and intelligence. This was due to the fact that they did not have adequate practice of English at home due to poor economic condition. Shanmugam (1977) found that sex played an important role in determining the achievement of writing skills, when compared to the attainment among male and female, the female students were good in written form when compared to male students.

These are very few studies that have been conducted to find the effect of correlates on writing skills. There could have been more emphasis on the correlates like Education qualification of teachers, experience, professional training, caste, parents' qualification etc. which could have given a clearer picture of the aspects that exactly influence the writing skills of the learners.

Research Trends on Error Analysis in English Writing Skills

Error Analysis, a branch of Applied Linguistics is concerned with the compilation, study and analysis of errors made by second language learners. It aims at identifying types and patterns of errors so as to identify the common difficulties in second language acquisition.

Majority of the studies on writing skills aimed on error analysis. Dave and Saha (1968), Joshi (1975), Ramkumar (1982) and Misra (1985) found that errors of grammatical structures were predominantly pronounced in the learners writing. Pradhan (1991),

Dave and Saha (1968), Misra (1985) and Desai (1986) found that with spelling errors, learners also misused the usage of idioms. However, Indapurkar (1968) found the errors committed by learners' phonetically resembled words and Inflection errors. The errors were widely spread among the knowledge of students in the grammatical structure of verbs. According to Joshi (1975), Misra (1985) and Mohammed (1986) the learners made a lot of errors in the relative concepts of verbs like irregular verbs, S-V concord that is none other than subject verb agreement and verb phrase. Tenses were another area of concern because most of the studies found that students were confused with tenses. Joshi (1975), Misra (1985), Desai (1986), Rabbani (1984) and Sarma (1991) found that learners committed errors especially in the 'ing' forms and sequences of tenses. Mohammed (1986) found that (82.28 %) percentage of errors was committed by the learners in tenses and it proved that 'tenses' was the most difficult area of concern with reference to grammar among the learners. In addition to this, according to Misra (1985), Rabbani (1984) and Ramkumar (1982) the numbers were of main concern which shows that the students had also problems with singular and plurals forms.

The main concerning part was the students' lack of understanding in forming correct sentences. The studies of Ramkumar (1982) and Dave and Saha (1968) claim that most of the students found it difficult to balance sentences. The limited knowledge of using appropriate punctuation marks employing correct word substitution, and phrases were also reasons for the learners lack of balancing sentences.

Ramkumar (1982), Joshi (1975), Misra (1985) and Mohammed (1986) stated that among the other parts of speech, prepositions, conjunction, connectives and pronoun were found to be the area of errors committed by the learners.

Rabbani (1984), Patrikar (1981), Ramkumar (1982), (Sarma, 1991), Dave and Saha (1968), Joshi (1975), Misra (1985) and Mohammed (1986) found that adjectives and degree of comparisons were common issues among the learners. They also found that there were also errors in the areas such as the use of articles, opposites, passives, word order, lexical items syntax, and generative suffix.

Though there were quite a number of studies which concentrated on the different types of errors committed by the students, there were also few studies which threw light on the reasons that forced the learners to commit such errors. According to Patrikar (1981) and Mohammed (1986) the reason that contributed the students to commit such errors was the confusion with regard to knowledge of English vocabulary, morphology and syntax in the learners. The other major causes according to Chaurasia (1978), Patrikar (1981), Mohire (1989) and Ayesha (1979) were the use of wrong items, omissions and wrong substitutions, lack of knowledge and control over the structure of language, interference of the mother tongue and lack of fundamental grounding for the receptivity of students from psychological and environmental points of view. Sarma (1991) found that language transfer, ignorance of L2 rules, false assumptions about L2, ignorance of rule restriction, teaching-learning situation were other few reason that led learners in making such errors. In addition to this Misra (1985) and Sarma (1991) also found that the learners found English grammar more difficult especially the concepts such as article 'the', propositions, S-V concord, negative questions, sequences of tenses, passive, relative clauses, and conditional clauses etc.

The above mentioned studies did try to identify the area of concerns so that the teachers can lay more emphasis on these specific areas and help the learners overcome these errors. However, these studies showed that students made errors in all most all grammatical structures. So it is a question to be pondered as to whether these studies would really be a help for the teachers or the linguistics to bring any reforms in the system to help the students. Moreover, it is difficult to find distinction between error and mistakes, the researcher could have possibly termed a mistake as an error. It is also difficult to identify the real causes of errors due to the multitude of possible causes. The error committed by a learner could be due to communication strategy factors, personal factors, external factors or any other. Hence, the learner's output can be considered to be the only source of evidence and found causes that can be necessarily unreliable.

Research Trends on the Factors that Hindered the Development of English Writing Skills

It is always a question most of the linguists have regarding the reasons why English writing skill is found to be the most difficult task among the learners. It was found that the role of learners and teachers in the school is one of the most important factors that enrich the writing skills of the students. Writing being a complex skill which determines the academic success of an individual is a determinant factor that aids each individual to do better in exams, essays, assignments, and so on. However, it's the role of a teacher to help each and every student attain this proficiency but in this modern world the teachers don't actually realize their responsibility in helping students improve their writing skills. Nevertheless, it is not merely the teachers' sole responsibility rather it is a collaborative effort of learners, the teachers and the curriculum to bring in desirable changes in each individual. However, there are quite a number of factors that hindered the development of English writing skills such as the teacher, methods of teaching, objectives of teaching, learners, text book, instructional material and evaluation.

The teacher: The various studies which were conducted to find the factors that hindered the development of English writing skills in the learners found to be the inefficiency in the teachers. The teaching of writing skills presents a dismal picture in most of the states in India. According to NCERT Synthesis report (2012) it was found that the methodology adopted by primary teachers found to be monotonous in most of the cases and only few teachers were seen to be giving some visual inputs before assigning writing tasks.

The studies of Mohire (1989) and Bhattacharjee (1984) found that the majority of the teachers of English were not professionally equipped to teach English. The findings of Singh (1984) with reference to the performance of the teachers based on their educational qualification was that the post graduate teachers in English consistently performed better and was superior to the performance of the non-post graduates in English. In addition, the lack of knowledge of teachers about the different methods used in teaching writing handicapped the

writing ability of the students. While analysing the teacher's linguistic and communicative abilities in relation to their classroom functions it was found that the writing ability of most of the teachers was not adequate. Singh (1984) also asserted that the teachers did possess grammatical competence to evaluate pupil errors, but lacked stylistic competence to the same extent.

According to Ram (1989) Rabbani (1984) interference of mother tongue was most common in most of the schools and most of the English teachers relied on mother tongue to teach English language and this affected the learners widely. It was also found that the students just copied the text written by teacher from the blackboard. However, the NCERT Synthesis report (2012) in its report asserted that the teachers need to devote extra time on English writing skill but with no avail. Reddy (1986) mentions that the teachers also didn't take any effort to improve the creative writing ability of the learners instead it was found that for every lesson teachers provided with some important questions and promoted the use of market guides to ease their job.

In fact it was found by Jain (1987) that the teaching at the foundation stage was neglected and this contributed for the lack of proficiency in the writing skills of the learners. According to Mishra (1968) a significant number that is, 85% teachers experienced difficulty in teaching grammar and almost all the teachers taught grammar by making students memorize the rules and work on exercises. The NCERT Synthesis report (2012) states that none of the teachers felt that contextualising grammar teaching was the best method. When teachers themselves found teaching grammar difficult, the condition of the learners who are taught by these teachers are unimaginable. Moreover, with reference to the study conducted by Bharathi (2013) the teachers did not show any interest in discussion of the topics nor gave ideas for the students on new topics while doing writing exercise, this is also a reason for a low quality in the writing skills of the learners. Mohire (1989) and Mishra (1968) found that most of the teachers did notice the problems in the students or the errors committed by the learners but only few teachers really helped students overcome these issues, the same was in the case of handwriting. Teachers never took initiative to improve the handwriting of the students. In

fact the communicative competence and the other needs of the students were not touched upon by the teachers. In addition to this the lack of uniformity in the distribution of the workload of English teachers made it worse. Jain (1987) added that the teachers teaching English were overburdened by teaching load, clerical duties, co-curricular activities, etc.

According to the NCERT Synthesis report (2012) there was a lack in the use of techniques in language teaching effectively as the main focus in the class was on rote learning of questions and answers. In fact it was also found by Misra (1968) that 65% of teachers did not find time to teach essay writing. The NCERT Synthesis report (2012) also added that the time allotted for writing in the classes was not more than 10-15 minutes daily and almost all the writing task provided in the exercise books was mainly given as homework.

While noting to the above mentioned problems identified in the part of the teachers that contributed for students lack of proficiency in the writing skills, it can be rightly noted that the teachers are not given enough opportunities to train themselves. It was also pointed by Bhattacharjee (1984) in his study that in-service training facilities for the teachers were found to be inadequate.

Methods of teaching: According to Bhattacharjee (1984), the teachers were also not competent enough to identify the appropriate teaching methods for the learners. With reference to classroom teaching, there was no systematic approach in teaching writing skills. Mishra (1968), Jain (1987), Ram (1989), Pillai (1988), Bhattacharjee (1984) and Madhavi (1990) found that most of the teachers used the traditional lecture and translation methods in the classrooms in spite of being trained to use new teaching techniques and methods. Jain (1987) asserted that over 70% of teachers used lecture and translation methods in every writing classes.

There are also studies like that of Singh (1985) who found that most of the teachers used grammar-oriented, text-oriented, translation-oriented and above all examination-oriented methods of teaching writing and the course was confused mixture of teaching contents, test-items and learning-objectives. Moreover, Ram (1989) in his study found that the teachers were not even aware of the structural/situational approach used for teaching writing skills.

Objectives of teaching: Objectives of teaching English have been an evolutionary process. Though the main objective of teaching English in the beginning was the creation of “a class of persons who were Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect” but now as Jain (1987) points out, the emphasis is on the acquisition of four language skills namely speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. However, it was found that the teachers usually had no clear cut objectives for any specific classes they taught. Instead teachers seemed to concentrate on teaching specific lists like vocabulary items, specific grammatical structure by treating the textbooks as content-based material. The teaching always aimed at fulfilling the goal of writing the examination instead of improving learner’s creativity. Pillai (1988) in his study found inadequacy in the syllabus that did not meet the requirement of the objectives of teaching English. According to Ram (1989) the teachers promoted to memorize set passages in the name of compositions and forced learners’ rote memorisation which showed that the teachers were themselves confused with the objectives of teaching English.

The Learners: Learners are always considered as the centre of focus of the educational system. There are few studies that also showed that the lack of proficiency in the writing skills were due to the attitude and problems of the learners. It was found that the students lacked other three skills of English such as listening, reading and speaking skills which in return affected the writing skills of the learners. According to Jayashree, (1989), the learners improper listening nature, and their inattentiveness in the classroom became a barrier in mastering writing skills. It became a tedious job for the teachers to make learners understand English due to their low performance in all the skills. Lack of interest, poor vocabulary of the learners and lack of participation, over-crowded classrooms were other major reasons that turned English writing to a scary skill for the students. Mohire (1989) asserted that the students’ inability to interact in English, large classes, cultural disparity made it impossible for the teachers to improve the writing skills of the learners.

Text Book: The most common resources in the classroom are the textbook as they are a crucial part of every child’s learning journey. A text book is a

teacher tool that endows every teacher with insights for planning lessons, in selecting the problems to be worked out, the methods of teaching to be adopted and the teaching aids to be used. When problems lie in the textbooks itself then there is nothing more to blame. Bharati (2013) found that the current textbook had limited writing activities. According to Mohire (1989) and Ram (1989) the English textbooks in general were dominated by literary material and thus the learners did not find the textbooks of English interesting. It was also found that in certain cases the teachers laid too much emphasis on the textbooks without taking the aid of any other reference materials. The textbooks were not only uninteresting, it also contained grammatical errors with difficult structures which made it difficult for the learners to follow the text book.

Bhattacharjee (1984) in his study found that in certain other cases even though the English textbooks were written according to the latest approach, the textbooks were not accompanied by teachers handbooks which made the teachers more confused. In contrary to this, according to Ram (1989) there were also cases where in the teachers never consulted the teacher’s guide even if it was available.

Instructional materials: Instructional materials or the so called teaching aids are vital components in every classroom that helps learners develop reading comprehension skills, reinforce a skill or concept, differentiate instruction and alleviate anxiety or boredom by presenting information in a new and exciting way. Use of teaching aids in classroom has been always an area of concern from the early times. Most of the studies found inadequate teaching resources in schools as one of the main reasons for the low level of achievement in writing skills. As for material resources, Pillai (1988) and Bhattacharjee (1984) found that most of the schools were not equipped with appropriate teaching materials especially with regard to audio-visual aids. Jain (1987), Pillai (1988) and Bhattacharjee (1984) observed that even in schools where such resources were available, they were scarcely used by teachers owing to lack of training in operating them. With reference to the NCERT Synthesis report (2012), It was also found that majority of the teachers did not give verbal or visual inputs before assigning the writing task.

Evaluation: Evaluation is a continuous process and if it is done effectively, evaluation can help the teachers to identify the areas for improvement and can set attainable aims and goals for the learners. Assessments or evaluation in writing skills play an important role in determining the learners' capabilities and help him nurture his writing skills. However, a few studies found that the evaluation of student performance was not merely based on written examinations alone but also on internal assessment. Jain (1987) found that more weightage was given to their oral performance rather than their written tasks. According to Pradhan (1991) the question paper was found to be an instrument that merely tested student's ability in reading a particular text rather than any other skill. The teachers rarely gave any writing assignments in the classroom nor evaluated learners' progress. This in turn resulted in no remedial measures in the English class leaving learners nowhere in writing skills.

However, the above studies show that the variables that really affected the students writing skills were teachers, students and curriculum resulting in the low performance of the learners in writing skills.

One of the major weaknesses in the field of language education is teacher training. Today the main focus is on the development in linguistics, psychology and pedagogy but not the teacher. The teachers are not given adequate training in different approaches so as to improve the teaching methods. The studies need to focus more on the appointment procedures of the teachers, the textbook content and activities, teaching aids, objectives and methods of teaching to bring in optimal changes in the teaching and learning of the English writing skills.

When we refer to curriculum, text book is the core part of the curriculum and is considered to be the back bone of the education system. It is the sole resource that attunes teachers and students to acquire desirable changes in the learning process. The problems underlying the text book cannot be broken up until some independent academic bodies undertake evaluation of the text books, stopping the undesirable collaboration among the textbook agency, the author, the reviewer, the publisher and those prescribing textbooks. There should be studies undertaken to check the weightage given for each skills and thus help in materialising a better workable text book for the students.

Research Trends on the experimental studies conducted in English Writing Skills

In the process of the growth of English teaching and learning studies, Experimental methods have played a pivotal role. In language studies Experimental methods aim to investigate whether there is any treatment effect on participants' behaviours or their internal processes. There have been few experimental studies conducted to find the treatment effect in English language with reference to writing skills. Sarma (1989) conducted an experimental study on well-designed communicative syllabus. Pugazhenth, Thambi & Jeyachandra (2013) conducted an experimental study on TBLT and Ramamoorthy (1992) and Suderkkodi (1990) experimented the effects of the components of narrative writing skills by remedial teaching programme involving the techniques such as oral drill, intensive writing practice, gesticulations, dramatizations, correlation, mimicry, pictures and flash cards, and phonetic methods which were found to be effective.

However, the studies did showcase how the different experimental studies improved the skills of the learners yet the practicalities of these methods are to be contemplated upon. At this stage all experiments of methodological innovations are carried and tried out in specialized institutions bypassing the large majority of schools and colleges which lack special facilities. The experiments might be good but, are they accessible to the general runoff teachers and teaching institutions is always a question to contemplate upon.

Suggestions Based on Research Trends

From the analysis of research trends on the level of achievement in English writing skills of the learners the authors felt that the researchers should have also focused on the:

- ❑ Components of writing skills such as organisation, content, vocabulary, grammar and conventions.
- ❑ Attitude towards English writing skills of both teachers and learners
- ❑ All the correlates of English Writing Skills such as
 - ⊙ Education qualification of teachers
 - ⊙ Total experience of teachers

- ⊙ Professional training
- ⊙ Location
- ⊙ Medium of instruction
- ⊙ Type of schools etc.

When we analyse all the mentioned studies, it is so obvious that most of the studies were carried out on error analysis. It would have been better if the researchers had also focused on:

- ❑ The grammar aspects deeply in spite of just listing errors.
- ❑ Analyse the errors based on each rule concerned with each grammar concept.

With reference to the research trends on the factors that hindered the development of English Writing Skills, the researchers could have also:

- ❑ Analysed the curriculum of teacher education with reference to writing skills as it is the determining factor of teaching and learning in the classroom.
- ❑ Analysed the factors that contributed for poor performance of students in writing skills from both teachers and students point of view.
- ❑ Focused on analysing the basic knowledge that the teachers had about objectives and approaches of writing skills so that the stakeholders can modify the curriculum for teacher educators giving more emphasis on what teachers really lack.

Textbooks and teaching aids being the most reliable tools that can do wonders in the learners academic life, a thorough analysis of the same could have been focused by the researches especially to:

- ❑ Analyse the different activities provided for writing skills in the text book and the writing topics covered all through the text book.
- ❑ Analyse if the text books that was prepared by experts do cater to the need of an average learner or not.
- ❑ Reflect upon the relevancy and appropriateness of the activities given in the text book for writing skills.
- ❑ Analyse and study different types of teaching aids that can aid writing skills.

Experimental studies always pave way to bring in innovative techniques in the field of education.

However, the experimental studies could have also focused on:

- ❑ Comparison of different approaches in teaching writing skills so as to identify the effectiveness of each methods over the others.
- ❑ The positive and negative impacts of each approach in teaching writing skills.
- ❑ Creating activity oriented workbooks to teach writing skills.
- ❑ Creating big write technique, technology based writing activities etc.
- ❑ Conducting experiments in normal institutions rather than in specialised ones.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the above mentioned finding shows that there have been a few numbers of surveys and experimental studies conducted in the area of English writing skills. Most of the surveys showed interest in finding the errors committed by the students in their writing and analysing the factors that hindered the development of English writing skills in the learners. The finding did showcase the two main factors that mired the progress of English writing skills in the learners namely the educator and the learner himself. When teachers were not professionally equipped to teach English, the learners lacked interest and motivation in studying English. To add to these factors, the textbook with overloaded literary material, outdated teaching aids and age old teaching methods used by the teachers exterminated the flair for English language in the learners.

The studies analysed also showed the loopholes in the present evaluation system portraying the importance given to oral performance instead of written ones. In addition, the experimental studies indicated that the remedial teaching programme, TBLT on components of narrative writing skills, well-designed communicative syllabus helped learners in improving their writing skills.

However, it can be rightly said that the number of studies conducted on English writing skills are not adequate or rich enough to help the stakeholders to bring in remedial measure to improve the writing skills of the learners. National curriculum Framework (2005) had recommended the

development of the writing abilities in the primary years and to continue through the middle and senior levels of schooling giving special preference to note making as a skill-development training exercise with the aim of discouraging mechanical copying from the blackboard, textbooks and guides. The authors could not come across any of the studies that aimed at investigating the recommendations inculcated in the curriculum. None of the studies tried to find if note making exercise were followed in any schools and if followed, the effectiveness of the note making exercise were not studied.

It was also recommended by the National curriculum Framework 2005 to break the routinisation of tasks like letter and essay writing to deflower the imagination and originality of the learners' thoughts through other forms of writing. Neither there was studies found which tried to focus on the types of writing tasks given to learners in each level nor did the researchers focused to find if the tasks given in the classroom helped learner develop their imagination and originality.

In spite of concentrating on the errors committed by the learners if the studies could focus on evaluating the place of English writing skills in the curriculum, analyse the weightage given to writing skills in the English text book, examine the number of hours allotted by the school timetable specifically to develop writing skills etc. could have helped the stakeholders get a clear idea to solve the basic problems in writing skills. Moreover, if the experimental studies could focus on the effectiveness of different methods of writing skills and if the researches had worked keeping in mind the recommendations of NCF (2005) by now we could have witnessed a drastic change in the attainment of the students writing skills, promoting the proficiency of English in the learners.

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