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**AN EVALUATION OF THE WRITING COMPONENT
OF THE HIGHER SECONDARY ENGLISH SYLLABUS
IN BANGLADESH**

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Submitted for the Degree of Ph.D.

University of Warwick, UK.

**Centre for English Language
Teacher Education**

January 1999

ABSTRACT

This evaluation study sets out to investigate the effectiveness of the writing component of the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) English syllabus in Bangladesh. The aims of the research were (i) to discover the needs and problems of students with regard to writing; and the purposes for which they need to communicate in writing in English; (ii) to identify their strengths and weaknesses in different aspects of writing; (iii) to gather perceptions of teachers and students on the writing process and to compare these with actual classroom practice with a view to characterising the approach to the teaching of writing in the Bangladeshi HSC context; (iv) to collect views on the syllabus and textbook and to determine if there was a match between student needs and the syllabus; and (v) to suggest recommendations for improving writing skills in the classroom.

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1 sets the context of the study by presenting its objectives, significance and research questions. A brief account of the history of the Revised English Syllabus is also presented. Chapters 2 and 3 contain reviews of the literature relevant to the field of writing and evaluation. Chapter 2 examines writing as ‘composing’ and ‘text’ and the different approaches to writing pedagogy. Findings from a couple of studies on the implementation of the process approach in different contexts are also presented. Chapter 3 explores the different approaches to evaluation and provides the framework for this evaluation study. The design features and the procedures employed in the study are given in chapter 4. To achieve methodological triangulation a series of instruments was used as well as data collected from a range of stakeholders. For the purposes of this study a marking scheme was designed to analyse the writing samples of students. Chapters 5 to 7 present and analyse the data. More specifically chapter 5 deals with the analysis of findings about the writing process, i.e. the collation of perceptions and the actual

practice of writing in class. Chapter 6 examines the purposes, needs and problems of learners with regard to writing and also concentrates on the evaluation of the HSC writing syllabus. The analysis of students' Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions are dealt with in chapter 7. Chapter 8 focuses on the discussion of the findings, followed by recommendations. In addition, a discussion on the socio-cultural appropriateness of borrowing western methodologies for local contexts is also highlighted. Finally, a summary of the main results from the empirical evaluation study and their implications are presented in chapter 9. The limitations of the study are also acknowledged in this last chapter.

The findings of the study revealed a disparity between students needs and what the HSC writing syllabus contains, and its actual implementation in the classroom. The teachers adopted an approach to writing which was overridingly form-focused and hence, product oriented. They performed roles which were traditional e.g. the teacher as purveyor of knowledge and evaluator. Teachers lack training in areas specific to the development of writing skills and are unaware of recent developments in writing approaches. There was no evidence in this study of promoting or encouraging the strategies of skilled writers in the classes observed.

This study has contributed to the documentation of curriculum evaluation studies in the context of Bangladesh, as well as frameworks for the assessment of writing skills for use in this context. An awareness has been raised about the hindering and helpful factors in bringing about change and general caution is suggested in the making of foreign methodologies appropriate to the local Bangladeshi situation. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations are also made in relation to curriculum development and pedagogy.

To Sonata and Pavana,
who sustained me in my work by
waiting for me to come
home at the end of the day.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Almighty, whose divine help has led to a perception of light at the end of the tunnel. In the world of temporal existence there are many individuals connected with the preparation and completion of this thesis who deserve the credit for the successful end to this endeavour.

The distinguished scholarship and the guidance of my supervisor Dr. Pauline Rea-Dickins has proved over and over again how invaluable she has been to me. But for her detailed analyses of my thesis, I would not have arrived at the stage of satisfaction I find myself in today. I have learned an enormous amount from her. My gratitude to her is, therefore, immense and abiding.

Ms Tricia Hedge, unfailing in her support and endless in her generosity, especially with the writing section of this thesis, draws forth my deep appreciation. I have immensely benefited from her writing expertise. I acknowledge my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Miyoko Kobayashi for her assistance with part of the statistical analyses carried out. Thanks are also due to Ms Julia Khan and Dr. Evdokia Karavas for their encouragement and support. I would also like to thank Mr. Gerard Sharpling for helping me with the grammatical error analysis. The entire staff at the Centre for English Language Teacher Education helped me in different ways, kept up my enthusiasm in gloomy weather throughout my period of study here, and thus my thanks go out to them. I am indebted to Robin Upton and Mr. K. M. Shabbirul Islam for helping me with matters of presentation and to Mrs Anwara Chowdhury for her care and sincerity during my years of study in England. I also appreciate the recent assistance of Ms Samina Ahmed in checking some technical details.

To all teachers, students and administrators back home without whose co-operation this study would not have been possible I am deeply grateful. I am especially thankful to Mr. M.A. Jabbar, Mr. A.F.M Salimullah, Mr. Khandaker Abdul Hannan, Mr. Zafrul Karim, Ms Atiya Siraj and Ms Nazmeen Huq for their assistance during the fieldwork of this study. I also thank North South University (NSU) for providing me with institutional support while this study was in progress.

I am profoundly grateful to my husband and my parents for their love and understanding and constant moral support throughout this enterprise.

This work is the result of the good will of those to whom I am deeply grateful. It was made possible by a scholarship from the British Council.

CHAPTER 1

The Context

1.1 Introduction

This study is concerned with the evaluation of the current writing component of the Higher Secondary Certificate (henceforth HSC) English syllabus in Bangladesh. It sets out to examine the content of the writing syllabus, the perceptions of teachers, students and other professionals, and practices in the teaching of writing. This introductory chapter consists of two sections. The first section (1.1-1.5) provides background information on the status of English and the education system of the country, highlights the place of English in the school curriculum, and describes the HSC teaching and learning context. A brief account of the development of the Revised English syllabus is also detailed for the reader. The second section (1.6-1.9) presents the motivations behind this study and clarifies the purpose and significance of the evaluation. The evaluation questions which the study seeks to investigate and the structure of the thesis is also outlined in this section.

1.2 Status of English

English is no longer as widely used as it was twenty five years ago, when Bangladesh was part of Pakistan, and when Urdu and Bengali were the national languages and English the official second language of the country. However, it still remains a language of prestige for the educated minority in Bangladesh.

During the ‘Pakistan period’ English played a dominant role and was used in all spheres of the administration, i.e. government, legislative, commerce and, education. It also functioned as a lingua franca between the Bengali and Urdu speakers of the two entities, East and West. However, with the emergence of Bangladesh (1971) as a separate nation English lost its second language status because of the strong, sentimental nationalistic feelings associated with the first language. Bengali or the preferred term ‘Bangla’ was accorded a prominent place, and it quickly took over from English as the medium of instruction in schools and government

administration. This change in the role and status of English has had its own consequences, leading to poor standards in English language teaching. At present, Bangladesh can no longer be considered as an ESL situation as English occupies the status of a major foreign language. English is a compulsory subject in the curriculum and one that is highly valued as prestigious. Currently there is a proliferation of private English medium schools in the country and there is heightened awareness of the importance of English, and young people both in rural and urban areas are keen on learning English (News Paper Reports).

Although English is retained as a compulsory subject in the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education in Bangladesh, standards have rapidly deteriorated. Particularly, students' writing problems have been compounded over the years and even after 12 years of instruction in English students are not able to write effectively.

Educationists and others regret the falling standards of English (as reported in key national dailies and in results of English failure in HSC exams), as they see the need for English as a means of access to scientific and technological development, as an instrument of international communication (British Council, 1986), and for lucrative job opportunities. However, for the last few years there has been a growing recognition and concern in official and public circles that the decline in the standards of English must be arrested, and various plans, schemes and proposals are being put forward to improve the teaching of English at various levels in the education system. Examples of these are the plans for establishing higher secondary Teacher Training Institutes, English language teaching resource centres (in different parts of the country) and the introduction of compulsory English Language at tertiary level (Raynor, 1995; British Council, 1997).

1.3 Education System of the Country

The education system of Bangladesh may be broadly divided into three stages: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary education is imparted in primary schools, secondary education in junior/high schools and secondary schools and in the

intermediate colleges. Higher education is offered in degree colleges and universities. Bengali is the medium of instruction at all levels of education. However, English is widely used in the tertiary sector, particularly in the universities (BANBEIS, 1992).

1.3.1 Primary Education

The primary stage of education begins at the age of six and continues for five years. Students who achieve satisfactory results in the examination at the end of each calendar year are promoted to the next grade. There is no national examination system at the end of this period in class V.

1.3.2 Secondary Education

Secondary education is divided into three sub-stages: junior secondary, secondary and higher secondary. A profile of primary and secondary education in Bangladesh is presented in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Profile of Primary and Secondary Education

	Primary	Junior Secondary	Secondary	Higher Secondary
Institutions	Primary Schools	Junior High Schools	Secondary Schools	Intermediate + Degree Colleges
Classes	I-V	VI-VIII	IX-X	XI-XII
Approximate Age	6-10 yr.	11-13 yr.	14-15 yr.	16-18 yr.
No. of Institutions	45,917	2136	9352	464 + 611 = 1075
No. of Students	11,939,94	574343	3960459	165023 + 186019 = 351042
No. of Teachers	189,508	18417	116760	7449 + 20262 = 27711

Source: BANBEIS, Bangladesh Educational Statistics 1991 and 1995

Junior Secondary

The junior secondary stage comprises classes, VI, VII, VIII and lasts for three years. Annual class examinations take place at the end of each calendar year. No national examination is held at this level.

Secondary

Classes IX and X comprise the secondary stage and the duration is two years. Diversification of courses and curricula are introduced at class IX, where the students are separated into two streams, viz. Science and Humanities. The national examination called Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination is held at the end of class X.

Higher Secondary

The Higher secondary stage which is the area of investigation of this study occupies an intermediate position between the secondary school stage and the tertiary stage. One of the main objectives of this level is to prepare students for entrance into higher education (BANBEIS, 1992). The Higher Secondary stage lasts for two years, i.e. classes XI and XII. Courses are diversified into Science, Humanities, Commerce, Home-Economics, Agriculture and Music. Generally Intermediate colleges in Bangladesh offer courses at higher secondary level. There are also many degree colleges which have an Intermediate section and who offer courses at the higher secondary stage.

1.3.3 Tertiary Education

After taking the HSC examination students can pursue a Bachelors' degree (BA) course in the degree colleges or in the universities depending on their results in the SSC and HSC. The duration is two years for the BA Pass course and three years for the BA Honours course. The one-year Master's Degree course is offered for holders of an Honours Bachelor's degree, and the two-year course for holders of a Bachelor's Pass Degree. M.Phil. and Ph.D. courses are also offered in selected subjects in the universities. An M.Phil. degree course takes two years and a Ph.D. a minimum of three years .

1.3.4 Administration

The overall educational administration is carried out by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in association with a number of attached Departments and Directorates as

well as a number of autonomous bodies. However, the universities enjoy autonomy. The Ministry of Education functions with the Education Minister as the head and the secretary as the chief executive. Under the secretary there are four Directorates which are headed by Director Generals.

All the secondary institutions are under the control of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE). There are four boards located at Dhaka, Comilla, Rajshahi and Jessore which are responsible for conducting the national level examinations, i.e. SSC and HSC. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) is responsible for the production of the syllabus and textbooks used in schools and colleges (BANBEIS, 1992). All the BISEs and NCTB come under the Ministry of Education.

1.4 Place of English in the Curriculum

English is taught as a compulsory subject in schools and colleges. In the five year primary cycle, English is now introduced from year I. In the first two years, students are introduced to the alphabet and basic vocabulary. From class III onwards they study a series of textbooks entitled **English for Today**. These books are accompanied from class V onwards by extra grammar textbooks and Rapid Readers and take the students through to class X, when they sit for the SSC examination. At the college (HSC) level students move on from **English for Today** series to an anthology of Prose and Poetry called **Higher Secondary English Selections for the Young [Prose and Poetry]**. These consist of essays and short stories by well known British writers and a selection of poetry from Shakespeare to the early twentieth century (Nahar, 1993). As mentioned above, the syllabus and all the English prescribed textbooks are prepared and published by the NCTB.

English is widely used in the universities as a reading and writing language. At present, English is a compulsory subject for the Bachelor of Arts degree at all the universities and currently there is an attempt to introduce compulsory English language at the tertiary level (Raynor, 1995).

It may be claimed that English forms a substantial part of the school timetable at both primary and secondary level. At the primary level it is taught for five thirty five minute periods of the school week, accounting for 14% of the timetable. In the three years of the junior secondary cycle, English is taught for seven, eight and nine periods per week. English takes up six forty-minute periods per week (16%) in the secondary and higher secondary timetable (British Council, 1986).

1.5 The Higher Secondary Teaching and Learning Context

Having provided a general overview of the education system of Bangladesh and outlined the place of English within the educational system, I analyse below in more detail the teaching and learning situation at the HSC level, the years of higher secondary schooling on which my study is focused.

1.5.1 Students

The total number of students studying at the HSC level is approximately 351,042 (BANBEIS, 1992). About three quarters of these come from a rural background. Students are generally between the age of sixteen and eighteen, and have had at least ten to twelve years of formal instruction in English, i.e. from grade 1. Students are of mixed proficiency levels and, generally speaking, their basic language skills are not up to standard. For example, it has been asserted that the proportion capable of writing a simple letter amounts to a mere 5% (Task Force Report, 1976). In addition it has been shown that the proficiency level of the students of class XII is four years below the standard assumed in their textbooks (Task Force Report, 1976). Subsequently, the results of research carried out by Rahman, McGinley and McGinley (1984) confirmed the findings of the English Teaching Task Force (1976) and revealed that the situation had deteriorated with, approximately, a six years gap between the reading level assumed by university texts and the actual level at which students can read with near complete understanding. More recently, a study undertaken by the British Council (Raynor, 1995) indicated that the competence level of university entrants is band 3 (Restricted) on the English Speaking Union Scale compared with the target of band 6 (Competent).

Students in rural areas tend to be weaker than students in the urban areas. There are also differences in their economic conditions, English language learning backgrounds, language skills and amount of exposure to English. It is observed by teachers and confirmed by HSC English results, that students in the Science group are better at English than those in the Humanities or Commerce. One reason for this may be attributed to the fact that the best students join the Science group. However, although, Science students are regarded as being better in English it has also been observed that they are disinterested in learning English as compared with their counterparts in the Humanities or Commerce streams. Overall (through discussion amongst the profession) it can be said that the motivation to learn English is high in both urban and rural areas because students realise that English is the gateway to further success in life and that they are, thus, aware of the role and importance of English in their lives.

1.5.2 Teachers

To teach English at higher secondary level, only a Masters Degree in English is required. The majority of teachers who are currently teaching English in the different colleges in Bangladesh are graduates in English Literature. The main reason is that until 1986 there was no provision to offer a linguistics option on the MA courses. Even today, the universities do not provide a BA (Honours) course in ELT or Applied Linguistics.

Teachers do not have to fulfil any pre-service training requirements before they start teaching. Although, some short in-service training e.g. 'general foundation course' is provided for teachers at this level by both the National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM) and the NCTB.

Teachers operating at the HSC level lack professional training. They are constrained by classroom resources, materials and technological support. In addition, they face significant difficulties in handling large classes. Teachers receive meagre salaries and are hence largely, and unfortunately, lacking in motivation.

1.5.3 Classroom Contexts

As mentioned earlier, English takes up six forty minute periods per week in the higher secondary time table. The classrooms themselves are small and over-crowded and class sizes are big, with approximately 100 to 120 students packed into one classroom. Seven to eight students share a bench. Minimum resources are available in the form of a blackboard and chalk. In fact, apart from the textbook, no other materials or technological devices are used at the HSC level.

1.5.4 Current HSC Syllabus

English is a compulsory subject on the HSC curriculum, carrying two hundred marks. The current HSC English syllabus mainly focuses on the writing skills, and there is no provision and guidance for the skills of speaking, listening and reading. The existing syllabus consists of a number of set, prose pieces and poems in addition to grammar items, translation, reading comprehension, letter, paragraph and composition writing. It has been commented that the HSC course is almost literary in character, and does not match HSC students' perceived levels of ability in the language (Harrison, 1976). The HSC English syllabus does not specify aims or assessment procedures as are laid down in a typical syllabus format.

This study examines the current HSC English syllabus (see Appendix 1.1). However, it is to be noted that a new revised English curriculum was drafted while this study was in progress (see Appendix 1.2 for extracts from the final draft of the Revised Syllabus).

1.5.5 Background to the Revised Syllabus

The Revised Syllabus is not the focus of this evaluation study. Nevertheless, it is important to provide a brief account of the background to the Revised Syllabus, as this has implications for any future management of syllabus change in Bangladesh more generally and, in particular, for the recommendations relating to the writing component which are made in chapter eight of this thesis (see 8.7.2 and 8.8). In addition, tracing the phases through which the Revised Syllabus has evolved gives

an idea of the range and role of stakeholders involved in the management of educational change in Bangladesh. Moreover, such changes need to be documented as Smith (1989:3, cited in Holliday, 1994a:135) remarks “there is inadequate research into the process of change in third world educational systems”.

The Revised Syllabus has had a chequered history and has evolved through several phases. The emergence of this syllabus is indicative of the fact that forces of change are in operation in the Bangladeshi educational system and it thus demonstrates its potential capacity for promoting change. This is a positive and significant first step, although implementation and acceptance of these changes is an uncertain and complicated issue, which is not part of this study.

As mentioned in 1.2, the nationalistic feelings towards Bengali as a means of forging national identity were very strong during the first few post independence years (1971-1974). At this time, the role of English was accorded a back seat. Subsequently, there was concern in educated circles about the declining standards of English. In 1974 the National Education Commission reviewed the system of education and submitted its recommendations to the government. The Commission report emphasised the place and role of English in the Education system (since it is the most widely used language in the world and the medium of international communication and information) and recommended that English should be taught more effectively (Report of the Bangladesh Education Commission, 1974:14). With this aim in view in November 1975, an English Language Task Force was set up by the Ministry of Education in order to survey the state of English Language Teaching at the secondary, higher secondary and teacher training levels in Bangladesh.

The Task Force team worked in close co-operation with the British Council and consisted of a wide representation of members (N=17) from different organisations and educational institutions within the country (e.g. members from BISE, MOE, NCTB, Bangladesh, Education and Extension Institute (BEERI), Bangla Academy, Dhaka University (DU), Institute of Modern Languages (IML), Teacher Training

College (TTC), Dhaka College). It is to be noted that some of the institutions and organisations which represented the Task Force team which has had a influential impact on creating the Revised Syllabus also supported this research in different ways (see 4.6.3.4, 4.4.2.2 and Appendix 4.1).

The Task Force Report made recommendations in four major areas: curriculum, textbooks, examinations and teacher training. The main point emerging with reference to the syllabus was that:

an appropriately graded syllabus should be introduced at each level together with new textbooks related to the needs and capabilities of the students should be prepared (p.3).

It was also recommended that the “SSC and HSC examinations should test comprehension and writing skills in meaningful contexts and should discourage rote learning” (p.3). Thus, specific mention of writing was in relation to the testing of writing and there was nothing that I am aware of on the actual development of writing skills and concerns of implementation. It was further commented by the Task Force that the need to learn the content of the reading texts and to memorise the answers to textbook exercises adversely affects the way English is taught throughout the system. Recommendations made in this thesis (see 8.7.1.1 and 9.4.1) also focus on the area of curriculum and teacher training with specific reference to developing writing skills.

The Task Force recommendations triggered a number of follow up developments. In (May) 1976 through the co-operation of the British Council an English Language Workshop was organised at BEERI to evaluate the teaching of English at the HSC level. The workshop identified the low proficiency level of students and recommended a new textbook for the HSC students. Subsequently, through government initiatives, the National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee (NCSC) was formed in July 1976 to implement the recommendations of the Task Force and to devise syllabuses for the different classes. In the report of the NCSC, the role and

function of English for education was highlighted and clarified. This stated that “the English syllabus should be functional rather than literary” (Vol. 4, 1978:76).

There were further curriculum changes in the late seventies and eighties in line with the Task Force’s recommendations. It is important to note that these changes were funded by the government and that there were also changes in other parts of the curriculum. In other words, the changes were system wide and not restricted to English. A new English syllabus and a new textbook from class 3 to 10 was drawn up and introduced via piloting and some teacher training provision. These textbooks formed the ‘English for Today’ series (now being revised). However, an attempt to extend this series into classes 11 and 12 (HSC years) foundered, when (during its trialling stage) one year after the introduction of the new textbook (English for Today Book V111, for HSC level), the NCTB was forced to withdraw it in the face of mounting public opposition (see below). In its place the old book of literary texts (Prose and Poetry selections) was reintroduced (ODA Report, 1990; Rahman, 1996).

For the junior level textbooks native speakers collaborated in writing most of these. The final textbook for the HSC level, however, was written exclusively by a group of Bangladeshi college teachers of English. It was a language oriented textbook which included topics about the history, culture, economy and social problems of Bangladesh. The exercises were designed with a view to give practice in language items which are considered to be problem areas for Bangladeshi learners. Teachers of English, newspaper editors and columnists criticised the textbook (Rahman, 1996).

Four main criticisms were levelled against it: the writers are not native speakers of English; the writers are not recognised writers of English; the pieces are boring and do not stimulate learning and they contain several grammatical and lexical errors (Hossain, 1987:7).

Reactions to the textbook were mostly published in the ‘letters’ column of the newspapers and an excerpt is presented below:

English for Today Book V111 is a rape of English language itself. There is no better way to make a mess of language than by learning it from foreign writers of no standing.....Any linguist would shudder at the language used in this book (Sameena 1986:7, cited in Rahman, 1996:194).

Rahman (1996:196) comments that criticisms of the textbook were for the most part unfounded, often malicious, and based on erroneous perceptions about language teaching and educational goals. Hossain (1987), in defence of the textbook, stated that:

Bangladeshi students need not learn British English but should be required to achieve the standard of English the educated Bangladeshi speakers of English have.....the writers and the NCTB should be congratulated rather than blamed.....(p.7)

Nevertheless, the rejection of the textbook and its withdrawal in the face of public opposition shows the unacceptance and strong resistance of the Bangladeshi educated community towards forces of change. This has implications for introduction of changes to the English curriculum (in general, and writing in particular) and demonstrates some of the prevailing complexities involved in the change process. Moreover, this can also serve as a caution for taking into consideration the socio-cultural element (e.g. teacher-centred classes, strong allegiance to literature and grammar, see 5.2.4, 5.3.2, 5.3.3, 6.4 and 8.2.2, 8.2.3 and 8.3) which is an integral part of the fabric of the Bangladeshi educated society and influences the attitudes of the recipients of curriculum reform (see 2.3.2.4 and 8.8).

The changes in textbooks at the lower level did not create such a furore inspite of the fact that these were language based and written by Bangladeshi writers (in collaboration with native speakers). The introduction of a language textbook at the HSC level met with severe resistance probably because almost all the teachers at college level have a literature background and are literary oriented (see 4.4.2.2 and 8.2.2). They have been teaching classic English literature texts for more than two decades and as such it was hard for them to culturally accept textbooks which were

language focused and contained no literature extracts. Equally, they felt that the authors lacked expertise in the actual writing of textbooks and were not established 'writers' of social standing. However, this reaction was exclusive to the case of English at the HSC level, as changes at the junior level and in other subject curriculum areas did not meet with similar resistance.

It was against this background that in 1990 as part of the stated objectives of the ODA-funded English Language development project set up at the NCTB a survey was carried out to assess levels of proficiency in English in the secondary schools in Bangladesh among both students and teachers. The three team members (Richard Cullen, Adviser for English Teacher Training, NCTB, Robert Shrubsall, Advisor for English textbooks, NCTB, Professor Shamsul Hoque, Editor for English, NCTB) involved in the survey made recommendations in the areas of training and supervision of teachers and for the revision of secondary school syllabus and textbooks. As regards the syllabus, they explicitly stated that the English syllabuses should be revised with recommendations that the objectives should be stated in terms of appropriate practical skills, and structures more clearly defined, graded and associated with common communicative functions.

Based on the recommendations of this ODA funded report (1990) the Ministry of Education through its materialising agency NCTB formulated the proposals for change. The NCTB supported financially by the government, sent out official letters to concerned personnel, institutions and organisations, arranged workshops and formed Secondary and Higher Secondary English Language Syllabus Committees to revise syllabuses for classes 6 to 12. Again through NCTB initiatives (in 1990) the OSSTTEB (Orientation of Secondary School Teachers for Teaching English in Bangladesh) project was launched (financed by ODA and Government of Bangladesh, GOB) for initiating and assisting curriculum changes. The OSSTTEB team consisted of national and British specialists (e.g. members from NCTB, TTC, teachers from secondary and higher secondary schools and colleges, British Council and ODA consultants) and had a major role in introducing communicative English

Language Teaching into secondary level education in Bangladesh (British Council,1997).

The Committee responsible for revising syllabuses for classes 9 to 12 consisted of 12 personnel and there was wide representation of local members (e.g. NCTB, Jahangir Nagar University (JU), DU, Jagannath College, IML and Motijheel Government Boys' School), as well as foreign experts. The expatriate consultants presented a draft syllabus to the members of the syllabus committee for discussion and feedback and accordingly some minor changes were made. A final report on the Revised Syllabus was synthesised and prepared by the NCTB and submitted to the Ministry of Education for its approval.

From the above analysis of the phases through which the Revised English Syllabus has evolved, it would appear that the Bangladeshi educational system firmly operates in a top down manner. In this process, the government takes a decision, constitutes a Task Force and Committees and engages external experts as well as internal stakeholders including some teachers. Thus, internal and external stakeholders seem to be involved in educational decision making with reference to the syllabus and textbook reform. For example, they are involved in identifying suitable agenda, issues to introduce, change, add and omit and their opinions are elicited through meetings, discussions and workshops. Collectively the views of the government (communicated through NCTB), and the internal (local experts, teachers) and external stakeholders (e.g. expatriate consultants) are responsible for making changes happen. I do not know, however, the extent to which these internal (above mentioned, e.g. members from IML, JU, teachers) stakeholder views were elicited in the decision making process. However, there are some signs of grass root initiatives. The example I have in mind is the Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (BELTA). This association aims to generate issues related to ELT among colleagues in the profession. It arranges seminars and workshops with financial support from the Ministry of Education and on previous occasions has collaborated with the NCTB in the preparation of textbooks as well as training of

teachers. For instance, in 1989 BELTA organised a three day national seminar (sponsored by MOE) on the “status and importance of English in Bangladesh” which contributed to curriculum development issues. The major recommendations of the seminar (like some of the Task Force and ODA recommendations) were in the area of textbook reform, teacher training, staffing and testing and evaluation. It was also proposed that a English teaching centre be set up to keep the government informed about the current state of ELT and to make new proposals/suggestions for improvement. Aside from BELTA, there is no other professional association or teachers’ union through which teachers’ views can be communicated.

The position at the time of writing this thesis is that the final draft of the HSC Revised English Syllabus is ready (see Appendix 1.2). The seeds for this syllabus, from my perspective, were sown in 1976 when the Task Force submitted its report. The syllabus is yet to be piloted and implemented and at this stage we do not know how successful its implementation will be.

There are plans for introducing the new curriculum by phases and on an incremental year by year basis. MOE’s schedule for nation wide introduction of new English syllabus and language materials is as follows (Hoque, Hannan, Foster and Shrubbsall, 1996:1):

Table 1.2 Schedule for Introduction of the Revised Syllabus and Materials

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Class VI	Class VII	Class VIII	Class IX	X	XI	XII

For curriculum dissemination purposes programmes have been launched by the Higher Secondary Education project (1996) under government funding. Five Higher Secondary Teacher Training Institutes (HSTTI) funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the GOB have been established in Mymensingh, Comilla, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Barisal for training teachers. A curriculum dissemination training

manual was designed (for classes 6-10 by local and foreign experts and published by the NCTB) for both classroom teachers and trainers (including core trainers and field level trainers) in order to introduce the main features of the Revised Syllabus. Two day orientation programmes and workshops were arranged in different parts of the country to acquaint and familiarise teachers with the new syllabus and methodology. Evaluation questionnaires were distributed at the end of these sessions to gather feedback and assist trainers to evaluate the orientation programmes.

The aim of this Revised Syllabus is to provide a communicative focus for teaching and learning of English at secondary and higher secondary levels in Bangladesh. It is articulated in the preface to the Revised Syllabus that:

for successful implementation of this syllabus, many new things will be required. Chief among these are suitable communicative language materials.....appropriate examinations that will test language skills, not the ability to memorise the contents of the textbook.

Preparations are in progress to carry out the implementation of the Revised Syllabus e.g. teacher training provision, textbook and materials production under government funding (ODA Report, 1990; Raynor, 1996; see 1.2 and 8.8). For example, the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) has been set up (June, 1998) to initiate changes in ELT methodology and to implement the new communicative curriculum at the secondary and higher secondary levels. This project is jointly financed by the GOB and the Department for International Development (DFID, formerly ODA) and is administered by Bangladeshi and British specialists. Its main aims are i) development of in-service teacher training for English language teachers in the new methodology (communicative) and use of new textbooks; ii) reform of examination methods to reflect communicative teaching; iii) textbook and curriculum revision; and iv) access to well-stocked English language teaching resource centres (British Council, 1997).

It is to be noted that Education in Bangladesh as in much of Asia operates in a traditional, “transmissional, teacher-centred and examination-oriented teaching culture” (Barnes and Shemilt, 1974, cited in Pennington, 1995:707). This also applies to the English language classes in general and writing in particular (see. 5.2.3, 5.4.4, 6.3.41, 8.2.1 and 8.4.2). The Revised English syllabus is quite different from the existing traditional English syllabus (see, 1.5.4 and Appendix 1.1). As stated in the objectives (see Appendix, 1.2), the ‘focus of this syllabus is on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as learner-centred activities within communicative contexts’. These new dimensions to the syllabus, i.e. ‘communicative focus’ and ‘learner-centred activities’ are novel and foreign concepts for the Bangladeshi educational context. There are implications for taking into consideration the educational and socio-cultural context of the innovation and for adapting and modifying (i.e. these foreign concepts) such changes to suit the needs of the Bangladeshi local situation (see 2.3.2.4 and 8.8). However, this change (i.e. introduction of communicative English syllabus) also indicates that Bangladesh is dynamic and willing to innovate in the field of English language teaching. References to the contents of the writing component of the Revised Syllabus will be made in chapter eight (see 8.2.6) and a brief discussion on the implications of borrowing foreign methodologies for local contexts will also be highlighted (see 8.8).

1.5.6 Textbook

There is only one official prescribed textbook for English at the HSC level. This is the **Higher Secondary English Selections for the Young (Prose and Poetry)** and is published by the NCTB (see 1.4). It has been reported that the contents of the HSC textbook are above the level of the average students of class XII and do not reflect the kind of reading and writing material which students are likely to meet at the university level (see 1.5.1). There is no other supplementary textbook to focus on the rest of the syllabus which includes grammar, reading comprehension, translation, letter, paragraph and composition writing. However, teachers themselves usually suggest different grammar books (which contain grammar exercises, model

paragraphs and compositions on different topics) by local authors. The HSC textbook is not a continuation of the SSC textbook. There is no Teachers' Book at the HSC level.

1.5.7 Examination

As mentioned earlier (see 1.3.1) the HSC course comprises two years, i.e. grades XI and XII. Towards the end of the first year an internal annual examination is held to promote students from class XI to XII. The public examination which is held at the end of the two year cycle is called the HSC Examination and is an entry requirement for entrance into the university.

The English public examination consists of two compulsory papers (I and II). Two hundred marks are allotted for the two English papers (I and II), a hundred marks to each. In paper I, fifty marks are reserved for answers from the prose pieces. The remaining fifty cover grammar (30), translation from Bengali into English (20) and letter writing (10). In paper II forty five marks cover poetry. The remaining fifty five include reading comprehension (15), paragraph (10) and composition writing (20) and translation from English into Bengali (10). A pass in English (33%) is essential for succeeding in the HSC examination.

One thing which needs to be mentioned is the predictable nature of English examination questions at the HSC level (see 8.2.4). There has been a tradition of repeating examination questions every alternate year. For instance, if a particular paragraph 'Your College Library' is on the examination question for the year 1996, it will not be there for the year 1997. But, for the year 1998, students can anticipate it might again be on the examination. So the common practice of the teachers is to give students a list of probable topics, for example 10 paragraphs, 10 compositions, 10 letters to prepare. Generally, this preparation takes place not in the classroom but at home, with the aid of guidebooks (e.g. books which contain grammar exercises, with answers provided and model compositions), or with help from private tutors who provide notes. Students tend to memorise and rehearse these in order to pass

the examination paper. However, most students fail to write even a few sentences if the paragraph, essay, or letter which they have committed to memory is not on the examination (Rahman, 1987). Thus, there is reliance on meaningless rote learning and on examination formats which encourage it (British Council, 1986).

1.5.8 Assessment

At the Higher Secondary level, no explicit marking criteria for markers to grade English papers is set out anywhere within the syllabus. From my experience, and through discussion with practitioners in the profession, it may be said that there is an unwritten agreement amongst markers that they will mark the English examination scripts mainly on the basis of grammar, mechanics and content. There is no common or prescribed marking criteria which teachers can adhere to in marking English scripts. Moreover, it is not specified anywhere what constitutes an adequate or inadequate answer. However, for the public examinations there is the system of double marking and with sample checks for moderation by a third examiner for further checks on reliability and standards.

For the purposes of both internal and public examinations, a holistic approach to marking written English is taken, and raters report a single numerical score. The approach is subjective and a global mark on a scale of 60% and upwards is considered as first division marks; 45% to 59% as second division and 33% to 44% is considered third division marks. The pass mark for the English examination is thirty three percent of the aggregate marks, which is sixty six out of two hundred. For the final examination, examiners are usually asked to avoid marks between 28% and 33%. They are asked to round up the score to thirty three (33), i.e. the pass mark.

Since teachers are burdened with a heavy marking load, the common practice in internal as well as in public examinations is to examine the surface features of a piece of writing in order to finish marking masses of scripts on time. Teachers usually underline mistakes only. Scripts of the first year final examination with

mistakes underlined are returned to students, but the test examination (i.e. the final internal examination) and public examination scripts are not returned.

1.6 Motivations for the Study

This section states the motivations behind this evaluation study and discusses the purpose and significance of the evaluation. The research questions and the structure of the thesis are also outlined.

There are three main reasons which have led me to carry out this research. Firstly, I taught English at the higher secondary level for eight years and during this time I was exposed to the problems students face, particularly in the realm of writing. I was especially concerned by the students' feeling of helplessness with regard to writing, something that even experienced writers undergo from time to time.

Secondly, at a national level, the unsatisfactory state of the teaching and learning of English in general, and the development of writing skills in particular, has also motivated me to explore this area. It is well-known that few Bangladeshi students can write English satisfactorily and hence they are not at all confident about their abilities. Despite their long familiarity (twelve years) with English, students are still intimidated by it and cannot write effectively. In the SSC and HSC, examinations the failure rate in English is higher than in other subjects. Students with otherwise excellent examination results, and even those who have good marks for English, are found to be unable to use English properly apart from the limited use of passing HSC examinations (Raynor, 1995). Everybody is aware of this failure, but not of the exact cause, as very little is known about the specific strengths and weaknesses of student writing in Bangladesh and, particularly, in relation to the syllabus taught in schools. Research undertaken in this area could illuminate some of the problems and provide insights into how to improve students' writing ability.

A further consideration is that the public examinations are used as vital yardsticks for assessing students, and the opportunity to study any subject at the tertiary level depends on achieving satisfactory test results. A written English exam is compulsory in both the internal and the public examination at the HSC level, as well as in entry tests in many of the tertiary institutions. Teachers reproach students for poor performance in English writing examinations, but seem unable to help them to do better. One problem is there is no proper marking scheme for writing specified anywhere in the syllabus. Teachers put a global low mark (in both internal and external examinations) on the scripts without really pointing out to the students what their major deficiencies are. Thus, the students only know that they are weak in writing without any indication of specific weaknesses. I would like to suggest improvements, for marking written work to assist teachers in pinpointing their students' strengths and weaknesses in writing. By this, learners will hopefully benefit by knowing where their performance is satisfactory, and where they fall short (in writing), in order to subsequently improve upon these identified areas.

Last but not least, it is generally acknowledged that writing is an important and complex skill, especially in a second language. The development of writing skills is of great concern to researchers and writing specialists all over the world. Though extensive research on writing is being conducted there is still, I believe, a great deal which further research studies can contribute, especially in my context.

1.7 Purpose of the Evaluation

The syllabus is an important document which specifies teaching learning content. Firstly, if the items on it are inappropriate and unsuitable, teaching will not achieve its desired goals and secondly, as McDonough and Shaw (1993:27) state "the syllabus is important but more important is how teachers implement the syllabus in the class through the use of methods and materials". So, secondly, teaching will not yield fruitful results if teachers are not able to translate syllabus objectives into effective practice. This evaluation study therefore aims not only to evaluate the contents of the existing English syllabus on paper, but also examines its actual

implementation at the HSC level, with specific reference to the development of writing skills.

The present evaluation aims to be largely descriptive and qualitative in nature. In the process, it aims to gain insights into current practice of teaching writing skills with a view to suggesting curricular improvements. This is an initial evaluation study since no systematic and in-depth evaluation has been previously undertaken in this particular context. Its main purpose is to see what is happening in reality, that is, to cast light on teachers' and students' perceptions of writing, what actually goes on in the classroom, what methods and materials are used for the development of the writing skills, and how syllabus intentions match students' needs. However, the evaluation also has a developmental purpose. This is two fold i) to identify strengths and weaknesses of the writing component of the HSC syllabus with a view to suggesting improvements to the Ministry for potential curriculum development, and ii) to raise awareness amongst a sample of teachers about the importance of the writing component of the syllabus.

This evaluation study seeks answers to the following specific research questions:

1. What is the English writing syllabus for HSC students in Bangladesh ?
2. How is the development of writing skills perceived and implemented at the HSC level in Bangladesh?
 - a. Students
 - (i) What are the purposes for which students need to write in English?
 - (ii) What are students' perceptions of the writing process ?
 - (iii) What are students' perceptions of their writing problems and of their perceived and actual strengths and weaknesses in writing?
 - b. Teachers and Other Professionals
 - (i) What are the teachers and other professionals perceptions of students' needs and writing problems?

- (ii) What are the different methods teachers adopt in developing writing skills when following the HSC syllabus?
 - (iii) What views of writing do these methods reflect?
 - (iv) What materials do teachers use to develop the writing skill?
 - (v) What are teachers perceptions of the writing process ?
3. What are teachers' and other professionals' views of the HSC syllabus and textbook?
 4. To what extent does the existing HSC English syllabus cater for the needs of the HSC students?
 5. What recommendations can be made to improve the development of English writing skills within the HSC syllabus ?

1.8 Significance of the Evaluation

Set within the higher secondary teaching and learning context, this study describes and evaluates the extent to which the HSC English syllabus promotes the development of writing skills and meets the needs of the students. However, it is important to note that this evaluation research study is not a commissioned piece of work and is not intended to feed into curriculum decision-making processes. There are, hence, certain limitations in terms of the impact that this research might have (see 9.3.2). Nonetheless, this study is considered (potentially) significant in a number of ways.

Firstly, this evaluation is most significant from the view point that to date no principled evaluation of the HSC English writing course *per se* has been undertaken. Previously there have been surveys seeking information about English language teaching and learning in Bangladesh and the assessment of the proficiency level of students e.g. Report of the English Teaching Task Force (1976) and the Baseline Survey of Secondary Schools (ODA, 1990). This research may therefore be seen as an original contribution in the form of a case study of the implementation of a specific component of the Bangladeshi Higher Secondary School syllabus.

Secondly, the evaluation is intended to raise awareness both in teachers and curriculum developers, as well as within official circles. The evaluation will suggest ways and means for improving the teaching and learning of writing.

Thirdly, this evaluation is important for systematic curriculum review and, specifically, in terms of curriculum renewal in a developing country. Currently, evaluation is not an integral part of curriculum development in Bangladesh. It is hoped that this evaluation will create some impact, and serve as a springboard and stimulate further evaluation activities. Hence, it could be significant for the current climate in contributing to either an awareness of or developing a culture of evaluation.

The evaluation results can work as valuable reference and provide information to the Ministry of Education with regard to the teaching and learning of English writing (at the HSC level) for future initiatives. In addition, it will create awareness about the management of curriculum changes and for careful adaptation of western methodology to the Bangladeshi educational context. Although the evaluation has not been commissioned by the Ministry of Education it has the potential (if deemed necessary) to contribute in terms of articulation of policy by for example, making recommendations in specific areas of curriculum reform and pedagogy with reference to the development of writing skills in English.

1.9 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. This first chapter provides the background of the study and highlights the HSC teaching learning context. A brief description of the development of the Revised syllabus as well as the implications for curriculum changes is also highlighted. In addition, the motivations, purpose and significance of the evaluation study, and the research questions which are the focus of the evaluation are also presented. The next two chapters provide reviews of the literature. Chapter two gives an overview of second language writing research and trends in writing pedagogy. A few studies of the implementation of the process approach are discussed and particulars of classroom teaching e.g. marking of written work are also

provided. Chapter three provides a review of the 'evaluation' literature by highlighting the different approaches, models and paradigmatic choices available for evaluation. A synopsis of a number of evaluation case studies are also presented as a basis of informing this present study. Chapter four outlines the evaluation design, and data collection procedures. This design is multifaceted, drawing on a range of sources and methods. Chapters five, six and seven examine the research findings and present the results of the data analysis. Specifically, chapter five presents the results in connection with the writing process and chapter six provides information on learner needs, problems and syllabus evaluation. Chapter seven discusses the results from the writing samples collected in this study, namely the i) the Writing Tasks and ii) the Examination Compositions. Chapter eight concentrates on bringing together the different results obtained from the study, followed by discussions of emerging key issues and recommendations. In addition, implications for curriculum renewal and implementation of innovations are highlighted. An awareness is created about the pitfalls of blind technology transfer from the Western world and for careful adaptation of these for the Bangladeshi context. Finally, chapter nine summarises the main findings and highlights their implications. The limitations associated with the study are also outlined in the last chapter.

1.10 Summary

In summary, this first chapter has familiarised the reader with the background and the context of the evaluation study. The educational system of the country, the status of English and its place in the curriculum has been outlined (1.2-1.4). The key characteristics of the HSC teaching and learning situation has been highlighted and a brief background to the Revised English Syllabus has been detailed (1.5). The motivations, purpose and significance of the evaluation study along with the research questions have also been presented (1.6- 1.8). Finally the structure of the thesis has been detailed for the reader (1.9).

The next two chapters provide the theoretical framework of this evaluation study, with the next chapter providing a brief overview of current trends in writing research and pedagogy.

CHAPTER 2

Contemporary Paradigms in Writing Instruction

2.1 Introduction

Having set out the background, context and motivations of the study in the introductory chapter, it is necessary to look at traditional and contemporary ideas about writing to see how the concept and teaching of writing has moved and developed over time. It is important to analyse briefly the sources of research that look at writing as product and process, together with the current principles that inform writing pedagogy, in order to see what insights can be drawn from research into the composing processes and analysis of texts. The purpose is also to survey the different approaches to writing pedagogy with a view to suggesting in subsequent chapters recommendations appropriate for the development of writing skills.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section (2.2) provides a review of the writing research literature focusing on writing as ‘composing’ and writing as ‘text’. The research into writing as ‘composing’ comprises a number of L1 and L2 studies on skilled versus unskilled writers to identify the various strategies (and different sequences of activities) they engage in at arriving at a piece of written work. Studies of writing as ‘text’ examine the extended dimension of writing as product and highlight the rhetorical organisation and the social dimension of writing (i.e. the audience for whom it is intended). The second section (2.3) focuses on different approaches to writing pedagogy (stemming from insights from writing research) and identifies the current trends in writing syllabuses and classroom practice in the 1990’s. In addition, studies documenting implementation of the process approach to writing have been summarised. The purpose is to raise awareness of issues arising from such studies as these may have implications for the recommendations proposed in this thesis (see 8.7.2.3, 8.8 and 9.2.5). The third section (2.4) discusses implications for curriculum renewal, with special reference to

methodology, error correction/feedback and marking of written work and how these might relate to possible changes in the HSC writing syllabus.

2.2 Overview of Second Language Writing Research

There is a growing body of literature on first and second language writing research. This section will first provide a brief review of research on first and second language composing processes (with specific regard to skilled versus unskilled writers) and then proceed to describe research into writing as 'text'.

2.2.1 Writing as Composing

In recent years, there has been a marked shift in paradigms with regard to the act of composition. Formerly writing was viewed only as 'product'. That is, the focus was on the finished text, or piece of work, produced by language learners as writers, and not on how they arrived at the product. In addition, the emphasis tended to be only on linguistic competence as displayed in the product, and composition was considered as being essentially linear in progression, i.e. it was viewed as a one snapshot performance (Krashen, 1984). According to this perspective, the writer progressed to finish a piece of work in a chronological step by step manner (e.g. outlining, writing and editing).

Emig's research (1971, cited in Krapels, 1990) was a milestone in the shift of composition orientation from a product perspective to process considerations. In this view, the processes involved in writing, i.e. the act of composing, became the focus of attention. Here, writing was seen to be recursive (i.e. writers go backward and forward, they write, revise and then again go back to incorporate new ideas) rather than linear, and the emphasis moved from linguistic form to ways in which meaning is created in text. Thus, Emig's study in L1 writing highlighted the naivety of past assumptions about the act of composing in writing.

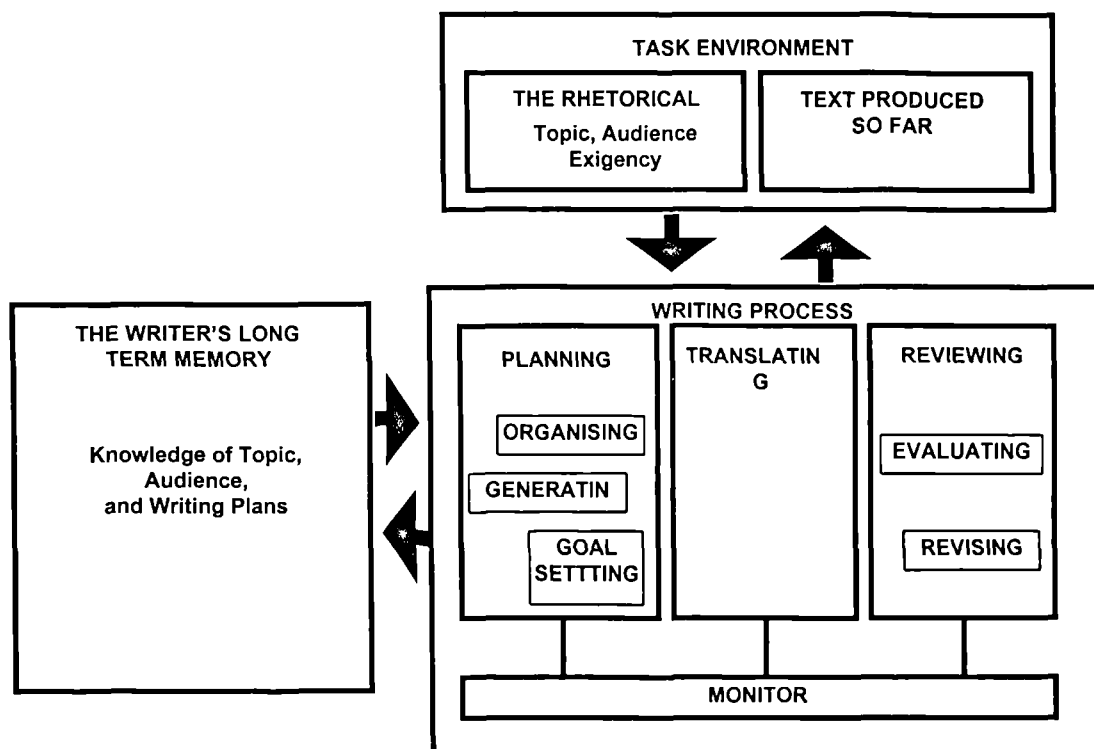
In most of the subsequent research conducted in L1 writing, the primary objective was to explore the mechanisms involved in the process of writing; to use writers as a focal point and not their products. Most of the research studies explored what skilled writers do as opposed to novice writers. It was discovered that proficient writers differ from weak writers in at least three ways: in planning, rescanning and revision activities. For example, Emig's (1975, cited in Krashen, 1984) study of professional writers revealed that they all engaged in some kind of planning of organisation and content. Stallard (1974, cited in Krashen, 1984) also found that good writers spent more time in pre-writing activities before actually writing. In addition she also discovered that they did not have rigid plans and were willing to change their outline as new ideas emerged. Pianko's (1979) use of writing tasks in her study of college freshman writers also revealed that capable writers planned more than poor writers. It was discovered in Stallard (1974) and Wall and Petrovsky's (1981) study that skilled writers spent more time on rereading and rescanning during writing. Pianko observed that better writers engage in rescanning, i.e. "pausing to plan what to write next, rescanning to see if their plans fit, and then pausing again to reformulate " (Piano, 1979:14).

Research into the composing processes also showed that successful writers revise more than poor writers and also employ different revision strategies. For example, Perl (1978, quoted in Krapels, 1990) devised a coding scheme for categorising writing process behaviours and she (1979) investigated unskilled college writers, and found that novice writers while revising focused more on form e.g. changes in spelling, verb forms, punctuation, and less on development of content as compared to good writers. In addition, they saw revision as editing only. Sommers' (1980) study of student and experienced writers pointed out that proficient writers revised to develop the line of argument while revision for inexperienced writers meant rewording only. Faigley and Witte (1981) designed a system to study the influence of revision on meaning and their study of experienced and novice writers revealed

that experienced writers used revision for invention and finding new ideas whereas inexperienced writers dealt with mechanical changes only.

Flower and Hayes (1980:29), in their seminal paper, describe writing as a 'problem solving activity' and a process of discovery. They emphasised the recursive nature of writing while discussing their 'cognitive model' of writing, i.e. a model of the writing process derived through a technique called protocol analysis in which audio recordings of writers who volunteer to think aloud their mental processes are recorded. The Flower and Hayes model comprises three major components: (1) the writer's long term memory, (2) the task environment and (3) the writing processes. All these are viewed as interrelated, and affect each other during the writing processes. In turn, the writing processes consist of the three processes of planning, translating and reviewing. As can be seen in Figure 2.1 below 'planning' and 'reviewing' have sub-processes of generating ideas, organising and goal setting, evaluating and revising which helps a writer to compose.

Figure 2.1 Model of the Composing Processes (Flower & Hayes, 1981:365-387)



The composing processes are controlled by a monitor which helps the writer to decide when to move from one process to the other. Flower and Hayes (1980:29) coined the word “ideas generation” and their recursive model “allowed for complex intermixing of stages”. This finding was confirmed by Sommers (1981). In this study she discovered that experienced writers are willing to go back again and start the “plan, write, revise cycle” all over again (quoted in Krashen, 1984:17). Zamel’s study (1983) provided further confirmation of Flower and Hayes’ views of the writing process.

However, recently and subsequently to the period of field work for this evaluation study, the Flower and Hayes model of the conscious processes involved in writing has been revisited (Hayes, 1996) and a new modified writing framework (for the model) has been provided. The major changes are to do with the role of working memory, inclusion of the visual spatial dimension, the integration of motivation and reorganisation of the cognitive processes. It also provides new and more specific methods of planning, text production and revision. This new framework is presented as being more accurate and comprehensive than the previous one. As the fieldwork for this thesis was undertaken prior to the publication of the 1996 model, the earlier Flower and Hayes (1980) model has been chosen as a point of reference for part of the questionnaire in this study. In other words, the construct behind two of the categories ‘starting to write’ and ‘gathering ideas/information’ is linked with the ‘generation of ideas’ in the early stages of the writing process (see, 4.6.1.1.2).

Flower and Hayes in their studies (1980, 1981) highlighted another important distinction between proficient and less capable writers. They reported that expert writers have a sense of audience and write for their readers and produce ‘reader based prose’, while less skilled writers produce ‘writer based prose’ which tends to be more topic oriented.

Thus, in all the L1 research studies mentioned above, writing was viewed as a process of exploration and thinking. The meaning conveyed by the writer was more important than simply features of linguistic competence, i.e. form and accuracy which had been the earlier focus of writing research.

The early L2 studies, like those in L1, aim to describe all aspects of L2 composing (writing) processes. Initially, the focus was to find out which behaviours proved to be successful or unsuccessful in producing effective L2 compositions. Later the emphasis was on the specific composing processes, i.e. what writers engage in as they create a piece in their second language. Most of this research was undertaken through case studies in second language classrooms, and was carried out using techniques such as observing, interviewing, audio and videotaping and asking writers to compose aloud (Raimes, 1986, cited in Huddleson, 1988). Some of the findings from these main studies are summarised below.

Chelala (1981, cited in Krapels, 1990) conducted one of the first second language writing process studies, using a case study approach for investigating composing and coherence. It aimed at identifying effective and ineffective behaviours in writing. Chelala identified that one ineffective strategy was to use first language for pre-writing and switching back and forth between the first and the second language. However, these findings were later contradicted by, for example, Lay (1982) and Cumming (1987). Jones (1982), too, conducted a similar study to Chelala's, investigating effectiveness and ineffectiveness in writing by concentrating on the written products and writing processes of two L2 writers. Jones described one writer as 'good' and the other as 'poor'. According to Jones, the poor writer was bound to the text, at the expense of ideas, whereas the good writer allowed ideas to generate the text (cited in Krapels, 1990). Jones concluded that the poor writer had never learned to compose (in L1) and this general lack of competence in composing proved

to be the major stumbling block in L2 writing. Jacobs (1982, cited in Krapels, 1990) made a similar discovery and pointed out that factors beyond linguistic competence determined the quality of students' writing.

Zamel's (1982) research also supported the notion that competence in the composing process was more important than linguistic competence in the ability to write proficiently in English (cited in Krapels, 1990), as earlier pointed out by Jones (1982) and Jacobs (1982). Zamel (1982) discovered that the writing processes of her L2 subjects were like those of the subjects described in L1 studies. For example, she pointed out that L2 writers, like L1 writers, recognised the "importance of being flexible, starting anew when necessary, and continuing to rework their papers over time as they take into account another reader's frame of reference" (p.168). Zamel (1982) further believed that when students understood and experienced composing as a process, their written products would improve. Zamel's (1983) study of 6 advanced L2 students further supported the similarities between L1 and L2 writers. It was found that the skilled writers spent more time on their essays than unskilled writers. She found that good writers "leave half finished thoughts and come back to them later" (p. 176) and have more flexible plans. Again, skilled writers of L2 exhibited similar writing strategies (e.g. spent time on ideas, focused on small parts of the essay, showed recursiveness, saved editing for the end) as those of skilled L1 writers (e.g. revealed in studies by Pianko, 1979; Sommers, 1980; Flower and Hayes, 1980). Zamel also reported very clear differences between capable and less capable second language writers in revision strategies. Proficient writers regarded revision as a means of discovering ideas (Krashen, 1984:40). They worried less about form. For example, one writer said "if I worry about grammar, my thoughts will disappear" (p.13). Thus, their attitudes towards revision were identical to those of proficient first language writers, as discovered by Sommers (1980).

Zamel (1987) mainly argued that the 'processes of writing in a second language are similar in many ways to writing processes identified in and described for native

speakers'. She also came to the conclusion that 'writing is a recursive rather than a linear process' (see for example, Flower and Hayes, 1980; Zamel, 1983). She discovered that what occurred in both languages were the features of planning, drafting, reading, rereading, and revising as well as the awareness of an audience.

Raimes (1985a), like Jones (1982), and Zamel (1982), in her investigation of the composing processes of ESL remedial and non remedial students, traced that a "lack of competence in writing in English results more from a lack of composing competence than from the lack of linguistic competence" (quoted in Krapels, 1990: 49). Raimes (1985a) also provided a comprehensive picture of L2 writers in her research. In her observation of experienced writers Raimes notes:

They consider purpose and audience. They consult their own background knowledge. They let ideas incubate. They plan. As they write, they read back over what they have written contrary to what many textbooks advise, writers do not follow a neat sequence of planning, organising, writing and then revising. For while a writer's product-the finished essay, story or novel- is presented in lines, the process that produces it is not linear at all (1985a :229).

She found that higher level ESL writers behaved like native English speaking basic writers' who made little planning before starting to write. In another study, on this occasion into the characteristics of unskilled ESL writers, Raimes (1985b) concluded that the composing processes of such writers exhibited a variety of behaviour, i.e. they did not show consistency in their writing. For example, one writer did not write as recursively as others and only three rehearsed their sentences. Raimes pointed out that understanding this variety was an important issue as second language writers come from different background e.g. educational, cultural, have different levels of language proficiency and different needs.

In a different study contrasting L1 and L2 writers, Raimes (1987:458) stated that "L2 writers did not appear inhibited by attempts to edit and correct their work". Before Raimes, L2 researchers had underscored the likeness between L1 and L2

writers, both skilled and unskilled. Raimes' research on writing indicates that there is a relationship between L1 and L2 writing processes but at the same time points out the fact that differences exist.

Jones and Tetroe (1987, cited in Krapels, 1990) analysed protocols to study the L1 and L2 planning behaviours of L2 graduate students. They found a great variety among their subjects in the amount of native language use in L2 writing. They concluded that when composing in a second language students used "cognitive capacity" (this links with Flower and Hayes' findings, 1980) that would be used for other tasks when writing in the native language (p.53). In addition, they discovered that a lack of L2 vocabulary resulted in the first language use in composing and "that the quality, and though not the quantity of planning transfers from L1 to L2" (p.56). Therefore certain features of one's L1 are transformed to L2 writing processes (Lay, 1982, cited in Krapels, 1990).

Cumming (1987) reported that unskilled writers consistently used L1 to generate ideas, while the skilled ones used L1 for both generating content and diction. In another study (1989) he reports how writing expertise and second language proficiency relate to the performance of composing in a second language. In this study, three aspects, i.e. qualities of text produced, attention devoted to aspects of writing during decision making, and problem solving behaviour used to control writing processes of writing performance were investigated. Results showed that, overall, participants with greater writing expertise and greater ESL proficiency received higher ratings on all three aspects of their composition (Cumming, 1989). Such findings that expert writers used particular strategies to solve problems as they engage in the process of writing, corroborate those drawn from other studies e.g. Flower and Hayes (1980) .

All the above mentioned studies have documented the processes writers engage in as they create a piece of writing. In summary, they highlight two distinctive things. Firstly, it has been shown that L1 and L2 writing processes share both similarities and differences. Similarities, for example, in that writing is recursive, rather than a linear process, and the activities of planning, drafting, reading, rereading, and revising occurred throughout the composing process. In terms of the differences, it was shown that L2 writers differed from one another in terms of how they approached the task of writing and in how effectively they made use of a variety of strategies e.g. some reread and revised consistently, while others did not. The variety of L2 writers' background was also pointed out, and the fact that lack of L2 vocabulary resulted in use of L1 (Raimes, 1985a; Huddleson, 1988). Secondly, these studies provide insights into the characteristics of what successful writers do. There are differences between the rehearsing and pre-writing, drafting and writing, and revision behaviours between skilled and unskilled writers (Richards, 1990; Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). Skilled writers appear to spend more time on the rehearsing and pre-writing stage, for example, thinking about ideas and the task, using a variety of strategies for planning. In their drafting and writing behaviours, these skilled writers use ideas derived from rehearsing and take time to let ideas develop. They also spend time reviewing (as corroborated by different studies e.g. Jones, 1982; Zamel, 1982) what they write and are primarily concerned with higher levels of meaning. In their revising behaviours, skilled writers make fewer formal changes at the surface level and revise at all levels and use revision successfully to clarify meaning. Moreover, they are aware of the sense of audience and purpose as opposed to inexperienced writers.

It is therefore clear from the various studies presented above that factors beyond linguistic competence determine the quality of students writing. In other words, it is not only linguistic accuracy but composing competence which makes a writer accomplished. By this I refer to the different stages and strategies in which the writer engages while putting thoughts on paper e.g. generation or development of

ideas, planning, rehearsing, revising, and awareness and sense of audience amongst other things. It is suggested that these strategies make a writer skilled and help to produce a good piece of writing.

In summary this discussion above has concentrated on L1 and L2 research studies and their findings which provide insights into the composing processes of skilled and unskilled writers and the strategies they use. It has set out to discuss how the 1970's saw the development of writing from a new perspective e.g. research undertaken by Emig (1971) and Zamel (1976) about the composing processes of writers (see 2.2.1). It is important to note that the focus on writing strategies was an important landmark in the development of writing research but the product dimension of writing was not totally disregarded.

2.2.2 Writing as Text

This subsection examines the research into writing as 'text' and analyses the different organisational patterns of texts. This view of writing can be seen as an expanded and redefined extension of the traditional product paradigm, as I discuss below.

Interest in the nature of the written product has also developed over time and has increasingly focused on the new perspective of discourse organisation. This perspective has been taken up in the genre approach which is interested in the rhetorical structure of texts as it relates to the context of writing. Studies by Selinker, Todd-Trimble and Trimble (1978), Hoey (1983), Weisberg (1984), Trimble (1985), Swales (1990) and Dudley Evans (1987, 1992) offer important insights into the structure of written texts.

Thus, one development in recent times has been a growing recognition that the cognitive model of the writing process, such as the Flower and Hayes (1980) model (see 2.2.1), does not fully cater for the social dimension, i.e. the range of audience

and varied academic contexts or the concept of the discourse community. It was argued by Bizzell (1982: 4 cited in Swales, 1990) that writing in college and universities should not be viewed strictly in terms of cognitive processes only “but as much as an acquired response to the discourse conventions which arise from preferred ways of creating and communicating knowledge within particular communities”. Thus writing, according to this perspective, should be viewed as a socially situated act.

Another development is reflected in the work of Trimble (1985) who believed it is important to develop in students an understanding of the discourse structure of texts. Trimble (1985) offered a rhetorical approach to text analysis in the field of English for Science and Technology (EST). Trimble and colleagues have analysed in detail the rhetorical techniques and the three rhetorical functions of definition, classification and description. In describing the organisation of texts, Trimble (1985) introduces the notion of the conceptual paragraph. According to him there are two kinds of paragraphs: the conceptual and the physical paragraphs. The former consists of all the “information chosen by the writer to develop a generalisation, whether this is stated or only implied by the context” (p.15). This may be realised in several physical paragraphs. This demarcation between paragraph types is important for an understanding of paragraph structure in writing because paragraphing is an uncertain and complex activity for most writers. This distinction between the two kinds of paragraph has been taken up in drawing specifications in the banding scale descriptors of the study’s marking scheme (see 4.11) .

A further contribution of Trimble’s work (1985) was the examination of the rhetorical elements in the discourse of Scientific and Technical English. For him rhetoric refers to both ‘organisation’ and ‘content’ and includes the ways in which information is organised with isolated items of information and with the larger discourse units in which these terms are found. He examined the rhetorical elements

and the grammar and lexis related to these with regard to the overall instruction of classification and definition.

In addition to Trimble's discourse approach to the analysis of written texts, the genre analysis approach has added useful dimensions to writing as text. Genre analysis is a "system of analysis that is able to reveal something of the patterns of organisation of a 'genre' and the language used to express those patterns" (Dudley-Evans, 1987:1). It investigates the features pertaining to specific text types, e.g. research articles, research proposals. Swales (1990) stresses the value of genre analysis as a means of studying both spoken and written discourse and shows how a genre based approach can be used to shape language learning and development of writing activities.

Swales (1990) moves beyond Trimble's view of rhetoric and, in his model of genre analysis, argues for the centrality of the three concepts of 'discourse community', 'genre' and 'language learning task'. He demonstrates the general value of this approach to the teaching of academic communicative competence. He is interested in those situations in which it is appropriate to consider the roles that texts play in particular environments. However, he views genre as more than texts. He views this type of analysis as the study of how language is used within a particular setting. Thus, Swales conceives the genre approach to writing to be broader and more encompassing than the rhetorical (Trimble, 1985) approach. Swales (1990:58) defines genre as follows:

"A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes."

Tribble (1996) takes up this definition provided by Swales and suggests that it represents a synthesis of contemporary interpretations of the word 'genre' (see Halliday, 1989; Kress 1989; Martin 1989 and Bhatia, 1993, cited in Tribble, 1996). Thus, Swales provides a theoretical framework which can be applied to a variety of

practical situations such as the teaching of advanced writing and English for academic purposes.

In addition to Swales' model, Gee (1996) writes about developments in genre analysis in Australia in the 1970's. This Australian model (e.g. Martin and Rothery 1981, and Martin and Christie, 1986, quoted in Gee, 1996) is now gaining recognition outside Australia. It has its roots in mainstream education and focuses on the teaching of literacy (this writing approach has been evaluated by Walsh et al., 1990, see 3.4). Its theoretical basis is embedded in the systemic-functional model of linguistics (see for example, Halliday and Hasan 1976, Halliday 1978, 1985), as quoted below.

One of the most well-known educational applications derived from systemic functional linguistics....Genre was developed from the work of Ruqaiyah Hasan....and Jim Martin and Joan Rothery as they began to think about the structure of whole texts from a systemic functional perspective.....Influenced by Hasan, Martin and Rothery collected, analysed and classified hundreds of student texts written by primary school students in Sydney. As recognisable patterns of text structure emerged from this study, genres and their elements and stages began to be identified and described (Feez, 1995:8, cited in Burrows, 1997:27).

Martin and Rothery's research (1980, 1981, 1986, cited in Gee, 1996) findings revealed that narrative/expressive genres (writing) were favoured and taught in the school curriculum; whereas factual ones (e.g. procedures, descriptions, reports, explanation) were not taught. They were concerned about the fact that children were not taught genres which they needed to learn. From a classification of factual writing into genres, Martin and Rothery (1981, cited in Gee, 1996) developed a model for the analysis of written text consisting of three levels: genre, register and language. Genre has a special association with register; the concept of 'register' has been borrowed from Halliday et al. (1964) and is defined as language variety according to use. In this model all three levels (i.e. genre, register and language) are

interpreted semiotically, that is as systems for making meaning (see Martin and Christie, 1984). Despite the criticisms that have been levelled against the Australian model, for instance, teachers find it difficult to fully understand the model and effective translation from theory to practice was difficult, it has influenced pedagogic practices outside Australia. Its main contribution has been to provide a conceptual orientation for the development of other models of genre.

The Australian model of genre analysis shares similarities with Swales' model by emphasising that genres differ in terms of purpose and structure. Like Swales, genres are conceived as social processes and there is social interaction of the participants. Moreover, each genre is conceived as a purposeful process and hence the participation is meaningful (Gee, 1996).

In this subsection, a brief account of various approaches to second language writing as text has been presented. Writing as 'text' explores the redefined and expanded view of writing as product with focus on the rhetorical and organisational patterns of texts produced within academic environments. It outlined briefly features of Trimble's rhetorical approach and Swales and the Australian approaches to genre. Insights from the study of texts provide guidelines for the description and understanding of the organisation of different types of text as used in pedagogy. This will be seen in section 2.3.3. The reader is now presented with a brief overview of the main trends in writing pedagogy.

2.3 Writing Pedagogy

The purpose of this section, based on insights from the writing literature, is to examine traditional and contemporary trends in writing pedagogy. Raimes (1993) highlights the main approaches to writing pedagogy which have been evident over the last twenty-five years. She discusses writing instruction which variously focuses on form, the writer, the content and reader. These different approaches to writing pedagogy are outlined below. Raimes contends that these are widely used and by no

means discrete or chronological. These are identified as:

- The product approach which focuses on form (see 2.3.1)
- The process approach which focuses on the writer (see 2.3.2)
- The genre or sociolinguistic approach which focuses on the content and reader (see 2.3.3).

Each is discussed in turn in the subsections that follow.

2.3.1 Product Approaches to Writing Pedagogy

The traditional approach to teaching writing focused on the accuracy of linguistic form. It basically had its roots in the audiolingual method where writing was accorded a secondary role, to speech (i.e. speaking) and aimed at reinforcing oral patterns of the language. Writing was viewed essentially as model based, and students were provided with rules about what constituted good writing and were expected to produce texts that observed these rules. This has been defined as the product approach because it emphasises the "ability to produce correct texts or products" (Richards, 1990:106). In other words, the primary goals of this teaching were to focus on the outcomes of writing and the actual piece of writing produced by a writer.

White and Arndt (1991:2) say that in a typical product centred approach "writing will converge towards a predefined goal, with a model text being presented to form the focus of comprehension and text manipulation activities". One goal of instruction is to emphasise grammatical rules in order to teach students how to use them in text. For example, characteristic activities are sentence combining and developing complex sentences following different rules of combination (Richards, 1990); making minor changes and substitutions to model texts; expanding an outline or summary; controlled writing activities e.g. constructing paragraphs from frame, tables and other guides; joining sentences to make a paragraph; producing a text by answering a set of questions; inserting supplied conjunctions; inserting a missing

grammatical form; and free composition on a given topic to test the level of accuracy achieved (McDonough and Shaw, 1993). In addition, the mechanics of writing are taught e.g. handwriting, capitalisation, punctuation and spelling (Richards, 1990:107). These instructional activities are accompanied by a particular approach to marking the products of writing. This “involves a pedagogy which analyses student writing after the text has been produced in order to diagnose and assess strengths and weaknesses” (Hedge, 1994:2). Furthermore, traditional marking systems for the 'product' have also tended to focus on accuracy as the primary criterion of 'good writing' (Hedge, 1994: 2).

The above characteristics of the product approach and aims of writing instruction make it clear that, overall, students do not have the freedom to generate texts but are subject to restriction by means of guided writing techniques which limit the actual composing process. For example, learners do not engage in extended writing but are more concerned with sentence level constructions.

2.3.1.1 Limitations of the Product Approach

Reactions against a exclusively form dominated approach to the teaching of writing had already started in the 1970's (see 2.2.1 e.g. Emig's study, 1971,1975). New trends in writing were emerging and the focus developing was on the writer, on discovery, on creating meaning in text, and on the notion of multiple drafts. Researchers were pointing out the limitations of the product approach and one of the main criticisms was that this approach concentrates on ends rather than means. An exclusive focus on product, it was argued, neglects the composing processes a writer goes through in order to produce the written text. Murray, (1980:3) commenting on these limitations, states "processes cannot be inferred from product any more than a pig can be inferred from a sausage". The essence of all these criticisms was that in order to produce competent and skilled writers, it is essential to know about their composing processes and to examine the methodology for developing writing skills in the light of this information.

Hence, the focus of attention was moving away from form to meaning, from the product of composition to the processes of composing. In other words, the emphasis was to be on understanding and working with the writer as creator of texts in a second language as attested in research studies (see 2.2.1, e.g. Zamel 1976, 1982, 1983, Raimes 1983). In the next section, the salient features of the pedagogy associated with the process approach are outlined.

2.3.2 Process Approaches to Writing Pedagogy

As shown in 2.2.1 above, research has focused on the processes writers go through while composing a piece of writing in their second language. This has created insights into problems people encounter while writing and the decisions the writer has to make when writing. Moving on to the domain of pedagogy and drawing on the work of pedagogues such as Hedge (1994: 2), the process view of writing may be defined as one in which "writing is the result of employing cognitive strategies to manage the composing process, which is a process of exploration and gradually developing organisation". It does not consist of a single phase but is made up of different steps such as setting goals, generating ideas, organising information, selecting appropriate language, drafting, reviewing, revising and editing. Thus, it can be viewed as a collection of interrelated and complex activities which may prove to be frustrating, difficult and stress ridden for many second language writers because it is a new way of dealing with writing. Moreover, "what differentiates a process-focused approach from a product-centred one, though, is that the outcome of writing - that is, the product is not preconceived" (White and Arndt, 1991:5).

The following sections will outline in terms of classroom practice a) the different stages and activities involved in process writing and b) the ingredients of a good piece of writing.

2.3.2.1 Activities in the Writing Process

A brief sequence of the different activities involved in writing are outlined below:

(i) Planning

Since good writers (see 2.2.1) are concerned with meaning and organisation of a text, planning activities are a vital first step in this process. Murray (1980) calls this rehearsing, or pre-writing, and it involves locating a topic, gathering and collecting ideas and thinking about it and letting ideas interact, develop and organise themselves. This is also the stage of generating ideas, and the technique which teachers can develop in students is that of brainstorming. White and Arndt (1991) recommend the use of 'WH questions' who? what? where? when? why? how? as a good strategy to generate ideas. This is based on the concept of 'Socratic dialogue' and yields ideas on the topic, along with advocating creativity and individualism within the learner. The amount of planning obviously depends on, and varies according to, the purpose for which one is writing, e.g. an informal letter to a friend will involve less planning than writing an academic essay. Planning may consist of structured and unstructured note making (White and Arndt, 1991) and may range from a brief mental checklist to detailed note making (Hedge, 1994). Any plan may be amended at any time to incorporate new ideas. The planning phase also encompasses the two activities of focusing and structuring.

(ii) Focusing

In the focusing stage, the writers have to make their purpose of writing clear, concentrate on a principal idea or a view point, and decide how to make it accessible to the reader. To achieve this, they must focus their thoughts or their writing will be incoherent. One useful focusing technique is fast writing, i.e. to write quickly without inhibitions. At the same time, writers must consider their audience since successful writers write 'reader based prose' (see 2.2.1). Hedge (1994:2) summarises this stage by pointing out that in order to produce an appropriate text a learner ought to consider questions such as who am I writing to? what do I need to say? and how can I get my writing across to my reader? These questions (i.e. about purpose and audience) were not considered in the product approach to teaching. Thus, this pedagogical orientation is in marked contrast to traditional methods of

developing writing skills. In process writing, different responsibilities reside with teachers as they have the vital task of helping students develop this sense of audience and purpose. To this end, teachers may engage them in collaborative work by asking students to work in pairs and groups, and share and exchange drafts for peer comment so that peers provide an immediate audience.

(iii) Structuring

Structuring is the next step for the learner to follow, and can be seen as an extension of the planning or ideas generation stage. This includes "selecting information on both factual and linguistic matters and arranging it" (White and Arndt, 1991:78). Writers have to gather ideas and decide how to present them and in which sequence. New ideas may be generated while writing and writers may have to readjust original plans and thus re-organise their ideas in the process. One technique for structuring is to cluster together ideas under different headings and create a framework e.g. a 'spidergram' technique can be used where a range of ideas on the topic can be produced under different sub-headings. Based on this framework the writer can proceed on further writing (White and Arndt, 1991).

(iv) Drafting

Drafting is the stage where the writer actually produces a first draft. Issues such as how to attract the readers' attention or how to write in an appealing way are some of the things writers are concerned with. This is where the process of revising and rewriting plays an important role as well. During drafting, the writer becomes concerned with the problems of beginning and ending the text. In order to help students to get started they may be provided with a handout or a poster with opening sentences and paragraphs from a variety of published texts (White and Arndt, 1991:103). During this stage, teachers have the responsibility of reading and responding to students' work and providing feedback (see 2.4.2) which will feed into the learners reviewing activity. This can be done on a one to one basis or the work of one or two students can be discussed with the class as a whole. Conferencing is

one procedure of providing feedback in which both teacher and student can work together on the text. This can be carried out either during or after the process (see 2.4.2). One to one or group discussion with the teacher about specific problem areas will help students to improve their drafts.

(v) Reviewing

Another activity throughout the writing process and one of great significance is that of reviewing or revision. Revision is emphasised, as it is through this process writers clarify their meaning (see 2.2.1). In the traditional approach to teaching writing revision did not occupy an important place because the teacher examined the work and evaluated it after it was produced. Hence, feedback was provided after the work had been completed and did not help much in improving the written work. At this final stage “writers have already made their major decisions about which words and structures give expression to their ideas” (White and Arndt, 1991:136). Nevertheless, writers have to check the writing as if looking at it for the first time in order to check the context for any irrelevant pieces which do not relate to the focal idea. Writers also have to check the connections (both logical and linguistic) between the sections of writing, whether they are coherent or not and consider the impact their writing will have on the audience. Murray (1980:5) says that revising helps give shape to the writing and helps say “what it intends to say”.

(vi) Editing

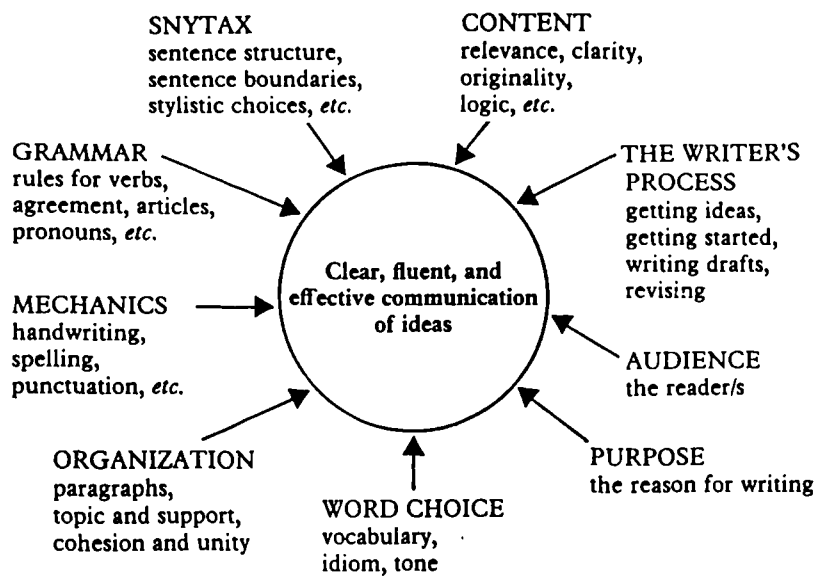
Editing is the last step in the writing process and as such teachers should encourage students to concentrate on first getting their meanings clear and to attend to details of accuracy like spelling, punctuation and grammar in the final editing process.

The above stages depict the main phases and activities good writers engage in while producing a written text. In addition, Raimes (1983b) suggests a number of elements which are essential for producing a text of good quality. These elements are presented below.

2.3.2.2 Components of Good Writing

Raines (1983b: 6) provides an overview of the pre-requisites for teaching effective writing in ESL classes. In Figure 2.1 below, she highlights the different dimensions of composing (see 2.2.1) writers have to take into account in producing a text.

Figure 2.2 Producing a Piece of Writing (Raines, 1983b:6)



Raines states that for clear, fluent and effective communication of ideas all the above e.g. grammar, mechanics, organisation, content, word choice, are called upon in the production and presentation of a written text. The implication for pedagogy is that students will not pick up writing as they learn other skills in classes. This implies an important role for instruction as the teacher can teach writing by focusing on the above features (Figure 2.1) in class. These aspects from the above diagram e.g. grammar, mechanics, organisation, content, vocabulary and cohesion form the

basis of broad categories for the marking scheme used in the study (see 4.6.4.3.1 and Appendix 4.10). These features have been selected because they are the essential components of skilled writing as evidenced in the various research studies.

In the foregoing section the various activities involved in the process approach to writing, together with the ingredients which need to be reflected in a skilled piece of written work, have been identified. These have expanded and changed our ideas about the teaching of writing, i.e. writing is not a linear activity but a recursive one and writers have the liberty to move back and forth to present their argument. These have also increased awareness amongst teachers and students alike with respect to writing skills and what goes on when writers write. In addition, these have made us aware of the importance of purpose and audience in producing texts.

Though it is true that the process view is full of creative and novel ideas and no matter how exciting and effective the torch bearers of this approach appear to be, it has not escaped uncriticized. At present there is some controversy surrounding the product/process dichotomy and a number of specific criticisms have been levelled, and it is to some of these I now turn.

2.3.2.3 Limitations of the Process Approach

Horowitz (1986) feels that the process approach is unsuitable as a means for preparing students to write under examination conditions. Johns (1990), arguing on the same lines, comments that it does not give proper guidance to the students because it advocates writing under long stretches of time. It is misleading as it fails to prepare students to handle academic writing which often has to be produced under the pressure of time and constraints of examinations. Tribble (1996) also points out that writing multiple drafts is not suitable for timed exams. Thus, under these circumstances, the process approach may fail to prepare for the time dimension. Silva (1990:17) contends that “it belittles, rather ignores the realities of academia and, that it operates in a socio-cultural vacuum”. Zamel (1983) and Reid (1984)

question the effectiveness of the process approach with its focus on the writer reflecting a view that it seriously neglects variation in the writing process due to differences in for example, individual writing tasks and situations.

Although the process approach has proved helpful for many teachers, it has been more recently argued (e.g. Tribble, 1996; Caudery, 1996) that it does not provide all the answers. For example, the lack of availability of textbooks to inform this pedagogy has been identified as a major problem in the development of writing skills. In addition, this approach places greater demands on teachers in terms of language and teaching skills required. Moreover, it may be demotivating if students have constantly to rewrite their tasks in the light of feedback obtained. Furthermore, it is difficult to assess whether a process approach is applicable in all settings where writing is taught. Here, case studies of implementation of the process approach (see below) in non-western contexts, e.g. Malaysia (1993) and Hong Kong (1995, 1996), reveal some of the practical and contextual constraints (e.g. existing attitudes, social system, lack of professional training, materials, resources and large classes) involved in implementing such an approach to writing, as well as provide some guidelines for overcoming some of the obstacles identified. In addition, an awareness of issues identified in such studies of innovation have implications (e.g. access to teacher training, see 9.4.1) for the case study reported here, because selected and workable features (e.g. planning activities, see 2.3.2.1, 8.7.2.3 and 9.2.5) of the process approach are recommended for use in conjunction with other approaches (e.g. product and genre features) in classroom contexts (see 2.3.1 and 2.3.3). Brief summaries of findings of selected case studies of implementation of innovations are outlined below.

2.3.2.4 Studies of Implementation of the Process Approach

An example of a well documented introduction of the process approach to writing in Hong Kong is Pennington and Cheung's (1995) study. The project, set out with the

aim of investigating the conditions involved in implementing a process approach to writing in Hong Kong secondary schools and sought to assess how innovation is resisted or successfully implemented in a particular context. Teachers were instructed on techniques of process writing and they were given a clear rationale for process writing. This was followed by a six-month implementation period when Cheung actually trained and supported the teachers as they tried to make sense of process writing and to implement it in their classrooms. There followed a one-year free implementation period in which teachers experimented with implementing process techniques in the classrooms. The results show that the degree of implementation by teachers depended on their initial perspectives and attitudes towards the change that was suggested. The study demonstrates that social systems (e.g. a strong orientation to tradition, authority and order, cultural expectations of tight control by the teacher) and the educational context in which the adoption takes place are important variables to consider when implementing an innovation. For instance, Hong Kong has an educational system in which transmission-based values and product-oriented goals are modelled (Pennington, 1995). On the other hand, process writing which involves a non-traditional approach originated and belongs to a culture, which has a collaborative and interpretation-oriented view of education (see 8.8). Education in Bangladesh, as in Hong Kong, operates under similar conditions (e.g. traditional system of teaching see 1.5.5, 5.2.2, 5.2.3 and 5.4.7) and consideration of the above variables (i.e. social and educational norms) will be crucial for successful implementation of innovations in Bangladesh as well. Thus there are implications for adapting curricular innovations in relation to the cultural context in which the adoption takes place. The study further showed that teachers can be:

assisted in actualising the necessary conditions for implementing the process approach by provision of suitable materials, and various types of support, including training to build a knowledge base and a repertoire of teaching techniques for process writing, and to develop skills for self reflection and pedagogical problem solving (Pennington and Cheung, 1995:15).

The above findings and observations have important bearings for the Bangladeshi educational context as it provides specific pointers for creating suitable and desirable conditions for innovations. It is encouraging to note that Bangladesh is already aware of the necessity of some of the above stated conditions which seem to be indispensable for effective change processes. For example, awareness about the importance of suitable materials and teacher education has been a repeated and consistent recommendation of various reports, seminars and project objectives in Bangladesh (e.g. Task Force Report, National Seminar Report, ODA Report and ELTIP objectives, see 1.5.5) and adequate measures are also being taken to materialise these conditions (see 1.2, 1.5.5 and 8.8).

More recently, the results of a study by Sengupta and Falvey (1998:72) in Hong Kong secondary schools suggests that “teachers perceptions of L2 writing are predominantly shaped by the contextual factors that surround their classroom lives” and these contextual factors arise from constraints laid by institutions, examinations and teachers’ existing knowledge base. However, the authors argue and expect that new initiatives e.g. recent developments in curriculum renewal and language teacher education will create conditions, which will lead to some changes in teacher perceptions.

Brock (1994) in his article on the implementation of the process approach in Hong Kong also documents teachers’ reflections (in diaries kept) on change, and mentions environmental constraints such as low language proficiency among students, low student motivation, lack of time and cultural resistance. However, he signals implications for teacher changes and suggests that these changes can occur if teachers are supported at all stages in implementing curricular innovation and if they are thoroughly trained in that innovation. Morris (1984), also delineates teachers’ perceptions of the barriers to the implementation of a pedagogic innovation (in this case Economics) in Hong Kong secondary schools and comments that the government had imported new approaches to teaching which emphasise pupil

involvement and a heuristic style of learning. However, classroom observations show that teachers did not use the new approach despite expressing attitudes favourable to that approach. Morris (1984), like Pennington and Cheung (1995), also concludes that the context in which an innovation is used and the nature of an innovation are viewed as critical determinants of how an innovation is implemented (also see Holliday, 1994b). Again there are implications for reflective approaches that cause users of an innovation to examine their own attitudes, and modification of users' attitudes and training courses could also provide users with appropriate skills (see 1.5.5, 8.8 and 9.4).

A study by Pennington, Brock and Yue (1996) report on Hong Kong secondary school students' attitudes and reactions to process writing. In particular, the study looked at the "cause-and-effect relationships existing between teachers' and students' attitudes and behaviours in the context of an innovation" (p. 227).

The study involved 8 secondary classes, each taught by an experienced teacher and its purpose was to study the effects of a six-month implementation of the process approach to writing on teachers and their students. The methodology used was a questionnaire and guided reflection from the teachers, classroom observation and a student questionnaire.

Analysis of the findings showed that two classes had an essentially positive reaction to process writing, two had an essentially negative reaction and four exhibited a mixed reaction. In looking for causes of these reactions, the authors suggested a causal relationship between the teachers' attitudes and behaviours and those of the students. For example:

the teacher judged at the beginning of the project to have had the most positive attitude toward process writing taught the students who evaluated the experience as most positive. The class that evaluated the experience as most negative had the teacher judged at the outset as having been most conflicted about process writing (Penninton et al.,1996:227).

One very interesting aspect of the study was that positive responses to some elements of process writing such as peer response and teacher student conferencing co-occurred with classes where students used their L1 in these activities. The advantage gained was that use of the native language enabled students to more fully participate in developing their ideas for writing. However, what was lost was opportunities to practice English. This demonstrates how an innovation can be reinterpreted when implemented in a new culture and the implication is that we need local adaptation of foreign ideas. Moreover, the results also showed that:

The students' positive response to these activities of process writing e.g. peer response and teacher student conferencing suggest the value of these particular features, as well as innovation more generally, in improving students' attitudes and level of involvement in their English classes (Pennington et al., 1996:243).

The above study is a good example of how educational innovations can be modified and implemented to fit the local context. It also shows how important teacher development is, particularly with regard to changing attitudes and building confidence. The implications, once again, are for teacher support.

Another study in Malaysia (1993) also aimed to find out teachers' perceptions, beliefs and attitudes towards the implementation of process writing, the training and support teachers received for teaching process writing and in their opinion what factors affected the implementation of this innovation (Johnson, 1993). Teacher factors (e.g. inadequate professional training, heavy workload) and organisational factors (e.g. large class size, shortage of teachers) were explored. Findings indicated that the teachers did not fully accept process writing as part of their writing methodology for teaching writing as it was not compatible with their past teaching experiences. This has implications for the changes proposed in chapter eight of this thesis. For example, features of the process approach like 'planning', 'reviewing' and 'conferencing' have not been part of Bangladeshi teachers' educational or teaching experience and, as such, may need to be modified and adjusted to function

in the local classroom (see 8.7.2.3 and 9.2.5). It was further indicated that “the problems of implementing process writing or any other ELT innovations in Malaysia arise from a combination of social, historical, political and organisational factors” (Johnson, 1993:92). For instance, organisational factors like large class size, heavy workload, unsupportive administrators and the inadequacies of the learners were cited as strong variables affecting the implementation of the process approach. Similar kinds of constraints exist in Bangladesh (see 1.5.1, 1.5.2) and are categorically reported by teachers in this study (see 8.8). These obstacles may inhibit the application of process writing unless it is applied with “a sensitivity to the users’ characteristics and to other constraints associated with the educational setting” (Pennington and Cheung, 1995:21).

Recommendations to overcoming barriers (to the implementation of a process approach) made in this study centred on four focal areas. Firstly, it was recommended that for innovations to be successful the attitude towards the fundamental concepts of knowledge have to be changed because learner-centred innovations like the process approach have little scope for success in examination-oriented and teacher-centred classrooms (see 1.5.5 and 5.4.7). Secondly, it was suggested that innovations must be adapted, developed and modified to suit the needs and problems of the local context. Thirdly, the importance of training was emphasised and it was recommended that training ought to be well planned and should have a place for the theories behind such an approach. Finally, the importance of evaluating the implementation was recommended.

The above studies lay bare the problems of innovations e.g. using a process approach in contexts (e.g. Hong Kong and Malaysia) which have a transmission and rote learning orientation towards education and where the social and educational system is not conducive towards such innovations (see Johnson, 1993; Pennington, 1995; Pennington et al., 1996). However, there is hope as these studies raise awareness of the issues that surround the implementation of this novel approach. For example,

suggestions made in this thesis argue for taking into consideration the social, cultural and educational environment of the local context, adapting, accommodating and reinterpreting the innovation according to student and teacher needs, materials' support and training facilities to promote such innovations (for a further discussion see 8.8).

The above quoted studies of implementation of the process approach have highlighted some practical and contextual limitations of adopting such a view of writing. For example, the existence of traditional, teacher-centred and product-oriented approach to writing, lack of in-depth training opportunities, lack of in-service support, lack of appropriate materials and resources, as well as large classes are some of the variables which hinder the adoption of such an approach (see 1.5.5 and Table 8.1). Nevertheless, its contribution to the development of writing should not be overlooked. Process writing is not represented here as a panacea for all types of contexts and students, but its helpful features like planning activities (see 2.3.2.1), feedback strategies (e.g. teacher student conferencing, peer feedback, see 2.4.2) can be adapted and tailored to meet the demands of specific situations and needs. The next section examines the salient features of the genre approach (advocated by recent methodologists) as applied to language teaching pedagogy.

2.3.3 Genre or Sociolinguistic Approaches to Writing Pedagogy

In contrast to the process approach, which focuses on the writer and the different stages involved in writing, the genre approach explores the structure of organisation, argumentation and style in writing. It focuses on the form and content that have to be recognised when a writer attempts to match text to a social purpose. In other words, a 'genre approach' provides a means of access to designing a syllabus and planning a course.

The genre approach caters to the needs of learners and the expectations of the educational environment. It helps in providing a framework in which different

aspects of genre can be slotted. Development of genre awareness both in terms of the genres that are relevant and their characteristic features is essential so that students are aware of the expectations of the context in which writing is practised and the different purposes that genres serve in society and culture (Gee, 1996). Thus, “an important theme in this approach is that students develop a sense of the shaping roles of genres in writing, and how language structure and genre constrain the ways in which language communicates information” (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996:260).

To illustrate the use of genre theory in pedagogy I present below some examples of practical approaches.

A very practical application to the teaching of genre is found in Hedge (1988:101). The purpose is to show how various types of textual analysis can help the writer to appreciate what makes a successful product in terms of linking ideas within or across sentences or in terms of the overall organisation of the discourse. This task (see Appendix 2.1) is to write a personal letter and the function is to provide a dynamic description of students’ present life, surroundings and experiences by describing the scene around them and what is happening in it. The focus of the task is on discourse organisation in non-chronological description.

The Australian model of genre analysis characterises the features of the narrative and the factual genres for the purposes of pedagogy. Learners need to be shown how the different text types are characterised by different generic structures. The narrative or story genre usually consists of a series of events chronologically arranged and its schematic structure can be divided into Orientation, Complication, Resolution and Coda (similar to the IMRAD format described below). On the other hand, factual genres (reports and expositions) have a different function from the narrative. The two main types of factual genres according to Rothery are reports and expositions.

Reports are described as genres that make general statements and consist of a general classification followed by a description (Rothery, 1985: 71, cited in Gee, 1996).

Similar work in Britain has focused on text types. An example of the ways of teaching comparison and contrast is offered by White and McGovern (1994:22-24). Learners are provided with an overview of typical organisation patterns for description (see Appendix 2.2) and are then required to work as analysts and editors before they work in the genre themselves. Here learners move from text to writing activity (Tribble, 1996).

Further suggestions for applications are suggested by Swales (1990) who provides a theoretical framework which can be applied to a variety of practical class situations e.g. the teaching of advanced writing and English for academic purposes. An actual example of a genre based writing course is provided in Swales and Feak (1994:155-172). It is aimed at graduate students and focuses on writing a research paper. It shows the overall organisation of a research paper and the main sections which it should include. It explains the IMRAD format, i.e. the four sections of Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion. Students are provided with some information about research papers and, working in pairs, are required to use the information to decide to which sections the comments belong. Thus students, are made to understand the ways in which texts are organised in their discourse communities.

2.3.3.1 Limitations of the Genre Approach

The limitations of the genre approach have not been articulated in detail. My perceptions of the limitations relate to the fact that, like the process approach, it places heavier demands on the teacher as it requires greater skills on the part of teachers: they have to be familiar with discourse features such as cohesion, thematic structures and the pattern and organisation of different types of texts.

The foregoing examples have explained the pedagogic focus of genre approaches to teaching. It is important to note that these have their roots in the traditional product

view of writing; they utilise product features, such as patterns of organisations and models, though from a modified new angle. The aim of this approach is to build awareness about appropriate forms for texts.

No approach is without its flaws. It has been argued by exponents of the genre approach that this approach to writing may complement the classroom practices which have been developed through process methodology. Bamforth (1993:97, cited in Tribble, 1996:61) summarises both process and genre as follows:

Unfortunately the genre/process debate has been typified by false dichotomies and ideological preoccupations. Ultimately, the central issues of freedom and control are not alternatives between which a choice has to be made. They are really interdependent, and effective writing pedagogy will call upon both approaches.

Following on from Bamforth, who invites us to call on the genre and process approaches, the trend in current pedagogy is also to unite both product and process because “writing is a matter of combining complementary perspectives rather than oppositions” (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996:34). The idea is to exploit aspects of all approaches, i.e. product features (e.g. controlled writing) process features (e.g. developing planning activities, audience awareness, reviewing and revising strategies) and genre features (e.g. describing discourse and global organisation, different forms of text) in writing instruction and to aim for an integrated pedagogy. However, the degree of integration will depend partly on the goals of writing, partly on the needs of learners, and partly on the context (Hedge, 1994).

It is expected that skilled writing teachers will learn from the ideas of all approaches, as these jointly contribute to the development of writing skills, and will combine them pragmatically to meet the specific needs of their students (Fulcher, 1996).

2.4 Implications for Curriculum Renewal

In this last section some specifics of classroom practice and methodology are

discussed. Methodology here refers to the activities, tasks and learning experiences selected by the teacher in order to achieve learning (Richards, 1990). The methodology for teaching writing is inextricably linked with teacher roles, the role of feedback/error correction and the marking of written work. These components of methodology are outlined below as they impinge on this evaluation study (see chapter 5 and 7).

2.4.1 The Teacher's Role in Writing Classes

Generally, in traditional approaches the teacher was supposed to be the one in possession of all the facts and the ultimate source of all knowledge and authority. The teacher performed two roles. "The first is that of knower: the teacher is a source of knowledge (this links with the product approach see 2.2.1) in terms of both the target language and the choice of methodology....The second role is that of activity organiser: the teacher sets up and steers learning activities in the right direction.....and provides authoritative feedback (this ties in with process, approach see 2.2.2) on students' performance" (Tudor, 1996:273-274).

In traditional writing classrooms the role of the teacher has been very limited. Namely to set the task, maybe with a brief discussion, and then to examine the work handed in as product. The teacher's role has primarily been to evaluate learner performance (Littlewood, 1981). Over the last two decades teachers' roles have been redefined, broadened and made more flexible to accommodate new changes. Littlewood (1981), Harmer (1983), and Richards, (1990) have classified these in terms of motivator, controller, assessor, organiser, prompter, participant, resource, tutor, manager, instructor, researcher, learner, counsellor and friend and provider of accurate models. Some of these are traditional and well established e.g. controller and organiser. Some, however, are reflective of the changes in methodology e.g. participant, counsellor, tutor.

More recently, in addition to these general roles, the teacher has another specific and crucial role to discharge in the writing classes, i.e. to provide feedback. Feedback from the teacher will help students to see their strengths and weaknesses in writing and to go on to improve their written product in the light of teacher comments or discussions. In traditional classrooms feedback, essentially meant only corrective feedback and that was usually summative and at the end of the writing task (Nunan, 1991). However, these days, particularly in process pedagogy, teachers have the extended responsibility of providing feedback at different stages of writing that is both during (writing) and after. Feedback during the writing process might involve e.g. written comments or some kind of error correction which will feed into the learners reviewing activity (see 2.3.2.1). Feedback after the process or on the product will involve summative assessment e.g. grading or marking by the teacher.

2.4.2 Feedback

In this section, I briefly survey the different approaches to feedback with a view to not only acquaint teachers with the different forms of feedback but also to analyse which are the most viable and feasible ones for adaptation to the current context.

Feedback is an indispensable tool for improving the teaching and learning of writing, by providing information to students on the performance of their written work. “Through feedback, the writer learns where he or she has misled or confused the reader by not supplying enough information, illogical organisation, lack of development of ideas, or something like inappropriate word-choice or tense” (Keh, 1996: 295). Major forms of feedback are outlined below.

Error correction (Allwright, 1975; Norrish, 1983; Hendrickson, 1984; Chaudron, 1988)

Feedback on errors is perhaps one of the oldest and most widely reported forms of feedback (Chaudron, 1977, 1988; Celce Murcia, 1993). Oral or written correction, or both, may be provided. In written work, typical ways used by the teacher are either to indicate and correct the errors in the text or simply to indicate them by means of a code in the margin about the kind of error. The feedback arising from these two

methods may consist of any of the following: locating errors, coding errors, treatment of errors (Norrish, 1983); “fact of error indicated, blame indicated, location indicated, remedy indicated, improvement indicated, praise indicated, opportunity for new attempts given” (Allwright, 1975:104).

An important distinction is made between local and global errors (see Burt & Kiparsky, 1972; Heaton, 1988). Those which do not hinder the readers’ comprehension of the sentence (e.g. misuse of articles, omission of prepositions) are considered local errors. Those which affect overall sentence organisation and result in failure to understand the message are referred to as global errors (e.g. word order, misuse of connectives). This distinction between local and global errors seem most useful to teachers for deciding which errors to prioritise for correction and also suggests different treatment for each kind. For example, local errors, if often repeated, may well be the result of carelessness and thus may sometimes be ignored by teachers. Global errors require more fundamental treatment by teachers. In line with this argument, Hendrickson (1984) and Bryne (1988) recommend that errors should be corrected selectively. Hendrickson further suggests that three kinds of error should be dealt with a) errors that impair understanding b) errors that have negative effects on the reader c) errors that occur frequently. This reinforces the importance of attending to global errors.

Peer Feedback (Lynch, 1988; Robinson, 1991; Arndt, 1993; Keh, 1996)

In the literature on writing, peer feedback is referred to by different names e.g. peer response, peer editing and peer evaluation. In this method students read each others writing in pairs and groups and offer comments. Keh (1996:305) feels that “peer feedback is versatile, with regard to focus and implementation along the ‘process’ writing continuum”. It helps to provide a wider sense of audience and saves teachers’ time.

Conferences (Freedman & Sperling, 1985; Hedge, 1988; Keh, 1996; Arndt, 1993)

Conferences are one to one or face to face meetings between teacher and students, and can be arranged individually or in groups. "Conferences can be used at the pre-writing stage, in process stage, evaluation stage, or post product stage" (Keh, 1996:305). This interaction between teacher and student has been considered to be very beneficial because the teacher acts as a 'live audience' and helps the writer sort through problems and assist the student in decision making' (Keh, 1996:298).

Written comments (Raimes, 1983; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; 1990; Leki, 1990)

The teacher writes comments on students' written work in the margins or between the lines or at the end. Comments are useful for pointing out "specific problems, for explaining the reasons for them, and for making suggestions" (Keh, 1996:305).

Text approximation (Holes, 1984)

This is a method of dealing with students' errors during the writing process. The emphasis is on multiple drafts and revision. Students revise their texts a number of times and the aim is to approximate an English text of similar type.

Reformulation (Cohen, 1982; Allwright, 1988)

There are several versions of reformulation. In the one advocated by Cohen (1982), a native speaker teacher rewrites the non-native speaker student's text without distorting original ideas. Allwright (1988) thinks it is a more positive substitute strategy to spoon feeding in which teachers are mostly concerned with local errors. She presents a representative text of a non-native student and describes a procedure which involves the whole class in discussing changes. Her contention is that reformulation helps in dealing with the main features of academic writing e.g. organisation, sign posting, cohesion and clarity of meaning.

Taped commentary (Hyland, 1990)

As the teacher reads the students work the remarks are recorded on tape. The teacher also writes numbers on the text along with the comments they make so it is easy for

the student to locate and identify the problem area. This approach is perceived to be useful for intermediate and advanced students.

Some of the types of feedback mentioned above are common and widely used by teachers. However, the use of feedback is restricted by context and practical constraints. The teacher's role is crucial because the teacher has to decide which kind of feedback is appropriate and suitable and beneficial for a particular group of learners.

2.4.3 Marking of Written Work

The marking of written work is another important dimension of methodology and an integral part of teaching writing. The vital questions before us are to decide i) on the appropriate method for marking, and ii) to determine the focus for marking written work and, in this process, outline suitable criteria for a marking scheme.

Traditionally, written work has been marked according to two methods: i) holistic or impressionistic and ii) analytic. The holistic approach assigns marks on the basis of the total impression of a text as a whole or on the overall effectiveness of a piece of work. This method of marking usually entails one or two markers giving a single score based on their impression of the writing. The main advantage of this method is for the markers, in that it is less time consuming. Its drawbacks are its inherent subjectivity and the absence of an attempt to evaluate the discrete features of a piece of writing for scoring purposes (Weir, 1993). Learners, therefore, do not receive specific feedback on particular aspects of their writing. Moreover, the trouble with holistic scoring is that it fails to assess the frequently varied performance second language writers exhibit on different varied criteria (Hamp-Lyons, 1995).

In analytic marking, on the other hand, candidates are judged on several different components of writing e.g. vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, content (see Heaton, 1988; Hughes, 1989; Hamp-Lyons, 1991, Weir, 1990, 1993; Alderson et. al, 1995

for detailed discussion). The main advantages to analytic marking are that markers consider aspects of performance which they otherwise might ignore, and this helps to delineate students' strengths and weaknesses in written production. This method of marking is also considered to be more objective as markers have to be more explicit about their impressions and award a number of marks for different elements of writing (Hughes, 1989; Weir, 1993). Hamp-Lyons (1991) argues for an analytic marking scheme for ESL learners mainly for two reasons. Firstly, this type of a scheme helps to create a balance among all the essential elements of good writing e.g. grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, organisation, content (see 2.3.2.2). Secondly, it helps markers cater for multidimensionality of second language writing. The main disadvantages of this method are that it is doubtful that the markers can judge each of the aspects independently of the others (see 7.3). This is termed as the 'halo effect' (Hughes, 1989; Weir, 1993). In addition, it is time consuming, and concentration on different aspects may divert attention from the overall communicative effect of the piece of written work.

However, the choice between holistic and analytic marking depends partly on the purpose of marking. If diagnostic information is required e.g. to see if students are improving or not, during the progress of a course, then an analytic marking scheme is useful. On the other hand, if information is required for summative purposes, i.e. end of course or certificate giving formal examination, then holistic marking is suitable, subject to establishing the reliability of the marking. The marking scheme used in this evaluation study for analysing the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions is analytic (see 4.6.4.3 and Appendix 4.10). The analytic marking scheme was chosen because the researcher was seeking diagnostic information, i.e. to find out about the weak and strong areas of student writing. In addition, the aim was to find the range of quality in student groups on discrete components and to get an indication of individual performance on these.

In order to do this, a banding system was used to rate student performance on the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions. This banding scale was accompanied by brief descriptors of typical performance at each of five levels. The advantages of using descriptors are several: firstly, they help a marker assign candidates to bands accurately. In addition, band descriptors make band scores more meaningful to people (e.g. students themselves) to whom they may be reported (Hughes, 1981:91). For example, Alderson et al. (1995) are against scales which contain only numbers or one word description like 'excellent'. In their place they recommend scales with no more than seven points and accompanied by explicit description of the points. This is the approach taken in this study. Heaton (1988) and Alderson et al. (1995) provide examples of descriptions of levels of performance and bands from UCLES International Examinations in English as a Foreign Language general handbook, 1987 and from Test of English for Educational Purposes, Associated Examining Board, UK 1984. A banding scale of 1-5, based on the CCSE banding scales was prepared (see 4.6.4.3.1 and Appendix, 4.11) to mark the samples of written work (i.e. the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions, see 4.6.4) collected for the purposes of this study.

Traditionally, the marking of writing focused largely on accuracy of form (Underhill, 1987). However, with the advent of communicative teaching (Wilkins, 1976; Munby, 1978; Widdowson, 1978; Brumfit and Johnson, 1979), there has been a move to include other criteria for the assessment of writing skills. The concept of appropriacy amongst others has been added to the existing concept of accuracy. Furthermore, the shift in the perception of language ability (Hymes, 1972; Canale and Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983) broadened this view of language ability to involve a wide range of skills and elements).

The marking scheme presented by the Writing Test Syllabus, for the Certificate in Communicative skills in English (RSA/UCLES) uses the criteria of accuracy, appropriacy, range and complexity to assess candidates performance in writing. In the CCSE (Writing paper), these four aspects of performance are described as follows:

- Accuracy:* how formally “correct” the candidates language needs to be.
- Appropriacy:* how appropriate to the specific context the candidates’ use of language needs to be.
- Range:* how wide a range of language the candidate needs to be able to use.
- Complexity:* how complex a text in terms of structure and organisation the candidate needs to be able to produce (RSA/UCLES, 1990).

The above mentioned criteria form the basis of the marking scheme used in the current study (see Appendix 4.10). The selection and use of these criteria represent a positive approach to evaluation of writing as compared with many traditional approaches which focus narrowly on accuracy. These allow a marker to identify the developing abilities of a writer and to look for strengths as well as weaknesses in their written work. I chose the CCSE criteria because they represent a clear and well tested framework deriving from the communicative approach to assessment of writing. It is based on the work of several researchers in the field e.g. Carroll, (1977, quoted in Morrow, 1979) Morrow, 1979. I also wanted to explore the extent to which a communicative framework for assessment would reveal other characteristics of student writing besides ones of accuracy.

2.4.3.1 Rater Reliability

Finally, the importance of examiner reliability in marking is discussed briefly here. It is important that raters (teachers) concur on the quality of writing produced by students, if marks in writing tests are to be considered fair (Fulcher, 1996). This is essential because the marks awarded by different markers or even by the same marker on different occasions may exhibit variability and thus inconsistency (Davies, 1968; Weir, 1993). The unreliability may arise from one or more of the following. The marking scheme may be ambiguous, and lack explicit agreed criteria; one marker is lenient, another severe; the marking done in great speed. This discrepancy of marking will be reflected in low interrater reliability coefficient, i.e. the estimate of the degree of agreement between different raters. To reduce this potential

unreliability a number of steps can be taken. One is to have more than one assessor. “The inconsistencies in the judgement of one marker can be ironed out by combining judgements of one marker with another” (Underhill, 1987:89) but merely increasing the numbers does not help. Standardisation meetings should be arranged for discussion and agreement amongst examiners for gaining a common understanding of the procedures for marking, the marking criteria and the rating scale to be used. In addition, there should be practice marking for agreement purposes (Alderson et al., 1995). For any marking procedure to be successful standardisation in marking and rater training is absolutely crucial (Hamp-Lyons, 1991; Weir, 1993). In contexts where important decisions are made about student performance on tests, i.e. high stakes testing contexts like Bangladesh (where examinations are used to screen students for higher education), it is particularly important to take steps to bring about uniformity and consistency in standards of marking.

2.5 Summary

The first section of this chapter (2.2) has summarised a number of related studies on the process of composing and text analysis. This review of research has revealed that the stages of generation of ideas, planning, drafting, reviewing and revision are more important determinants in making successful writers than mere factors of linguistic competence. In addition, recent research provides insights into the textual organisation of different kinds of text, raising awareness about the varied discourse communities, academic contexts and patterns of texts. Section two (2.3) has identified the main trends in pedagogic approaches to the development of writing skills. The traditional product approach mainly stressed discrete grammar items and controlled writing tasks; whereas the process approach emphasises meaningful multiple drafts. The genre approach focuses on the discourse organisation of texts.

Current pedagogy strives for a judicious blend of all the above. Studies of the implementation of the process approach have also been outlined to draw attention to implications of borrowing such approaches for local contexts. Finally, the third section (2.4) has discussed dimensions of methodology, i.e. teacher roles, feedback, and marking of written work.

This chapter is one of the two chapters which provide the theoretical framework for the evaluation study. In this chapter I have elaborated upon the theoretical constructs, pedagogical principles, and the practice of writing. The six broad categories of the analytic marking scheme used in this study have been selected from Raimes' (1983b) list of characteristics of good writing. The criteria of 'accuracy', 'appropriacy', 'complexity' and 'range' presented in the Certificates of Communicative Skills in English (CCSE) Writing Test have been adopted for the sub-categories of this marking scheme. Part of Flower and Hayes' cognitive model (1980) has been used for justifying the use of two categories in the questionnaires.

On the basis of discussion in this chapter the implications of these aspects will be examined in chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. For example, in chapter 5 it will be seen which characteristics of skilled writers were encouraged by the teachers in this study, in their classroom practices; also which roles were performed by teachers and whether these adhered to traditional or redefined roles; what kind of feedback/error correction was offered to students. Chapter 7 will demonstrate the extent to which the Writing Tasks administered to the students in this study reveal which essential features of writing (e.g. grammar, mechanics) need to be focused on and deserve special attention. In addition, it will examine whether an analytic marking scheme provides a more comprehensive picture of students' strengths and weaknesses in writing (see 7.4) than a holistic one. Chapter 8, will consider what methodological features to recommend as practical suggestions for Bangladeshi college learners for developing their writing skills. The recommendations will be based on findings from a study of students' needs, problems and different perspectives gathered on the syllabus and

textbook as discussed in chapters 5, 6 and 7. The next chapter provides a review of the evaluation literature in order to provide the framework for the evaluation design of the study.

CHAPTER 3

Approaches to Curriculum Evaluation: An Overview

3.1 Introduction

This research is about writing and the development of writing skills at the HSC level in Bangladesh. It is also an evaluation of the writing programme, the current practices, perceptions and beliefs about writing in this particular context, and for this latter reason, it becomes important to incorporate a chapter on evaluation which gives an overview of the principles and practice of evaluations.

Evaluation is the principled and systematic collection of information for purposes of decision making about the worth of something (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1992, Rea-Dickins, 1998). Interest in evaluation has risen dramatically over the past decade because of growing concerns with improvement and quality control in education. In fact, evaluation has become of increasing importance due to demands for “accountability”, “cost effectiveness”, “quality assurance” and “development” (Murphy, 1985). It has currently become an indispensable and integral part of the curriculum as the present educational climate presses for results of explicit outcomes and achievement of aims. Evaluation serves as an effective tool to meet these mounting pressures.

In Bangladesh there is a lack of an evaluation culture, and there is sparse documentation of evaluation activities. Since evaluations are necessary to impart useful information about the quality or impact of specific aspects of a curriculum and also because they “stimulate learning and understanding” (Rea-Dickins, 1998), this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the HSC writing syllabus. Moreover, it is time that an awareness is created about the importance of evaluation in educational practice in Bangladesh.

The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the main models, approaches and some paradigmatic choices involved in evaluation. The second

section reviews a selected number of ELT evaluation case studies, to examine the range of practices evident in the applied linguistic literature. These together form the basis of informing the design of the present evaluation study.

3.2 Overview of Approaches in Educational Evaluation

3.2.1 Evaluation Models

Some researchers talk about models and approaches interchangeably. In fact evaluation designs have also tended to be called models as they reflect a particular evaluation approach.

Models are also perceived to be frameworks for conducting evaluations as they represent theories of knowledge; they are heuristic devices for planning and organising evaluation and abstract formulation for the analysis of evaluation (Norris, 1990:112).

This section will highlight some key approaches which have been influential in determining evaluation practice. Since the 1960's a number of models have appeared on the evaluation scene. It is quite difficult to draw a strict demarcation line between these different evaluation approaches because some features seem to overlap. Four classes of educational evaluation models will be briefly reviewed in this section:

- i Goal attainment
- ii Judgmental
- iii Decision facilitation
- iv Naturalistic.

3.2.1.1 Goal Attainment Model

The earliest evaluation models were objectives driven (Worthen and Sanders, 1987) and conceived of evaluation "chiefly as the determination of the degree to which an instructional programme's goals were achieved" (Popham, 1975:24). Tyler (1949) was the main proponent of this approach, and associated evaluation with the assessment of learning outcomes in relation to predefined objectives. For Tyler,

evaluation was essentially the “process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are realised by the program of curriculum instruction” (Tyler, 1949:105 cited in Norris, 1990).

While Tyler’s (1949) emphasis was only on the actual realisation of goals and objectives, Cronbach (1963) raised additional dimensions of evaluation. For Cronbach, evaluation was seen as “the collection and use of information to make decisions about educational programmes” (1963: 672). He emphasised decision making as the main concern of evaluation, with particular regard to course improvement, decision about individuals and administrative regulation. Worthen and Sanders (1973) also viewed evaluation along similar lines, i.e. with a strong decision making focus. They suggested that the major aim of evaluation was:

to ascertain the effects of the project, document the circumstances, in which they occur, and present this information in a form which will help educational decision makers to evaluate the likely consequences of adapting the programme (1973:88).

Metfessel and Michael (1967, cited in Popham, 1975:26) also provide an example of a goal attainment model of evaluation, which outlines criteria such as broad goals and specific objectives, and the development of measurement instruments (e.g. tests) which can be used to determine the goal attainment of an educational programme.

The goal attainment model highlights accountability as the main purpose of evaluation. This type of evaluation is usually summative in nature and carried out at the end of a programme. The main objective is to find whether a given programme is yielding worthy results, or not, in order to make decisions regarding the programme. In addition, these may be defined as product evaluation models associated with the conventions of experimental design as I explain below.

Research in both the social sciences and education has been characterised by a number of styles derived from two fundamentally different perspectives:

- (i) the positivist approach
- (ii) naturalistic approach.

The positivistic approach exhibits the traditional and experimental approach to evaluation and uses experimental and quasi-experimental research designs (Cook and Cambell, 1979, cited in Lynch, 1996). In a true experimental approach to evaluation, students are randomly assigned to either the program of interest or to a 'control' condition, such as an alternative program. The program students are then compared with the control students, usually by testing them for achievement gains in order to decide if the program is having the desired effect, i.e. its students are outperforming the control students (Lynch, 1996:13). In quasi-experimental approaches the evaluation areas are not randomly selected and often have not been randomly assigned to treatment conditions. Compared to true experimental designs, quasi-experimental ones are more flexible, and show greater potential for generalizability of results in realistic day to day environments (Anderson et al., 1973, cited in Lynch, 1996). Usually quantitative data which lends itself to statistical analysis e.g. test scores, student ranking within their class is generally used for such designs. Earlier evaluation studies, both in education and English language education (see Bangalore Evaluation 3.4.2), tended to use experimental approaches in which the main emphasis was on outcomes and the degree to which pre-specified instructional goals had been achieved. (For a discussion on naturalistic approaches see 3.2.1.4 below).

3.2.1.2 Judgmental Model

The approach taken by Stake (1967) and Scriven (1972) can best be described as examples of the judgmental schemes of evaluation. In this approach there is a noticeable shift from product to process oriented approaches. Stake and Scriven stress that evaluation procedures could be utilised to facilitate curriculum changes and development. It should be noted that in the earlier 'goal attainment models', the development aspect was not focused upon. Stake's (1967) "countenance model" focuses on what actually happens in the programme and the judgements of people concerned. Stake's conception of evaluation emphasises two chief operations, i.e.

descriptions and judgement. He recommends that the judgmental criteria used in educational evaluations be explicated as clearly as possible prior to their being employed in actual judgements (Hopkins, 1989). The real pay off in the 'countenance model', of course, is the judged outputs of the program being evaluated (Popham, 1975: 33). However, Stake's model (1975) has been later extended and refined into what is known as the 'responsive model' (see 3.2.1.4). The goal oriented model and the judgmental model overlap to the extent that both aim for meeting objectives for making judgements. Although all evaluations make judgements, these judgemental approaches may be qualitatively different reflecting the different evaluation purposes.

Scriven (1972) proposed a "goal free" model of evaluation where no a 'priori' objectives or goals are stated but everything emerges from the observation of the programme or activity being studied. It will be recalled that this is in contrast with the 'goal attainment model' in which the primary focus is on setting out goals that need to be met. According to Lynch (1996) the 'goal free' model contends that the evaluation should be conducted by someone who is external to the program and does not know the goals of the program because the focus is not on what the program is trying to accomplish but on what is actually happening. He further states that in order to accomplish the task of goal free evaluation the evaluator must rely mainly on observation and interview techniques of data collection. In his view the 'goal free' evaluators are supposed to be less biased in their perceptions of the program and can, perhaps, make greater claims for objectivity. It is a decisively judgmental approach.

3.2.1.3 Decision Facilitation Model

The orientation of such models is that these should serve the purposes of decision makers, and provide them with information. This is similar to the view advocated by Cronbach in 3.2.1.1. The most quoted example of this approach is the Context,

Input, Process and Product evaluation (CIPP) model which is associated with Stufflebeam et al. (1971). The characteristics of the four types of evaluation this model identifies are described below:

- (i) *Context evaluation*, identifying elements of a specific educational setting and discrepancies between what exists now and what is desired to occur.
- (ii) *Input evaluation*, analysing available sources and strategies so as to choose the most appropriate course of action.
- (iii) *Process evaluation*, collecting data about the program and keeping records of its progress.
- (iv) *Product evaluation*, determining the extent to which the programme achieved its stated goals.

At each of these four stages, outcomes are compared to stated objectives and the differences between expected and actual results are reported to decision makers. In this respect it is similar to the goal attainment model discussed in 3.2.1.1 above. This model tries to accommodate both dimensions of evaluation e.g. product and process in contrast with goal attainment models where the focus is exclusively on product or outcomes of the programme.

3.2.1.4 Naturalistic model

One major difference between naturalistic approaches and earlier ones, especially, that of goal attainment, is that the former are ethnographic in their orientation. The emphasis is on observing, describing, interpreting and understanding how events take place in the real world as opposed to laboratory settings. The ethnographic evaluator collects evaluation data by means of observations, interviews, participant observation and journals (see Stake, 1975; Parlett and Hamilton, 1976; Patton, 1980; Miles and Huberman, 1984) and hence, the data is generally qualitative in nature.

Thus, these models are described as qualitative, and stem from the naturalistic or multifaceted approaches to evaluation. Patton (1978) and Guba and Lincoln (1981) echo the responsive views of evaluation coined by Stake (1967). Stake believed that educational evaluation is responsive, if it responds to programme activities, incorporates audience requirements and takes different perspectives into account

while reporting results. Patton (1978) stresses the need to identify decision makers and information users, and to work with both parties in a collaborative way; while Guba and Lincoln (1981) emphasise the role and importance of stakeholders in an evaluation (see also Weiss, 1972 in this connection). Kemmis (1986:26) also points out a novel feature of evaluation. He argues that “evaluation is the process of marshalling information and arguments which enable interested individuals and groups to participate in the critical debate about a specific programme”. The novel point is getting more audiences involved in evaluations to contribute their views towards a programme.

Parlett and Hamilton (1977) have pointed out the shortcomings of the experimental paradigm by arguing that evaluation should be more concerned with description and interpretation than accurate measurement and prediction. In support of their argument, they presented a social anthropological approach called “illuminative evaluation” which embodies humanistic values. Parlett called it a ‘paradigm for people not plants’ (quoted in Norris, 1990). Parlett and Hamilton’s (1976) model called the ‘Illumination model’ is the most discussed naturalistic model and has been influential in the literature. It focuses on multiple audience perspectives and program processes. A variety of data gathering techniques such as observations, interviews, questionnaires, tests and background documentation can be used for conducting evaluation in this approach. The basic tenet of Parlett and Hamilton’s (1976) approach is that decisions were only possible if one had an in-depth understanding of how curricula operate in specific situations. The task of “illuminative evaluation” was to elicit the interactions in and between the instructional system and the learning milieu, (Stenhouse, 1975; McCormick and James, 1983).

Like the previous models, both the responsive model (Stake’s) and the Illuminative model attempt to gather information on the stated goals and objectives of the programme. But the main focus here is on a view of evaluation which involves greater participation of stakeholders and extended and in-depth methods of enquiry.

It has been pointed out that such naturalistic models of evaluation can yield a more meaningful picture of educational undertakings that would not be possible in a more traditional scientific paradigm. Ethnographic evaluators usually have an anthropological orientation to their work and the most common methods of data collection are participant/nonparticipant observation, key informant interviewing, surveys, interaction analysis protocol, archival and demographic collection. Thus, in this approach the ethnographic evaluator uses, as it were, the anthropologists tool kit in attempting to understand educational phenomenon.

As mentioned above in 3.2.1.1, earlier evaluations adopted a positivistic approach focusing on pre-ordained objectives and measurable objectives. Patton (1981:270) contends that there has been a shift from positivist paradigms towards “ a paradigm of choices emphasising multiple methods, alternative approaches and the matching of evaluation methods to specific evaluation situations and questions” (cited in Norris, 1990:51).

Considerable discussion on paradigmatic choices has been generated in the English language programme evaluation literature. Richards and Long (1984) are of the view that experimental design approach is the strongest research design available for foreign language and second language program evaluation. They argue that the design will be further strengthened if internal validity is consolidated by consistent monitoring of classroom practices. But Beretta (1986), Mitchell (1991), Alderson and Beretta (1992) and Lynch (1996) point out the difficulties and limitations of experimental designs. They criticise the experimental and quasi-experimental research approaches as inadequate approaches for FL/L2 programme evaluation even if it takes into account the process dimension of gathering systematic classroom data relating to L2 acquisition theory (as suggested by Long, 1984). They are in favour of multifaceted approach (a term used by Harris, 1990) rather than experimental approach.

Lynch (1996:20), commenting further on the issue of 'paradigm dialogue', states that this issue has moved only one step ahead by "moving from arguing which approach is best to arguing that they can be used together because there are no important differences, to arguing from keeping them separate because of important philosophical differences". Thus the issue of the paradigm dialogue has not been resolved. Lynch, however, feels closer to the pragmatic stance (Howe, 1988, cited in Lynch, 1996:20) which "puts paradigm and method at the service of practice in order to be able to have something rational and convincing to say about the object of inquiry". Lynch suggests combining strategies from both positivistic and naturalistic paradigms, and mixing both kinds of data for more fruitful results.

One dimension of evaluation which is gaining increased importance these days is the developmental dimension of evaluations. Such evaluations are necessary for bringing about educational change and improved performance (see Fullan, 1998). The earlier goal attainment approaches did not focus on this aspect of evaluations. Stenhouse (1975), Hopkins (1988, 1989) and Norris (1990) have emphasised this developmental feature of evaluations to see if targets are realistic and to identify where improvements are needed. Inextricably linked to the development aspect of evaluation is the notion of evaluation for awareness raising. This idea is particularly associated with Stenhouse's work and he highlights especially the developmental and formative feature of evaluations. Formative evaluations usually take place during the course of a programme and have awareness raising goals, focus on teaching processes, and provide information that can be used for developmental purposes. Stenhouse (1975) stressed the relationship between development and evaluation and believed that there could be no curriculum development without teacher development. He "offered a strategy based on the teacher as researcher" (Norris, 1990:47) and his work laid the foundation for the 'awareness raising' purpose of evaluation. The idea is that professionals need to be provided with opportunities to develop an in-depth understanding of the tasks they are involved with in order to contribute to curricular improvement. Evaluation therefore serves to stimulate professional involvement and growth (Rea-Dickins, 1998).

Another issue which is of prime importance in conducting evaluations is the triangulation of evaluation techniques. Triangulation means the collection of data using different instruments and different sources. Data gathered through a single source may not yield satisfactory and valid results. We need to corroborate its accuracy by checking it against other sources (Weir and Roberts, 1994). The evaluator can gather data from program participants of different perspectives e.g. teachers, students, and administrators. Different data gathering techniques such as combining observational field notes with interviews, questionnaires or test results can be employed (Lynch, 1996). Triangulation is supposed to enhance the validity of evaluation designs by collecting data from multiple sources and methods.

3.3 Summary

This first section has surveyed briefly the main approaches in evaluation. In tracing the history of educational evaluation it has provided a short introduction to some of the key models (for details see Patton, 1980, Worthen and Sanders 1987, Alderson and Beretta 1992, Lynch 1996) to acquaint the reader with their design features. The positivistic and naturalistic method available to evaluators (which can be used in specific evaluation activities) have also been outlined. In addition, the importance of achieving triangulation in evaluation studies was also emphasised. In the light of the above discussion it can be seen that there is more than one way to conduct an evaluation, hence evaluators must be acquainted and aware of the different options which are available to them for carrying out their task.

3.4 Evaluation Case Studies: An Overview

This second section attempts a brief overview of six ELT case studies. They are arranged chronologically, and no other priority is involved in this ordering. The thread that unites these studies is that they are recent and well documented case studies of evaluation of language education programmes and most of them are concerned with second and foreign language teaching programmes. The main purpose in presenting these case studies is to survey the main approaches and

procedures involved in doing evaluations in the field of ELT, as these practical examples can provide us with useful insights, tools, clues and information which can be utilised in the evaluation process and applied, in particular, to the evaluation study reported in this thesis.

3.4.1 The Foreign Language Classroom: An Observational Study

Date, author: 1981, Rosamond Mitchell, Brian Parkinson and Richard Johnstone.

Approach: Multifaceted (Judgmental)

Evaluator: External

Purpose:

The main aim was to evaluate current classroom practices in first year French classrooms in Scottish Secondary Schools for curriculum development purposes, i.e. focus on foreign language teaching processes.

Method:

The following procedures were used :

- (i) systematic classroom observation at ten minute intervals with structured schedules.
- (ii) teacher interviews.
- (iii) a ten minute oral achievement test was administered to pupils.

Findings:

- (i) Hardly any communicative use of French in the language classrooms. Most of the observed foreign language activities consisted of repetitive and restricted sets of language elements.
- (ii) Students had not efficiently mastered core structures of the language.
- (iii) Most teachers understood foreign language competence as the sharpening of oral skills which emphasised fluency and structural accuracy and correct pronunciation.
- (iv) A gap existed between current theories about the optimal conditions for foreign language learning in classrooms, and classroom practice observed in the study. A limited pattern of teaching in the classes was observed.

Discussion:

This evaluation was undertaken to produce a descriptive account of current practice in foreign language teaching and to evaluate the same with a view to bringing about improvements in methodology (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1992). In other words, it was undertaken for curriculum development purposes, which also entailed teacher self-development. This study utilised a number of procedures and the triangulation strategy was used. This evaluation was mainly conducted by external evaluators. The study revealed the inadequacies of systematic classroom observation and pointed out that these can only yield a partial account of the teaching process (see 3.5 for discussion).

3.4.2 Evaluation of the Bangalore Project

Date, author: 1985, Alan Beretta and Alan Davies

Approach: Traditional experimental design (Goal attainment)

Evaluator: External

Purposes:

To assess if there was any difference in terms of attainment in English between classes of children who have been taught on the Communicational Teaching Project (CTP) and their peers who have received normal instruction.

Method:

The following procedures were used :

- (i) Six schools were involved. The Control Group followed the structural syllabus while the Experimental Group followed the CTP syllabus.
- (ii) Achievement tests were constructed separately for the two different groups. The Control Group was tested by a structure test and the Experimental Group by a task based test. Proficiency Tests were used which were designed to be neutral across both Control and Experimental Groups.

Findings:

The results showed that the Experimental and Control Groups did significantly better on their own Achievement Tests. There was some evidence to show that the CTP groups performed better on the Proficiency Tests.

Discussion:

This study was designed in the positivistic tradition and adopted a traditional experimental design approach. Neither triangulation was aimed at nor was there any stakeholder involvement. Tests were used as the sole evaluation instrument and as such no process (classroom observations) or qualitative data was gathered. The evaluation relied on only numbers from the test results. The evaluation was product oriented and dealt with the summative dimension only in the sense that the programme had been evaluated many years after it had been set up. Its focus was on the outcomes of the teaching and learning in terms of learner products. Moreover, it failed to provide information regarding areas in which curriculum improvements could be made. It could be argued that by focusing on a range of classroom events and processes a formative evaluation would have produced more fruitful results (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1992). Moreover, as Greenwood (1985) points out more appropriate and illustrative evidence of the materials and methodology used in the CTP was required.

3.4.3 The Independent Evaluation of the Western Isles Bilingual Education Project

Date, author: 1987 (1992), Rosamond Mitchell.

Approach: Multifaceted (Judgmental)

Evaluator: External

Purposes:

The purpose was to evaluate, retrospectively, the impact and effects of a Bilingual (Gaelic-English) Education Programme in Western Isles schools.

Method:

The study used the following data collection instruments:

- (i) systematic classroom observations via structured interview schedule.
- (ii) interviews with teachers and parents .
- (iii) assessment of pupils' spoken and written Gaelic and English proficiency through collection of samples in both languages.

Findings:

- (i) The language assessments provided rich information on the current state of children's bilingual competence and revealed that all the children possessed effective oral communication skills in English and Gaelic was also spoken with varying degrees of fluency.
- (ii) Development in both the languages was observed although it also revealed that greater attention was being paid to English than Gaelic. The evaluation study revealed that what was happening in the primary schools (under study) was in conformity with Bilingual Education Project recommendations and principles.

Discussion:

This was a summative evaluation, and the study focused on the implementation of Bilingual Primary Education. It utilised product (assessment tasks) and process (classroom observations) data and triangulation procedures as the data was collected from a number of informants e.g. teachers, students and parents. The systematic observation schedule was not an effective means of judging the quality of classroom experience because these only helped to give broad indications about the relationship between medium of instruction, curriculum area and teaching learning activity. Since the study was retrospective no baseline data was available and, in this connection, this links with the present study which is also retrospective in a certain sense. The external evaluator in the bilingual programme acted as the expert and there was no stakeholder involvement.

3.4.4 Evaluation of the Brazilian ESP Project.

Date, author: 1988 (1992), Charles Alderson and Mike Scott

Approach: Multifaceted (Decision facilitation)

Evaluator: Insiders and outsiders

Purpose:

The evaluation of the national ESP project in Brazilian Universities was undertaken for the purposes of review and to assess if there was value for money (VFM). It also had a developmental focus in its evaluation of the staff development training dimension.

Method:

The following procedures were used:

- (i) questionnaires for students, teachers and subject specialists.
- (ii) interviews with teachers and students.
- (iii) reports of class discussion, both student and teacher reports.
- (iv) statistics on use of the resource centre called Centre for Research, Information and Resources on Reading (CEPRIL) and analysis of materials sent to Cepril.

Findings:

- (i) Teachers and pupils expressed general satisfaction with the teaching materials in use with the project approach to ESP although some aspects of classroom management appeared not to have been entirely satisfactory e.g. presentation of teaching materials.
- (i) Teachers reported there was no opportunity to engage in project related research.
- (ii) The evaluation failed to determine if there was value for money.

Discussion:

This evaluation was undertaken mainly for review purposes. It also had a developmental and policy shaping purpose (see Celani et al. 1988). It was a participatory evaluation, as both insiders and outsiders were involved. The outsider's role in this case was that of consultant, facilitator and collaborator. The data used in the study was both quantitative and qualitative. Triangulation was achieved through different instruments and different types of informants. The evaluation, however, overrelied on perception data, i.e. questionnaires and interviews. No data was gathered as to what really happened in the classrooms.

Since no tests or classroom observations were used, there was lack of data on student learning in terms of both outcomes and process. It is reported that the instruments used in the study had problems. The questionnaires were too long. Some questions were not repeated using the same words or some item was missing; some questions contained information which was uninformative and, it was difficult to interpret some of the open ended questions. These weaknesses are also observed in the piloting and design procedures of this evaluation study.

3.4.5 Evaluation of the Metropolitan East Disadvantaged Schools Programme Professional Development Programme for Primary Teachers, focusing on Teaching Factual Writing.

Date, author: 1990, John Walsh, Jennifer Hammond, Geoff Brindley, and David Nunan

Approach: Multifaceted (Decision facilitation)

Evaluator: External

Purposes:

To provide information to the educational authorities who had funded an innovative in-service Writing Package designed to improve the writing skills of primary students in disadvantaged schools in Australia. The evaluation aimed to investigate both student outcomes and the teaching learning processes. The purpose was to determine value for money and impact.

Method:

Twelve primary schools participated in the evaluation. The main data collection procedures were:

- (i) questionnaires for teachers.
- (ii) interviews with teachers and other key people responsible for shaping, delivering and overseeing the Writing Package.
- (iii) observation of lessons (schedule devised).
- (iv) samples of student writing collected from schools which participated in the package and those which did not (reflecting Control/Experimental elements).

Findings:

- (i) The Writing Package had positive benefits both for the teacher and students.

The objectives of the Package were largely met as it helped to give better direction and guidance to students and enabled them to learn about purpose, structure and development in writing.

- (ii) The assessment of sample texts reflected that students from package schools produced a greater range of factual texts from non-package schools.
- (iii) The impact of the Writing Package on pedagogy was significant. Teachers reported that all aspects of the Package were helpful to them. They emphasised the value of the demonstration lessons as these provided them with practical assistance in the classroom.

Discussion:

This was a funded evaluation for the purposes of determining value for money and impact. The study collected data from multiple sources and triangulation of procedures was used. The study utilised both process (classroom observations) and product (assessment of writing samples) data. A number of written texts were collected and analysed according to a set of criteria. A similar procedure, i.e. analysis of writing samples based on specific criteria, was incorporated into the design of the present study.

The major structural shortcoming of the study stemmed from the fact that the evaluation was not commissioned until the innovation had concluded (this feature also links with the present study) and hence was summative in nature. There was no stakeholder participation and the evaluation relied heavily on the knowledge and commitment of a small number of consultants which is often the case of sponsored evaluation of educational innovations. Most of the teachers surveyed were not involved in decisions made about their school's participation in the Package.

**3.4.6 Syllabus Evaluation: An Evaluation of the Teaching of Structure in
Zambian Grade 8 Classes.**

Date, author: 1990, Lawrence, Lorraine.

Approach: Multifaceted (Naturalistic)

Evaluator: Insiders and outsiders

The main purpose was to evaluate the effectiveness of the classroom implementation of the structure component of the syllabus taught at grade 8 level in Zambian Junior Secondary Schools.

Method:

The following procedures were used:

- (i) proficiency tests were administered to pupils.
- (ii) questionnaire given to a sample of practising teachers.
- (iii) structured classroom observation of structure lessons .
- (iv) structured interviews with teachers .

Findings:

- (i) The level of students' overall proficiency was lower than expected and was not adequate to enable them to function through the medium of English.
- (ii) The structure syllabus did not cater to the actual needs of the students, i.e. learning their school subjects through the medium of English.
- (iii) The methodology adopted by most teachers was in contrast with that advocated by the revised structure syllabus.
- (iv) The findings of the evaluation have implications both for curriculum development and teacher self- development, particularly the importance and need for in-service teacher training programme.

Discussion:

This evaluation was largely formative in nature, and had the potential for curriculum development and teacher self-development, as it pointed out areas where improvements were needed. We do not know, however, whether the information was actually fed into decision making because the evaluation was not commissioned to feed into policy. In this respect, it can be linked with the present study which has not been commissioned either. The study utilised both process (classroom observations) and product (proficiency test) data and triangulation of several procedures was achieved. The descriptive data based approach adopted in the evaluation study helped to provide a better understanding of the classroom practices.

3.5 Discussion

The case studies reviewed above were undertaken for attaining different purposes. Two of the above evaluations commissioned by the Scottish Education Department (SED) (Mitchell et al., 1981 and Mitchell, 1992) were mainly descriptive in character. These two projects documented aspects of classroom contexts and the L2 instructional practice as it operates in schools. They provided accounts of foreign language teachers' instructional practices. There is a lot to learn from such kinds of evaluations as they "contribute significantly to an understanding of the evaluation procedures" (Rea-Dickins, 1994) and they provide "considerable contribution to the description of the range of L2 classroom realities" (Mitchell, 1989: 209).

The systematic observations used for these studies have been criticised. Alderson and Beretta (1992) comment that these systematic procedures represent a significant limitation of the study of the Bilingual Education Project. The procedures used were not a revealing and effective means of judging the quality of classroom experience. For example, "to record that a group of pupils are working for twenty minutes on a practical activity involving Gaelic Language Arts and Environmental Studies say nothing very precise about the educational value of the task. The ORACLE-style Teacher Record did address the quality of classroom interaction (categorising teacher utterances for topic and cognitive level), but in a very limited way" (p.19). Thus, one has to be careful about the design of the observation scheme. The current study's observation scheme was changed twice to ensure a design which would capture all the nuances of classroom interaction and meet the demands of contextual constraints.

Lawrence's (1990) evaluation of the structure component of the Zambian grade 8 syllabus is different from Mitchell et al. (1981) and Mitchell's (1992) study. While the former used systematic classroom observations, Lawrence describes current classroom practices through a comprehensive design which focuses in depth not only on what the teacher did but also on what learners did in the classrooms. Hence, it provided qualitative descriptive data which gave insights into the actual happenings of the classroom.

The current evaluation study shares a number of features with Lawrence's study. It has also used an ethnographic component in the observation of classrooms. Like Lawrence, who used the National Examination results, this study also used part of the Public Examination scripts (HSC English Examination) to analyse the level of the students' performance in English in addition to a Writing Task used for the same purpose. The 'Writing Tasks' along with the 'Public Examination Compositions' were used to examine the English language proficiency level of students and their strengths and weaknesses in different aspects of writing. The aim of the teacher questionnaire was also similar, i.e. to discover teachers' perceptions and opinions on the writing process, learner needs and problems and views on the syllabus and textbook. Lawrence developed the questionnaires in conjunction with a group of teachers. This researcher, however, had no opportunity to do this but would have liked to involve teachers while designing the questionnaires. Joint collaboration of concerned teachers would have contributed to a more fault free questionnaire and, perhaps included questions which have been overlooked.

The study presented in the thesis is also similar to the Walsh et al. (1990) study. Both the studies document writing practices. The Walsh et al. study collected process data on teacher practices and opinions as did the current study. As mentioned earlier, the most striking similarity between these two studies is in the common procedure of collecting a number of written samples of student writing and their analysis according to set criteria.

Finally, the 'Bangalore evaluation' and the evaluation of the 'ESP Brazilian Project' have much to offer to evaluators in general. The 'Bangalore evaluation' is an example of the measurement-based approach to evaluation. It shows the dangers of relying mainly on tests and product outcomes and future evaluators can take lessons from that. That is why the researcher did not tread on those lines and decided to adopt a multi-method perspective via classroom observations, questionnaires, interviews and assessment of written samples. In addition the data was triangulated through different sources. The evaluation of the ESP Brazilian Project brings to the

forefront the important and sensitive issue of who should be involved in evaluations and argues for a participatory evaluation.

These case studies have provided a background, that is, a methodological framework against which the current practice of evaluation in ELT can be more readily understood. They provide a baseline and starting point for those seeking to innovate, evaluate or explore teaching practices. An analysis of the above review also brings many other important issues to light. The case studies reveal that evaluations should be context sensitive, planned, systematic and principled. In the planning stage collection of baseline data should be regarded as an imperative first step. The first stage of an evaluation should involve translating policy questions into evaluation questions and clarifying the purpose of evaluation. The evaluation should ask relevant questions as clear aims and objectives help to make the evaluation focused (Rea-Dickins, 1998). However, sometimes these change overtime and, hence, the need for evaluation to be responsive to changes within a programme.

Decisions also have to be made about the type of evaluation to be conducted. For example, is the evaluation to be formative or summative in dimension? As mentioned above, a summative evaluation of the Bangalore project was undertaken. However, in the end it was diagnosed that a formative evaluation relating to the process of teaching and learning would have yielded more information about that particular project. In addition, the product (outcomes) and process (procedures) dimensions should also be considered in an evaluation. Long (1984) argues for using product and process evaluations in combinations as it helps to determine not only whether a programme worked but also the reasons for it. However, it is important to note that product/process and formative (used for the development of an ongoing activity) and summative (used for the purposes of accountability, value for money and student achievement) reflect different perspectives of evaluation and should be seen as complementary in role.

The next step in an evaluation is to specify its design features followed by data collection procedures and analysis. Since no single design can hope to address the

great diversity of questions that are asked about different programs, evaluators will have to be familiar with and combine different research methodologies. Data should be gathered from a number of sources and methods because triangulation is essential in evaluation designs as it helps to collect information from different perspectives and multiple methods. Both quantitative and qualitative data are needed to get a comprehensive picture of the case or situation under study. Reliance on any one method, (as we saw the Bangalore evaluation only relied on test data) is not desirable because no methodological approach is flawless.

Next to specifying design features, the question of participants, i.e. stakeholder participation is also important. Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1992) are of the view that “ it is important for the users of innovation to be involved in its evaluation”. If possible it is desirable to include all stakeholders e.g. teachers, administrators and specially learners, if evaluations of classroom, courses and curriculum are involved because they are the key participants in the teaching learning situation in the evaluation process. The evaluation of the ‘Writing Package’ (1990) discussed in 3.4.5, revealed that the teachers surveyed had no direct role or participation in the preparation of the Package; they had no say about the duration and time frame of the delivery of the Package or the potential to negotiate the Package. They were totally in the dark about the processes and planning stage of the Package. This distancing did not help as their input would have been immensely valuable in making suggestions. For example, suggestions could have been elicited from teachers regarding an appropriate time frame for the duration of the Package. This lack of communication or deliberate non involvement of participants (in this instance, those associated with the benefits of the Package) with the Project Consultants in evaluation studies should be bridged to achieve sustained and beneficial results. Thus, for better outcomes, effective communication and collaboration between the Project or Programme planners and beneficiaries should be ensured.

The role of evaluators (who evaluates) is no less crucial and sensitive an issue and is an extension of preceding discussion. It has generally been the trend that

evaluations have been carried out by external specialists. These are preferred because they are seen to be bias free, neutral, and objective and, hence, their reports are likely to be reliable and credible than insiders. One question is how effective and useful are external evaluators? They are usually consultants who are not fully aware of the background history and context of a given situation. They are hired by funding agencies and given a brief to work with. On the contrary, insiders are fully aware and more experienced of the situation at home and, are supposed to have more insights into the workings of the programme than any external evaluator who comes for a short stay. Thus, insiders can provide a more detailed understanding of developments of a project than an outsider would gather in a short visit. Some of the above case studies have shown that evaluations undertaken by outsiders do not always yield fruitful outcomes and have been perceived to be threatening and disruptive to the local participants. However, one should not be totally against evaluations conducted by external evaluators, as these specialists serve the purpose of providing guidance, and expertise for training and, more generally, in facilitating the process of evaluation.

It is desirable to integrate both insider and outsider participation as pointed out in the Brazilian ESP Project. Outsiders need to collaborate with insiders to make the evaluation successful. According to Weir and Roberts (1994) an evaluation where both outsiders and insiders are involved may prove more suitable and rewarding because for developmental purposes both external accountability oriented evaluation and internally motivated evaluation is required. Thus, any approach to evaluation should, if possible, be a partnership blend of insiders and outsiders. The final stage of an evaluation consists of translating findings and making them available for decision making or reference in future initiatives.

These evaluation case studies, by shedding light on the design, procedures and limitations of different projects and programmes, provide an overview of the parameters and the main characteristics of evaluation. They offer insights into the

nature of evaluation and provide guidelines for future evaluators to profit from these experiences and thus improve upon earlier practices.

3.6 Defining the Present Evaluation Study

The present evaluation study has not been commissioned by anybody. It has elements of a summative evaluation in that the Writing Programme is being evaluated almost at the end of its term. The evaluation has been undertaken by the researcher for the purposes of review. Such evaluations may be “carried out at any stage of a project’s development by internal reviewers, external agents or both” (Prodess Report, 1995:12).

This study may also be regarded as a baseline evaluation study as it sets out to describe the status quo, i.e. it represents an attempt to gain an overview of the current teaching and learning of writing at the HSC level in Bangladesh. The study documents current pedagogic practice, in the development of writing skills, together with the opinions and beliefs of a range of HSC stakeholders in the HSC writing programme.

The approach towards evaluation is multifaceted, using both qualitative and quantitative data. This evaluation is largely process oriented as it portrays actual happenings of the classrooms although product data in the form of assessment of students’ writing samples is also utilised. Triangulation is achieved through collecting data from a range of audiences e.g. teachers, students, Principals and curriculum developers and from several procedures e.g. questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations and assessment of writing samples.

In terms of insider/outsider perspective, the evaluator is an insider, from the stand point that she knows the context well, and was educated within this local situation. However, she may be considered an outsider from the perspective that she is not directly involved with the programme participants. In this particular case a participatory evaluation was not possible.

It is believed that information gathered from this evaluation will be useful i) to compare and contrast future descriptions of the current programme or revised ones. The findings of the study can thus, function as baseline data and, ii) make recommendations for developmental purposes.

3.7 Summary

In summary of this chapter, the first section (3.2) has acquainted the reader with the main parameters of evaluation by highlighting some major approaches and paradigmatic choices in evaluation. In the process, it has also outlined the main purposes and dimensions for which evaluations may be undertaken. The sub-section (3.4) has provided an overview of six ELT evaluation case studies and through an analysis of these has drawn out the central features and important issues in evaluation. This review has, in turn, helped to shape the focus and methodology of the present study. The main characteristics of this evaluation study have also been outlined. These are taken up for closer focus in the next chapter which presents the specific design features and actual implementation of the evaluation study.

CHAPTER 4

The Evaluation Study

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology of the evaluation study which has as its main objective to investigate the effectiveness of the writing component of the HSC English syllabus and, on this basis, to suggest ways of improving it. A case study approach has been adopted which examines syllabus implementation in two colleges of Dhaka city in Bangladesh with the purpose of providing a detailed description of the status quo, i.e. what actually happens at a specific point in time. The design is multifaceted, combining survey procedures: questionnaires, interviews, and a specially designed Writing Task, alongside an ethnographic style of classroom observation. Information from all these strands has been combined to build an evaluative description of the implementation of the writing syllabus.

The aims of the study are outlined first, followed by a description of the subjects, details of sample size and the research procedures used by the researcher.

4.2 Aims of the Evaluation

The following are the aims of the evaluation:

1. What is the English writing syllabus for HSC students in Bangladesh?
2. How is the development of writing skills perceived and implemented at the HSC level in Bangladesh?
 - a. Students
 - (i) What are the purposes for which students need to write in English?
 - (ii) What are students' perceptions of the writing process?

- (iii) What are students' perceptions of their writing problems and of their perceived and actual strengths and weaknesses in writing?
- b. Teachers and Other Professionals
 - (i) What are the teachers and other professionals perceptions of students' needs and writing problems?
 - (ii) What are the different methods teachers adopt in developing writing skills when following the HSC syllabus?
 - (iii) What views of writing do these methods reflect?
 - (iv) What materials do teachers use to develop writing skills?
 - (v) What are teachers perceptions of the writing process ?
- 3. What are teachers' and other professionals' views of the HSC syllabus and textbook?
- 4. To what extent does the existing HSC English syllabus cater for the needs of the HSC students?
- 5. What recommendations can be made to improve the development of English writing skills within the HSC syllabus ?

This evaluation study, by finding answers to the above questions, seeks to provide a comprehensive picture of the current state of teaching and learning of the writing skills with regard to the writing component of the HSC syllabus, i.e. what is on paper, what is implemented, how it is implemented in class, and where it is felt there is room for improvement.

4.2.1 The Evaluation Framework

The framework below provides an overview of the evaluation study in terms of the evaluation focal points, the range of sources and the methods used.

Table 4.1 The Evaluation Framework

Evaluation Focal points	Methods	Sources
Student Needs, Purposes & Problems	Questionnaires & Interviews	Teachers, Students, Principals, HODS & Curriculum Developers
Perceptions of the Writing Process (TT & SS perspectives)	Questionnaires, Interviews & Classroom Observation	Teachers & Students
Students' Strengths & Weaknesses in Writing	Questionnaires, Interviews, Analysis of Writing Tasks & Examination Compositions	Teachers & Students
Views of Syllabus & Textbook	Questionnaires, Interviews	Teachers, Students, Principals, HODS & Curriculum Developers
Fit between Student Needs & Syllabus	Questionnaires, Interviews	Teachers, Students, Principals, HODS, & Curriculum Developers

HODS = Head of the Departments, TT = Teachers, SS = Students.

The evaluation framework at a glance reveals that the evaluation focal points were arrived at through successive triangulations (see 4.3) of perspectives and methods. Data collected from various sources and by different instruments should, it is anticipated, i) reveal the actual picture in the development of writing skills in the HSC syllabus, ii) identify the match or mismatch between syllabus intentions and classroom practice and iii) suggest appropriate methods of promoting the writing skill.

4.3 Research Design and Methodology

This evaluation study is exploratory and descriptive. The aim of the study is not to emphasise input and output by traditional means of testing. For example, no tests are used to ascertain learner achievement and, as such, it is not a measurement-based evaluation. As already mentioned in 4.1, the investigation style reflects a case study approach. It is regarded as a case study in the sense that it incorporates in-depth classroom research, and examines syllabus implementation in two colleges of Dhaka city in Bangladesh. However, the study has included a survey feature in its use of questionnaires which were circulated to a large sample of the teacher population. In

this regard, its design features have accommodated both depth and breadth. Although only two colleges have been investigated, and the purpose of this evaluation is not to generalise, the findings may be seen as representative of many other colleges in Bangladesh in respect of learner needs teaching practices, perceptions, materials and resources.

Table 4.2 below provides an overview of the research design and methodology of the study

Table 4.2 Research Design and Methodology of the Study

Year	Questionnaires	Classroom Observation	Interviews	Writing Tasks & Examination Compositions
1996 – 1997	Students (240) Teachers (80)	Classes (30) HSC 1=18 HSC 2=12	Students (60) Teachers (10) Principals &HODS (11) Curriculum Developers (8)	Writing Tasks (30) Examination Compositions (10)

Table 4.2 summarises the range of data collection tools and the number of respondents involved in the study. An important feature of this evaluation is the use of triangulation procedures (see 3.2.1.4). In this study triangulation was achieved in two ways: firstly, by using multiple research instruments, i.e. questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations and analyses of Writing Tasks and Examination Compositions; and secondly, by gathering data from different stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the HSC curriculum e.g. teachers, students, principals and curriculum developers (see Rea- Dickins, 1998). The following sections describe in detail the design features of the study.

4.4 Sampling and Subjects

In this section the selection of colleges, the subjects and sample size of the participants in the study is described.

4.4.1 Selection of Colleges

An important decision concerned the selection and number of colleges to be included in the study. A number of factors influenced this. First of all choice of colleges depended mainly on access and communication facilities, but financial constraints and travel costs narrowed the choice still further.

The main study took place in two colleges in the capital city, Dhaka. Two colleges were selected, on the assumption that data collected from two would be more reliable than data collected from just one institution. The main reasons for choosing these two colleges were access facilities, the availability of teachers and distance considerations. I was a student of one of the colleges (college A) during my HSC years and subsequently worked there for 8 years as an English teacher, and this was one of the motivations for selecting that particular college. I knew one of the English teachers at the other college (college B) and this personal contact determined this second choice. Furthermore, these colleges were also chosen on the ground that they are situated within a short distance from each other, which would facilitate the field work involved in this study.

Both these colleges provide co-education facilities and have both female and male students. The medium of instruction in both the colleges is Bengali. College A provides instruction beginning from class V till B.A (Pass) degree. College B offers courses from nursery to degree (B.A) level.

4.4.2 Sample Description and Size

The subjects and sample size of the study are described in this sub section. The defined population, is as follows:

- Students
- Teachers
- Curriculum Developers
- Principals/ Head of Departments (hence forth HODs) of English

These represent the range of stakeholders in the HSC curriculum.

4.4.2.1 Students

Sample Size

(a) Questionnaires were distributed to 240 students (HSC 1=120, HSC 2 =120) and equally distributed across the two colleges:

College A (HSC 1=60)

College A (HSC 2=60)

College B (HSC 1= 60)

College B (HSC 2=60)

(b) Interviews were conducted with 60 students; (HSC 1=30, HSC 2= 30)

College A (HSC I=15)

College A (HSC 2=15)

College B (HSC 1=15)

College B (HSC 2 =15)

As mentioned in 4.3 above, students in HSC 1 and HSC 2 were selected from two different colleges. They were all native speakers of Bengali with a similar educational background. Students participating in the study were between 16 to 18 years of age. All had an average of 10 to 12 years of English at the Higher Secondary level. Students were selected for the study from all three major streams, i.e. Science, Humanities and Commerce. From each year (both colleges), 20 students were chosen from Science, 20 from Humanities, and 20 from Commerce. 50 % of the students in the study were male and 50% of them were female. Students were picked by even roll numbers, for example, roll numbers 2 through 138.

4.4.2.2 Teachers

Sample Size

A total of 130 Questionnaires were distributed randomly to practising teachers of English and of these, 80 teachers (50 female and 30 male), volunteered to complete and return the questionnaires. Interviews were conducted with 10 teachers. The sample size of the interviews is quite small (N=10) as compared to the number of

questionnaires (N=80). The main reason for this is that teachers were uncomfortable with the idea of giving an interview and secondly, they were hard pressed for time.

Like the students, the teachers who participated in the study were all native speakers of Bengali and they were all teachers of English. All of them had B.A (Hons) and an M.A in English literature. 4 teachers teaching at the university had an M.A in ELT/ TESOL/TEFL from abroad; 5 teachers (at the university) had Ph.D. degrees (4 in Literature and 1 in ELT). Table 4.1 presents the profile of teachers who kindly agreed to participate in the study.

Table 4.3 Profile of Teachers Who Participated in the Study (N=80)

a) Academic Qualification

Academic Degree	B.A (HONS)	MA	Ph.D.
No. of Teachers	80 (Literature)	80 Literature = 76 ELT = 4	5 Literature = 4 ELT = 1

b) Teaching Experience

Years of Experience	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	Over 20 years
No. of Teachers	25	9	19	13	14

c) Designation

Rank	Lecturer	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Professor
No. of Teachers	42	21	10	7

From this Table, it can be seen that most teachers who participated in the study have a literature background. Out of 80 teachers, 68 were teaching in colleges (HSC level) and 12 in universities. 70 taught in the main capital city, Dhaka, and the remaining 10 taught in different districts outside the capital. They came from the districts of Barisal, Rangpur, Jamalpur, Khulna, Jhenidah, Jessore, Narsingdhi, Thakurgaon and Comilla (see Appendix 4.1 for names of institutions from which teachers participated).

4.4.2.3 Curriculum Developers

Sample size:

8 Personnel associated with the NCTB were interviewed.

Curriculum developers are defined in this study as personnel who are involved with the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB). The NCTB is responsible for the curriculum development (preparing syllabi), and the printing and supply of all text books for the primary, secondary and higher secondary levels (1.3.4). These personnel were selected on the basis of availability with regard to place and time. 6 of them were currently working with the NCTB (3 senior specialists in English, 1 member of curriculum board, 1 curriculum specialist, 1 editor). The remaining 2 at the time of the interview were working in other institutions. One interviewee was teaching at the Institute of Modern Languages, and at the same time working on his Ph.D., and the other was the ex-consultant of NCTB and was presently working at Bangladesh Open University as ELT advisor.

4.4.2.4 College Principals and Head of English Departments

Sample Size

Interviews with 11 key personnel were conducted (four Principals, one Vice Principal and six Head of the Departments of English including, Dhaka University Chair).

Interviews were conducted with Principals' of Colleges and Heads of the English Department, of Colleges and Universities. Four Principals (one each from colleges where the main study took place) and one Vice Principal was interviewed. Out of these five, three were people who had an MA in English (Literature). The Head of the English Department of Jagannath College, the Dean of Social Sciences, National University, Bangladesh Open University and the current Chairman and two ex Chairmen of English Department, Dhaka University were interviewed.

4.5 Data Collection

This section will provide information on a) the preliminary data collection phase, b) data collection mechanisms, c) piloting and actual implementation, and d) data analysis.

4.5.1 Establishing the Feasibility of the Study

As a preliminary step some colleges, i.e. beyond the two chosen for the main study were visited to establish what was worth examining as well as what was available. It was important to explore such factors as time, money and access, which could have an affect on the design of the evaluation, and other contextual factors e.g. holidays and strikes as well. These visits took place in early March, 1996. The country had just come out of a long political crisis and the educational institutions had reopened after a long closure. Administrators and teachers alike were in a rush to finish syllabi and internal examinations. At this juncture, gaining access to colleges for the purposes of research work was very difficult. I was refused access for piloting my study by three colleges on the grounds that they could not accommodate my research pursuits at the cost of class time and student lessons. This refusal stemmed partly from the political condition of the country and partly from the lack of research culture in the institutions. However, I managed to get access to a few colleges where I had personal contacts and used the same to carry out the trialling phase of my study. Formal letters were issued to these institutions to carry out my research work (see Appendix 4.2 for copy of letter). After informal discussion with some teachers, I knew which documents I would have access to (e.g. English timetable, HSC examination results). I could assess how much time I would have to carry out my work as well as how much time I would require to complete my research. It emerged that the study would have to be carried out in two phases. The first time for HSC 2 and the second time for HSC 1. Moreover, when I went to different colleges to get the feel of the situation it also became clear that it would be futile to attempt to ask Principals to fill in questionnaires, as they had extremely tight schedules and were reluctant to do so. All this information was useful in the planning of the main study. Next, as a preliminary measure, my second step was to carry out a documentary

analysis. All relevant secondary data related to the higher secondary level was collected and reviewed. Furthermore, this initial feasibility survey helped me to organise and plan my work in a constructive way and thus adjust my programme accordingly. Establishing the feasibility of the study is an imperative first step in any evaluation design as it helps to bring out the scope and constraints of the particular context.

4.6 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

For any evaluation to be comprehensive, data needs to be gathered which will not only provide a full account of what has taken place but which will also contribute to an understanding of the reasons behind the practices that affect success (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1992). As mentioned earlier (see 4.3), I used the triangulation strategy and did not confine myself to only one mode of enquiry. In addition, a multi-faceted approach was adopted as it yields data that may be used to cross-validate the various instruments employed in the study and strengthen the validity of the results (see Nunan, 1989; Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1992; Mitchell, 1992; Alderson and Beretta, 1992). Therefore, a variety of methods and sources were utilised in the study. The following data collection tools were used for the evaluation.

- i Questionnaires
- ii Classroom observation
- iii Interviews
- iv Actual samples of student writing; a) Writing Tasks and b) HSC Examination Compositions

The research instruments used for the purpose of the study are discussed below in the order they were used.

4.6.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are widely used in curriculum evaluation studies for a number of purposes. They are regarded as invaluable and indispensable tools for providing

information and assessing both teachers' and learners' understanding of issues, and their attitudes towards the strengths and weaknesses of a particular aspect. In addition, according to Hopkins (1985), questionnaires are easy to administer, quick to fill in and easy to follow up. Moreover, they provide direct comparison of groups, and the data collected is quantifiable and reliable. However, they do have some inherent disadvantages e.g. the unreliability in the interpretation of the questionnaire.

Questionnaires were used for the study as they would enable me to gather a wide range of responses. Initially, it was planned to give questionnaires to all respondents concerned. However, during the exploration stage of initial data collection, it became clear that Principals, HODS, and NCTB officials remained very busy and would have no time to devote to questionnaires. Hence, only 2 questionnaires were designed, one for the teachers and one for the students. The questionnaires underwent several revisions until they achieved their final form. Both Teacher Questionnaires and Student Questionnaires were piloted more than once before they were circulated and distributed for the present study. First, I will describe and discuss the Teacher Questionnaire.

4.6.1.1 Teacher Questionnaires

Teacher Questionnaires were used in collaboration with Classroom Observations and Interviews in this study. In addition to the teachers teaching at college A and B, questionnaires were also distributed to a wider sample of the population (see 4.4.2.2).

4.6.1.1.1 Purpose

The main purpose of the Teacher Questionnaire was to investigate teachers' perceptions of the writing process. It was then hoped to compare these responses with findings obtained from classroom observation and interviews to see the agreement or disparity of perceptions and practice. Teachers were asked to indicate their ideas on the approaches they adopted in teaching writing to students, for instance, on the methods and materials they used in class. An outline of the main content areas explored through the Teacher Questionnaires is given below.

4.6.1.1.2 Content

The Questionnaire was divided into 9 sections. Firstly, background information (e.g. qualification, experience) was sought purely for descriptive purposes and to build a profile of teachers participating in the study (see Table 4.3). Secondly, teachers were asked to indicate and express their opinions regarding students' writing needs and problems, methodologies used in class, their roles as teachers and assessment e.g. modes of error correction and feedback. Thirdly, their views on the syllabus and textbook were elicited. Finally, they were asked to comment on teacher training and to respond to general questions such as problems teachers face in teaching, and to make some suggestions (see Appendix 4.3 for copy of Teacher Questionnaire).

The Teacher Questionnaire had a total of 39 questions, of which 24 were closed and 15 were open questions. In 12 of the closed questions, respondents had to circle either 'yes' or 'no' (e.g. Q. 6 in Appendix 4.3), and in the remaining 12 there was a list of options followed by 'other' to enable respondents to add personal choices or details (e.g. Q. 19 in Appendix 4.3). The 15 open-ended questions asked for teachers' opinions and perceptions and some of them asked for follow-up comments on closed questions (e.g. Q.13 in Appendix 4.3).

Seven categories, i.e. grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, spelling, organisation, expression of ideas, gathering information/ ideas and starting to write form the basis of questions asked in the questionnaires. These were chosen with reference to Flower and Hayes' (1980) model of composing processes and also informed by Bachman's (1990) model of language competence.

In designing the questionnaire, I was influenced by two factors. The first was that I wished to discover what perceptions teachers and students had about the ways in which writing is currently taught in Bangladesh. In order to elicit this information, questions were formulated with a view of what would be understandable to the subjects. Therefore, I could not introduce terms that would be unfamiliar or unclear for them. It was necessary, for example, to use the term 'expression of ideas' as this

is the term used by teachers and students in the context to express the notion of getting one's ideas across, i.e. to be able to communicate effectively in writing. Secondly, to link these categories to contemporary models of language production, soundings were taken from both Flower and Hayes' (1980) model of the writing processes and Bachman's model (1990) of language competence. From Flower and Hayes' (1980) model I used the notion of 'ideas generation' behind the phrased construct for 'starting to write' and 'gathering information and ideas' (in the questionnaires). For instance, If I had used the term 'ideas generation' in the questionnaires it would have been difficult for the respondents (e.g. students) to relate to this new 'terminology', so these were phrased in a way which were comprehensible to the respondents. In terms of Bachman's model (1990) the constituents of grammatical competence e.g. vocabulary, graphology, syntax, cohesion and rhetorical organisation were regarded as a useful organisational tool for the identification of categories of grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, organisation, and spelling in the questionnaires.

4.6.1.1.3 Pilot Testing (May 1996 -November 1996)

On 22nd May 1996, the Teacher Questionnaires were pilot-tested on a group of 5 teachers, and feedback was solicited from friends and colleagues. In the light of feedback obtained, I revised and improved upon the teacher questionnaires and sent them to my supervisor at the University of Warwick, England for her comments. By 20th September 1996, I had finished revising and refining the questionnaires along the lines suggested by my Supervisor. Changes to the Teacher Questionnaires mainly consisted of changes in wording, addition of prompts and choices, the omitting of vague questions and providing of more space for answering open-ended questions. The second phase of trialling started on 24th October 1996. I distributed the questionnaires to 3 teachers of TNT Mohilla college and on 3rd November 1996 to 3 teachers of University Women's Federation college and made further refinements.

4.6.1.1.4 Teacher Questionnaire Administration (November - April 1997)

By 10th November 1996, the revision of the Teacher Questionnaire was complete and it was administered from November 1996 to April 1996. I handled the distribution personally from 13th November 1996, first to teachers of college B and then to teachers of college A. From 14th November 1996 onwards I also distributed questionnaires to teachers in other institutions, some of whom were kind enough to agree to help, although others refused on the ground that they were hard pressed for time. Thanks to the co-operation of the Director of the National Academy for Management (NAEM), I was also able to distribute questionnaires to a group of English teachers from different districts of Bangladesh on a course there. I distributed 15 questionnaires and received 10 completed questionnaires, which enriched my sample.

In general, the most difficult part was getting the completed questionnaires back. Initially I gave the teachers one week's time to finish the questionnaires. Only 3 or 4 teachers finished them within that stipulated time. Most of them took as long as three to four months to return the questionnaire, in spite of frequent reminders. In all I received 80 completed questionnaires of the 130 distributed, but the whole process took from 10th November 1996 to 23rd April 1997.

4.6.1.2 Student Questionnaires

Students questionnaires were distributed to 240 students (HSC 1 and HSC 2) in both colleges. The Student Questionnaire was available in both Bengali and English, and students had the option to respond in either language. The English version was translated into Bengali by a friend of the researcher and subsequently revised by another colleague (see Appendix 4.4B). The reason for translating the questionnaire into Bengali is, firstly, it is of paramount importance that the language of the questionnaire does not act as a barrier to the students' understanding of what is being asked, which in turn relates to the reliability of responses. Secondly, not all the students were at the same level of proficiency in English and hence, it was predicted, some might experience difficulties in the English version.

4.6.1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of distributing Student Questionnaires was to find out student perceptions of the writing process e.g. to discover the methodology used by teachers, the kinds of writing done in class, students' perceptions of their own strengths and weaknesses in writing. Their views on the syllabus and textbook were also elicited.

4.6.1.2.2 Content

The Student Questionnaire was divided into 6 sections, comprising 25 questions (see Appendix 4.4A for a copy of Student Questionnaire). As with the Teacher Questionnaire, the Student Questionnaire was a combination of closed and open-ended questions of which 16 questions were closed and the remaining 9 were open. Out of these, in 8 questions, respondents had to circle yes/no responses (see Q. 21 in Appendix 4.4A). Some of the remaining questions, such as the items in the Teachers' Questionnaires had the 'other' option where respondents could detail their own choices (e.g. Q. 5 in Appendix 4.4 A). The open-ended format required elaboration/support for closed yes/no questions or for student comments (e.g. Questions 12, 19 in Appendix 4.4 A).

Special care was taken to see that the overall questionnaire and the questions on it were short, straightforward and not time consuming. The main reason being that students are not familiar with this kind of questionnaire filling and the length might intimidate them. Hence, the extra caution of not making it too lengthy was taken.

4.6.1.2.3 Pilot Testing (May - November 1996)

The Student Questionnaires also went through the phases of extensive trialling and testing. Piloting took place between May-November 1996. The piloting of the Student Questionnaire was done in 3 phases. The first phase started on 7th May 1996 in B.A.F Shaheen college, Kurmitola, with trialling on a class of 50 students (including some from the 3 major streams). Students were given 40 minutes in which to complete the questionnaire, i.e. within the time allocation of a regular English language class period. 99% students answered the questionnaire in Bengali.

After the class, a short discussion was held with the students to find out which questions posed difficulties in comprehension or format. As listed below, a number of changes mostly in wording and rubric were made after the first trialling. The following were attended to.

- the Student Questionnaire was made more familiar and friendlier by making it easier and the language less difficult.
- some questions which were totally incomprehensible to students were dropped. For example, they were not asked to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the syllabus.
- some questions were rewritten in order to make them clearer and less ambiguous.
- additional prompts were added to some questions (e.g. the prompt 'lack of confidence' to question 7 and 'use a dictionary ' to question 24 in Appendix 4.4A)
- some students pointed out that a middle category like 'satisfactory' should be on the rating scale and this was added (see Q. 9 in Appendix 4.4A).
- printing mistakes were detected and corrected.

As usual, after the first phase of trialling, revisions and additions were made to the Student Questionnaire. At that point, the questionnaire was mailed to my Supervisor for her comments and further improvements were subsequently made. The second phase of trialling was done in two institutions. Questionnaires were distributed to students of 'University Women's Federation college on 24th October 1996, in one class period, and collected the same day. An informal discussion was also held with the students to discover ambiguities, lack of clarity, and other potential sources of unreliability in the questions. On 9th November 1996, the Student Questionnaire was further pilot tested on a group of students (21) who had just taken the HSC examination and were enrolled in a General English (48 hour) course at the British Council Teaching Centre at Dhaka. This piloting was followed by an informal discussion with students to improve the Student Questionnaires further. After these

several phases of piloting, i.e. 3 draftings, final revisions were made and the Student Questionnaires were photocopied for the main study.

4.6.1.2.4 Student Questionnaire Administration (November 1996 - February 1997)

Questionnaires were given to HSC 2 students first, because it was the end of their term and they would soon not be available because they would begin preparing for the HSC (public) examination. The fully revised Questionnaires were distributed to 120 HSC 2 students of college A and B on 13th and 16th November 1996 and to 120 HSC 1 students of both colleges on 11th January and 1st February 1997 respectively. Ten minutes were spent explaining the purpose and content of the questionnaires, while one English teacher of the institution helped the researcher distribute and collect these. The respondents finished completing the questionnaire within the class period (i.e. 40 minutes), and their roll numbers were noted down as these same students would be interviewed. They were also notified of the date of their interview on the same day. In this sample it was also observed that 99% students in both colleges chose to complete the Bengali version of the questionnaire.

4.6.1.2.5 Data Analysis

Teacher and student questionnaires were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to compute the frequency counts and percentages for questions. Before data entry into SPSS considerable time was spent making appropriate and global categories for data analysis. The categorisation process for the open ended questions was lengthy, and was carried out throughout the month of June 1997. These were drawn up by the researcher and were presented to colleagues for discussion and feedback over an informal meeting. Some categories were found to be redundant, and hence, dropped and according to suggestions some were collapsed for brevity purposes.

4.6.2 Classroom Observations

In this subsection, the procedures for classroom observations are described. In curriculum implementation studies, classroom observation is considered the heart of the research design because it provides first hand information about the operation of any programme. Many authors (e.g. Fullan and Pomfret, 1977; Mitchell et al., 1981; Shaver, 1983; Frohlich, Spada and Allen, 1985; Spada, 1987; McDonough and Shaw, 1993; Low et al., 1993) have emphasised the importance of classroom observation as the most suitable and appropriate research method for eliciting information about teaching methods as they provide specific information about classroom behaviour. Weir and Roberts (1994) state that observation gives direct data about classroom events on the reality of implementation. They can be used to measure how much a particular programme objective has been met and to gauge participants' expressed perceptions and beliefs.

It has been further pointed out that teachers working in real classroom settings have to be observed for what teachers actually do rather than what they think they do. That is, classroom observations help to reveal the discrepancies between teachers' perceptions of their teaching strategies and what they really do in the classroom (Rea- Dickins and Germaine, 1992). I also believe that classroom observations can contribute much by providing rich descriptions of authentic data. Moreover, experience shows that classroom observations have proved to be successful in drawing out actual pictures of the lessons in action. For example, Lawrence's (1990) study of the Junior Secondary Language syllabus in Zambia used classroom observation as a main data source (see 3.4.6). However, classroom observations are not very easy to conduct because of the 'threatening' nature of the activity itself, especially in contexts where this concept and practice is alien. In addition classroom observations are expensive, time-consuming, and susceptible to many biases e.g. the observer's paradox (see Labov, 1972). Despite these drawbacks classroom observations have been successful instruments in measuring the reality of classroom experiences and are frequently used in evaluation studies.

4.6.2.1 Purpose

In this research classroom observations were used as the means to probe into the real situations of classes, and hence provide a realistic account of the teaching processes. With this aim in view, a classroom observation scheme was developed to investigate the implementation of the writing syllabus in the classroom. The main purpose behind the classroom observation scheme was to see what was practically taking place in the classrooms as opposed to what teachers perceived they were doing. A fundamental problem was to decide on an appropriate observation scheme. Systematic observations, for example, those used by Mitchell et al. (1981), were not adopted, firstly because they are demanding and involve considerable resources and skills, and both of these were scarce in the present case. Secondly, these schemes present theoretical and practical problems (Weir and Roberts, 1994) and are perceived to be more mechanical and rigid, and always do not help in revealing true pictures (see 3.5). In addition, systematic and controlled classroom observations have been criticised as being limiting and restricted as they fail to capture an in-depth picture of the classroom environment (Delamont and Hamilton, 1976; Van Lier, 1978, quoted in Lawrence, 1990). Van Lier (1978) says that ethnographic monitoring can reveal “what is going on in the classroom and why; as well as direction for further decisions about courses of action; and the deeper knowledge of the teacher-learner relationship and its effect on classroom procedures” (1978:68, quoted in Lawrence, 1990).

Thus for the purposes of the present study a responsive and interpretative approach (see 3.2.1.4) based on the work by Parlett and Hamilton (1977) and Allwright (1988a) was adopted towards classroom observation. This study, like Lawrence’s (1990) study (see 3.4.6), attempts an ethnographic description of the classroom. The purpose was to present a more open account of what teachers were doing in the classroom and to provide an overall flavour of classroom happenings.

4.6.2.2 Content

The classroom observation scheme consisted of an observation checklist. This was used in conjunction with field notes. The aim of using these two jointly was to give an overall view of classroom events and to provide a descriptive account of the features which were supposed to have a bearing on syllabus implementation. For example, the pedagogical methods used, modes of error correction and the researcher's global estimate of the whole class proceedings was recorded on paper.

The first section of the observation checklist gathered factual information, (such as name of institution, experience of teacher, class size, class level) for summary descriptive purposes. The checklist itself focused on 23 aspects related to the teaching of writing in class; for instance, the focus of the class, strategies used by the teacher, roles discharged by the teacher, kinds of writing done, focus of correction and revision (see Appendix 4.5 for a copy of the Classroom Observation checklist). Under each aspect, there were a number of items which the researcher had to circle. The last item on each aspect was the 'other' category, where there was space to note additional details observed. The last page was kept for taking field notes.

4.6.2.3 Pilot Testing (May-November 1996)

Like the other instruments, the observation checklist after the first phase of trialling (which took place on 12th May 1996 at BAF Shaheen Kurmitola college) was revised by my Supervisor, and further improvements and refinements were made. Subsequently, the revised classroom observation checklist was trialled on 9th November 1996 at the 'University Women's Federation College'. Later on additional corrections, amendments and final revisions were made.

The fully revised checklist was used (for the main study) to observe HSC 2 classes of both colleges during the month of November, 1996 and HSC 1 classes between January and March. The schedule for the classroom observations is presented in Table 4. 3 below.

Table 4.4 Classroom Observation Schedule

Date	College	HSC Year	No. of Classes
13th November 1996	B	1	2
14th November 1996	B	1	2
17th November 1996	B	1	2
18th November 1996	A	1	2
19th November 1996	A	1	2
20th November 1996	A	1	2
14th January 1997	A	2	3
15th January 1997	A	2	3
20th January 1997	A	2	3
2nd March 1997	B	2	3
3rd March 1997	B	2	3
5th March 1997	B	2	3

Total =30 classes

It can be seen from Table 4.3 above that a total of 30 classes (HSC I=18, HSC 2=12) in both years were observed.

4.6.2.4 The Researcher's Role in Classroom Observations

My involvement in the classroom observation process was as follows. Firstly, at the beginning of the lesson the teacher introduced me to the class. I then seated myself at the back of the class as an external observer and did not participate in the normal proceedings of the class. I tried to make my presence as least threatening as possible by not making eye contact with either the teacher or the students. In fact my status was that of a nonparticipant observer as I did not want to disturb the normal routine and discipline of the class. Moreover, there was no scope to establish a participatory evaluation firstly, because I was not working in these institutions and secondly, I was not sure how the teacher would take it. After the class was over, I asked the teacher to give me some samples of written classroom work.

4.6.2.5 Data Analysis

Data collected from classroom observations was systematically analysed. Responses were classified according to categories in order to see (e.g. variance or similarity) the

pattern in the classes observed. Most of the data was qualitatively processed from the field notes, drawing out the general and specific features of the classes observed. The samples of written work produced by students were scanned to see the types of errors students had committed, as well as to list the modes of error correction employed by the teacher.

4.6.3 Interviews

It was hoped that interviews would shed more light on what participants had expressed in the questionnaires and hence facilitate a clear understanding of the issues under investigation. In addition, it was hoped that data obtained from the interviews, apart from providing a rich source of qualitative data, would be helpful in cross-validating the findings of other methods in the study. The Interviews consisted of both open ended (factual and opinion questions) and closed questions. Special attention was given to the wording of the questions with care taken to frame the questions asked in an unbiased and neutral manner and to avoid leading or embarrassing questions (see Oppenheim, 1966). The interview questions were structured, in that they were prepared in advance and the researcher recorded the answers on the interview response sheet. All the interviews were arranged at least two weeks ahead of the exact date and permission was sought to audio tape them. All interviews were conducted privately.

4.6.3.1 Structured Interview Questions for Teachers

Interviews were carried out with 6 of the observed teachers alongside 4 others. These additional 4 teachers were selected on the basis of availability and their willingness to take part in the interview. The aim of the interviews was to get a more in-depth understanding of teachers' classroom practices by probing further into the issues of writing needs, strengths and weaknesses of student writing, views on methodology, materials, syllabus, textbooks, correction/feedback. Questions regarding significant problems teachers face as well as suggestions to promote writing abilities were elicited (see Appendix 4.6 for copy of structured interview questions for teachers).

4.6.3.2 Structured Interview Questions for Students

The purpose of these interviews for students was to gather information about their reasons for needing to write in English, specific problems in writing, as well as what they regarded as difficult and easy items on the syllabus. Questions on the methodology adopted by teachers was also elicited (see Appendix 4.7). The interview questions for students were translated into Bengali and the interviews were conducted in Bengali. The same students who filled in the questionnaires were asked to respond to interview questions, but only 60 students were selected. These students were chosen on the basis of their willingness to take part in the interviews but care was taken to have an equal number from all the three streams.

4.6.3.3 Structured Interview Questions for Principals and Head of English Departments

The principals and HODS of English were asked some of the same questions as the teachers and curriculum developers. My aim was to compare the views of the different groups of people involved in the teaching learning process. Altogether 19 questions were asked to elicit respondents' opinions about the purposes, needs and problems of students, and their views on the syllabus, textbook, training and staff development activities (see Appendix 4.8 for copy of interview questions).

4.6.3.4 Structured Interview Questions for Curriculum Developers

With similar objectives in mind (as stated in 4.6.3.2 and 4.6.3.3) personnel associated with the NCTB were interviewed. In addition to the common questions e.g. strengths and weaknesses of the syllabus, textbook, with this group, responses to additional questions on syllabus objectives and evaluation activities were sought (see Appendix 4.9).

4.6.3.4.1 Procedures

It was very difficult to get interview appointments with teachers, Principals and curriculum developers, due to their busy time schedule. I made appointments with them well ahead of time but despite that interviews had to be rescheduled because of

their heavy commitments. All interviews except the student interviews were conducted in English.

With regard to teacher interviews, it was originally planned that they would be conducted after observation of lessons and collection of the questionnaires, but this sequence was not possible in the actual field work. The main reason was that teachers took a long time to return the questionnaires and the interview dates were set by them. As a result the interviews took place before the questionnaires were returned and as such the researcher did not have the opportunity to clarify and probe points arising from the questionnaires.

Student interviews were conducted in Bengali, mainly because the researcher did not want to intimidate the students and moreover, she wanted to create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere which would allow students to be at ease. Importantly, as all students cannot speak English well, it was believed that they could articulate their feelings better in their mother tongue.

4.6.3.4.2 Data Analysis

The interviews were used as an exploratory device to gather more information from respondents on various issues. All interviews except student interviews were transcribed. For purposes of analysis, responses were categorised according to focal points, for example, needs, purposes, writing problems, important items on the syllabus, strengths and weaknesses in the syllabus. The data was then arranged under different categories, collated and systematically analysed qualitatively.

4.6.4 Samples of Written Work

Two main kinds of actual writing samples were collected for the study. The first one was a Writing Task prepared by the researcher for the purposes of the study and the second sample was an Examination composition extracted from the HSC (1996) public English examination. In addition specimens of students' written classwork were also collected (see 5.4.6) during the classroom observation sessions.

4.6.4.1 Writing Task

Alongside gathering data from students on their strengths and weaknesses in writing and specific writing problems, via questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations, an additional procedure was incorporated into the design of the study, in the form of a specially designed Writing Task. The inclusion of a Writing Task helped to eliminate the over reliance on perception data as it provided data which could to some extent be objectively assessed, although the assessment of writing is always bound to be subjective to a certain degree. Thus, it was thought that assessment of Writing Tasks would be an extra way of supporting any other evidence gathered from other means, for example, as to the ways in which students writing problems were diagnosed. With this end in view students were given a Writing Task to perform. The purpose of the writing task was to assess:

- (i) strengths and weaknesses in student writing
- (ii) characteristics across a range of performance according to general proficiency levels and to see the variation in writing performance.
- (iii) to inform the basis and guidelines to teachers for a suitable marking scheme for internal examinations.

4.6.4.1.1 Topic Selection

Choice and selection of topic was an important consideration in designing the Writing Task. According to Raimes (1983c: 266) “the great responsibility of the teacher is to select topics on which the students are able to write something. The issue of background knowledge is important. The topic should be appropriate, realistic and feasible”. Bearing in mind the above considerations, a topic was chosen which was familiar and drawn from the students’ own experience. They were asked to write on the following topic: Why have you opted for your chosen subject (Humanities or Science or Commerce group) of study? How do you see this preparing you for your career or later life.

This was considered to be an interesting topic as students could bring in personal information, i.e. background knowledge and create arguments. In addition, the topic

was thought to be realistic and feasible as students had already made their choices of streams, and as such the information or content of the composition was already there. Students were expected to exhibit aspects of vocabulary, organisation, coherence in the building of arguments, i.e. all the elements that make a piece of writing effective (Raimes, 1983b). Instead of a word limit, a time limit of 40 minutes (one class period) was set to see how much of a developed argument students could produce in a given amount of time.

4.6.4.1.2 Pilot Testing (May-November 1996)

The Writing Task went through two phases of trailing. Initially (on 5th May, 1996) students were asked to write on the above topic. During the first trailing phase it was realised that the wording of the task were too difficult for students to comprehend, as students repeatedly asked for clarification of the question and less than half could perform the task. Accordingly, after discussion with colleagues the researcher changed the wordings of the task. For the main study, the students were asked to write in response to the following question: Why have you decided to study Humanities/Science/Commerce? Will it help you in getting a job? Give reasons for your answer.

The second phase of the trailing task took place on 5th November, 1996 at the University Women's Federation college and the Writing Task was piloted on a group of 20 students.

4.6.4.1.3 Writing Task Administration

HSC 2 students of college B and A completed the set Writing Task on 14th and 17th November respectively. HSC 1 students of both colleges did the same Writing Task on 17th January and 12th February. All the students who completed the questionnaire performed the Writing Task which was invigilated by 1 English teacher from each institution. The researcher was also present. The students were able to complete the task in one class period, as planned. A total of 240 Writing Tasks were collected from HSC I and HSC 2 students in both the colleges.

4.6.4.2 Public Examination Composition

As part of the evaluation study and in addition to the Writing Tasks, a total of 60 (Paper I{30}, Paper II{30}) English Public Examination scripts were collected to have more samples of written work. These were gathered in order to have a varied sample of student writing. However, it must be mentioned that respondents for both writing samples were not identical, a limitation of this part of the study (see 9.3.2).

4.6.4.2.1 Procedures

These Public Examination scripts were selected on the basis of marks allotted to them, that is, from the top scoring group, (e.g. 55 and above), those in the middle range (45-55) and those in the lowest scoring group (i.e. 33 and below) students. It is to be noted that these scripts had a numerical grade on them because they had already been marked by an impressionistic (holistic) method of marking.

It was decided to analyse for the purposes of research only ten scripts from paper II. Compositions from paper II were chosen so that a uniform sample of a particular writing task (in this case, the composition) could be established. The topics from which the students had the option to choose in the Public English Examination are given below:

Q. Write an essay on any one of the following; (20)

- a. duties of a student
- b. food for education
- c. uses and abuses of television
- d. rural electrification in Bangladesh
- e. fish cultivation in Bangladesh

The scripts which had the composition “Uses and Abuses of Television” were chosen for analysis because the majority of the students had attempted this essay.

4.6.4.3 Marking Scheme

As mentioned in 1.5.7 at the HSC level, the marking of writing is subjectively carried out by teachers and a holistic approach to marking is adopted. It was

perceived by the researcher that there is a problem with holistic or impressionistic marking as it does not provide a detailed picture of students' abilities (see 2.4.3). Moreover, as argued by Barrit and Stock (1986), a holistic system is less revealing as it provides no windows through which teachers can see and consequently provide feedback. Furthermore as mentioned earlier, Hamp-Lyons points out that a holistic scheme is less useful for ESL learners as it fails to capture the varied performance of their work (see 2.4.3). Therefore, a different kind of marking scheme, i.e. analytic (see 2.4.3) as opposed to the one (holistic) used in the researcher's context was designed for the purposes of the study. It was hoped that an analytic method of marking would provide diagnostic details which would be of use to both teachers and students and therefore this method was used for assessing the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions.

4.6.4.3.1 Assessment Criteria

Thus, in order to gather detailed feedback and in an attempt to improve the reliability of marking, an analytic set of marking criteria were developed. The aims of this detailed marking scheme was mainly to get acquainted with this new form of marking and to explore the extent to which it would be suitable for the research context.

The marking scheme comprised six broad criteria and four sub-criteria. These broad criteria were based on salient features from Raimes' (1983b) components for producing effective writing (see 2.3.2.2). These are presented below:

- Grammar
- Mechanics
- Vocabulary
- Organisation
- Content
- Cohesion

All these categories e.g. grammar, content and organisation were selected because they are core elements. They are operational in a piece of writing and a quality text is

produced through the interplay of all these important aspects of writing. These are well defined categories in terms of i) what is reviewed in the literature and ii) what would be acceptable and workable with teachers and students in the Bangladeshi context, as these criteria have the potential to be intelligible to Bangladeshi teachers. By way of contrast, a category such as 'audience' provided by Raimes (see 2.3.2.2) was not included since there would be difficulty of Bangladeshi teachers to relate to this category. Similar criteria as the above were used by Brown and Bailey (1984) for their assessment scheme for scoring second language writing skills. More recently, White and McGovern (1994) offer the above six criteria as a useful checklist for the assessment of written work.

The objective was to look at the writing samples in all its parts, discretely, and to see how the students performed on these. Each of the broad criteria mentioned above (except mechanics) was assessed in relation to the 4 sub-criteria of accuracy, complexity, range and appropriacy (see 2.4.3), used in the Writing Paper in the Certificates in Communicative Skills in English (CCSE). These were chosen because they relate to the elements of writing ability which one would hope to see developing in students apart from simply the ability to write accurately. For example, 'complexity' reflects the ability to produce an essay with more complex sentences and 'range' suggests that students are expected to use a wide range of vocabulary. All these aspects relate to the successful abilities of a writer. This marking scheme is innovatory in the context of the Bangladeshi system of marking, and represents an experimental dimension to the thesis. The marking scheme used for the study is presented in Appendix 4.10. There is a section for teachers comments on it as well (see 7.3 and Appendix 4.10).

As mentioned in 2.4.3, a banding scale is necessary and useful to award marks or scores and it should be accompanied by a brief description of the various grades of achievement expected to be attained by the student or class. Only a number like '2' or a one word statement like 'excellent' or 'good' is not sufficient as these can be interpreted in different ways by different examiners. Therefore, it is important to

specify each level or number to give specific guidelines to markers. The Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions were graded on a scale from 1-5. A brief description of each scale was also prepared for the purposes of the study. The banding scale was drawn up in relation to a scheme used by teams of examiners assessing scripts for the CCSE writing examination, and drawn from the Degree of Skill criteria as published by the RSA Examinations Board. Added to the Degree of skill is the first item in each band which refers to the degree of task achievement.

One of the reasons for choosing this scale is that these examinations have undergone many years of trialling with revisions to the banding scheme and are tested scales in International examinations. Hence the reliability of these grading scales has been proven over the years of use and revision at Cambridge. In addition, it is a banding scale that has been derived from contemporary ideas about what constitutes text quality. Moreover, in the absence of a locally formulated banding scale and in the light of practical difficulties in trying to set up and trial such a scale, this was thought to be the most appropriate in view of the purpose.

4.6.4.3.2 Pilot Testing (March-June 1997)

As with all the evaluation procedures in this study, the marking scheme went through several phases of trialling. The first phase of piloting was done in November 1996 and the marking scheme was discussed with colleagues for their feedback. The second phase of trialling took place on March 1997. A preliminary assessment of 60 Writing Tasks was done. At that time the marking scheme had 4 criteria (Grammar, Mechanics, Task Achievement and Language Content) instead of the current 6.

After trialling two of these were changed to Vocabulary and Content and two more, i.e. Cohesion and Organisation were added. Initially, the Writing Tasks were assessed out of 20 marks (5 marks for each criteria). However, this scoring scheme was abandoned on the grounds that it did not give a complete picture of student ability, i.e. the range and level of student proficiency in writing. Finally, a banding scale based on the CCSE Degree of Skill was adapted for the purposes of the study. The banding scale is presented in Appendix 4.11. However, it is to be noted that the

marking scheme and the banding scale used in the study could not be piloted on a group of higher secondary level teachers because of time and financial constraints, a limitation on this part of the study (see 9.3.2).

4.6.4.3.3 Procedures

30 Writing Tasks were chosen for the purposes of assessment. These were selected randomly ensuring that both years (HSC 1 and 2) and scripts from all three streams were represented. In addition 10 Examination Compositions were selected for analysis. These 10 were again randomly chosen. The reason for this small number is firstly, time constraints and secondly, the busy schedule of the other two raters.

Three raters were involved in marking and an interrater reliability meeting to assess the similarity and standard of marking was arranged. Establishing interrater reliability is crucial in marking (see 2.4.3.1 and 7.2) to see if the markers have applied the marking scheme properly. If there is too much variation between markers, reliability of marking becomes questionable. “It is essential that each examiner try to match the ‘standard’ all the time” (Alderson et al., 1995:129). Therefore 10 scripts were trialled and compared amongst markers (using the rubric presented in Appendix 4.10 and 4.11) to reach agreement on uniformity of marking. In addition, a detailed discussion was held on the points regarding which discrepancy in the interpretation of the criteria had been perceived and these were resolved.

4.6.4.3.4 Data Analysis

30 Writing Tasks and 10 Examination Compositions were marked by three markers using the study’s marking scheme. Correlations were calculated by using SPSS, first to establish interrater reliability and secondly to examine the relationship between the different categories (e.g. grammar, organisation) of writing (see 7.2 and 7.3). An overall grade for the scripts was also calculated by averaging all the scores and subsequently statistical analysis was conducted. A qualitative analysis of grammatical errors was also undertaken to see what sort of specific problems students faced in ‘grammar’. Grammatical error analysis (7.5) was conducted using

a modified version of Shackle's list (1987). This list was used as a basis because it identified certain common problems faced by speakers of Indian languages for example, word order, number, prepositions and subordinate clauses.

4.7 Summary

In summary, this chapter has presented the design features of a basically exploratory and descriptive evaluation study. The study will not claim that its findings are generalizable in all settings but only that they may be seen as characteristic of other HSC colleges in Bangladesh with regard to e.g. learner needs, perceptions, teaching procedures, materials and resources.

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the teaching and learning of writing skills at the Higher Secondary level. The specific aims have been highlighted in 4.2 and the various data collection instruments and procedures utilised in the study have been described in detail in the foregoing sections (see 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6). The triangulation strategy, the ethnographic component of classroom observation, and the assessment of the writing samples are examples of process data which enrich the design of the study. The next three chapters describe the results of the evaluation study.

CHAPTER 5

The Writing Process: Analysis and Interpretation of Results

5.1 Introduction

This, and the next two chapters, describe and discuss the main findings of the evaluation study. This chapter examines findings about the writing process, i.e. perceptions and practice related to the development of writing skills. It is divided into three sections. The first section (5.2) summarises the results of the teacher questionnaires and interviews in relation to the following research questions:

- What are the different methods teachers adopt in developing writing skills when following the HSC writing syllabus ?
- What views of writing do these methods reflect ?
- What are teachers' perceptions of the writing process ?
- What materials do teachers' use for developing writing skills ?

The second section (5.3) looks at findings on the same issues from the perspective of students and also presents results obtained from student questionnaires and interviews in connection with the following research questions:

- What are students' perceptions of the writing process ?
- What are students' perceptions of their own strengths and weaknesses in writing?

In the third section (5.4), findings from classroom observations are also presented in association with questions addressed in the first section (5.2).

5.2 Perceptions of the Writing Process: Teacher Perspectives

5.2.1 Introduction

Teacher perspectives on the writing process were gathered through questionnaires and interviews. It will be recalled from 4.4.2.2 that questionnaires were collected from 80 teachers and their views were sought on different aspects associated with the

teaching of writing skills. In the questionnaires and interviews teachers were asked for their views on methodology, their roles as teachers, the kinds of material they used and their modes of error correction and feedback. Under the broad heading of methodology, for example, they were requested to identify the main focus and aims in their writing classes and the methods they typically used to teach writing in class. The questionnaire findings in relation to methodology used by teachers for the teaching of writing are presented first.

5.2.2 Methodology for Teaching Writing

The term ‘methodology’, as used in this thesis, encompasses aspects related to teaching, and ‘method’ here does not mean a typical ‘method’ such as ‘total physical response’ or ‘suggestopedia’. Rather, like Richards (1990), I look at method as a technique, or as different activities, tasks or learning experiences chosen by the teacher in their teaching of writing (see 2.4.1). Keeping this definition in mind, teachers were asked about the ways in which they approached the teaching of writing in class. Their responses are summarised in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Teacher Ways of Teaching Writing in Class (N=80)

Category	Responses	(%)
Ask questions	45	20.7
Give outline and make students develop it	41	18.9
Give spoken/written feedback	41	18.9
Write important points on the board	38	17.7
Make a plan on the board	23	10.6
Make students read model texts and write	10	4.6
Make students write paragraphs in groups	9	4.1
Students memorise model texts	4	1.8
None of the above	3	1.4
Other	3	1.4

Results show that ‘asking questions,’ i.e. questions based on the text or topic on which students are asked to write in class such as “what happens in a book fair? ”; “why is the poet sad ?” seem to be the most frequent activity of teachers (20.7%). Other important activities are to provide ‘feedback with spoken/written comments’ on students’ written work (18.9%), ‘making students develop an outline’ (18.9%)

and ‘writing important points on the board’ (17.5%). The rest of the options (as indicated in Table 5.1 above) show negligibly smaller percentages. However, it is important to note that only 1.8% of the total responses show that students memorise model texts whereas, in open questions on the questionnaires, memorising and dependence on rote learning has been identified by respondents in this study as the main strategy for the development of writing skills (see Tables 6.2, 6.7 and 6.3.3.1).

Teachers were also asked to identify their main ‘content’ objectives in their writing classes. Table 5.2 summarises these responses.

Table 5.2 Main Focus of Writing Classes (N=78)

Category	Responses	(%)
Expression of ideas	51	25.5
Grammatical accuracy	43	21.5
Vocabulary	25	12.5
Gathering information/ideas	24	12.0
Spelling	23	11.5
Organisation	17	8.5
Start writing	13	6.5
Paragraphing	04	2.0

From Table 5.2, it is clear that ‘expression of ideas’(25.5%) and ‘grammatical accuracy’ (21.5%) are given priority by teachers. ‘Vocabulary’, ‘gathering information/ideas’ and ‘spelling’ are accorded secondary importance. In addition, it is observed that less than 10% teachers emphasise ‘organisation’ as an important focus of writing classes. ‘Starting to write’ which is associated with generation of ideas in the composing process, is regarded as least important by teachers (see 2.2.1).

One of the assumptions underlying this study is that a traditional approach, i.e. a product approach in which teachers and students concentrate on writing as a finished product is adopted by Bangladeshi teachers in the development of writing skills (see 2.3.1). This assumption would be evidenced in part by a concentration of teachers and learners views on, for example, aspects of accuracy and spelling, whereas a contemporary approach to the development of writing is more likely to look beyond the linguistic elements and take into account issues of creating meaning, fluency and

appropriacy. For this reason, the teacher responses have been classified in Table 5.3 into two groups, i.e. form-focused and meaning-focused groups below. In form-focused instruction learners are encouraged to focus their attention on specific properties of the linguistic code and a conscious effort to achieve grammatical correctness whilst in meaning-focused the effort primarily involves the exchange of meaning (Ellis, 1990).

Table 5.3 Form-Focused and Meaning-Focused Aspects (N=78)

Form-Focused	Responses	(%)	Meaning-Focused	Responses	(%)
Grammar	43	21.5	Expression of ideas	51	25.5
Spelling	23	11.5	Gathering information & ideas	24	12.0
Vocabulary	25	12.5	Starting to write	13	6.5
Organisation	17	8.5			
Paragraphing	4	2.0			
Total	112	56.0	Total	88	44.0

Table 5.3 compares the percentages of responses that were form-focused with those that were meaning-focused. As can be seen, 56% of the responses were form-focused. This lends support to the existing belief that teachers seem to be primarily concerned with linguistic capabilities, as evidenced mainly by a focus on ‘grammar’, ‘spelling’ and ‘vocabulary’. From this, it may be inferred that these are the aspects of language proficiency teachers tend to emphasise in writing classes in this case study. Although the scales tip in favour of form-related aspects, meaning-focused aspects are also perceived to be important.

Moving on to the interview findings, teachers were asked to identify their main aims in teaching writing, i.e. addressing information similar to those presented in Table 5.2. 60% of the interviewees (N=6) mentioned teaching students to ‘write correctly’ as their dominant aim; 30% (N=3) mentioned ‘expressing ideas clearly and appropriately’ to be important. 10% of the respondents considered focusing on ‘vocabulary’ and ‘organisation’ to be important aims. This distribution of responses, again identifies a concern with form as opposed to meaning. However, at the same time it should not be overlooked that 30% of the teachers (N=3) have stressed the

importance of ‘communication of ideas’, i.e. ‘expression of ideas’ which is a very important feature of the contemporary approach to writing (see 2.2.1 and 2.3.2). In addition, teachers expressed a preference for methods which do not generally tie in with teacher fronted classroom methodology. For instance, they advocated use of teaching activities like ‘group discussions’. This, in relation to teacher centred classrooms, may be considered as a typical characteristic of learner centred classrooms. However, it is important to note that the sample size of the interviews was small.

It may be said that findings from interviews on the issue of methodology focus on aspects of ‘accuracy’ which links with a ‘form-focused’ approach to the teaching of writing. This finding is significant in terms of its similarity with the teacher questionnaire, where teachers also stressed the importance of form as opposed to meaning. Thus, the findings elicited from both methods, questionnaires and interviews, bring to light agreement amongst teachers regarding certain methodological beliefs.

5.2.3 The Teachers’ Role in Writing Classes

In a traditional classroom, teachers’ roles are generally fixed (see 2.4.1) and they operate within certain parameters, with teachers usually finding themselves performing set roles. As McArthur (1983: 281) notes, “the teacher does not use new or novel activities and hardly ever improvises, being instead the vehicle for the transmission of an approved body of information by approved means” (see 1.5.5). As such, the teachers’ role is very much fixed and prescribed in what they are going to do or is expected to do. In addition, in traditional classrooms teachers roles are, as Nunan (1991) points out conceived mainly in terms of providing ‘corrective feedback’ (see 2.4.1). In other words, teachers’ roles in traditional classrooms are to a large extent predetermined.

In order to examine what teachers view themselves to be doing in their classes, teachers were given a list of roles, some of which were associated with a learner centred approach and some with a teacher-centred approach. They were asked to

tick the role they perceived themselves to be fulfilling in the classroom. Table 5.4 below set out the roles obtained.

Table 5.4 Teachers' Perception of Role in Teaching Writing (N=78)

Roles	Responses	(%)
Facilitator and guide	45	56.3
Participant in an organised activity	10	12.5
Organiser of a range of activities	8	10.0
Controller of activities	6	7.5
Source, as a language informant	6	7.5
Assessor	3	3.8

Interestingly 56.3% of the respondents describe themselves as performing the role of 'facilitator and guide' whereas only 7.5% of the respondents see themselves in the role of 'controller of activities'; and 3.8% see themselves as 'assessors'. The clustering of responses around the role of 'teacher as facilitator and guide' is significant in terms of indicating a role which is less likely to be evident in a class which is dominated by a lot of teacher talk and teacher centredness. Thus, this finding is interesting, as it runs contrary to the set belief that in traditional classrooms teachers mostly perform the roles of 'controller of activities' or 'assessors'. It is difficult at this point to assess whether teachers really understood the concept behind 'facilitator and guide', or just ticked it because it looked appropriate and attractive. In the interviews teachers were not asked to comment on their roles, so additional data corroborative or otherwise are not available on this issue.

5.2.4 Materials Used in Class

Teachers were asked questions regarding writing materials used in class with two objectives in mind. Firstly, to examine whether teachers' confined themselves to the prescribed textbook or whether they used additional/supplementary materials to help

in the development of writing skills; secondly, to see what received priority in the class the teacher or the materials. In this regard, information was solicited on whether teachers use any additional material in class and, if so, the kind of materials used. On the question of use of additional materials in class, 50% of the respondents (N=76) reported that they use additional materials in class whilst 45% stated they do not. Those who indicated they used additional material were asked to identify the kind of material used. Table 5.5 shows the percentage of different kinds of additional materials used by teachers.

Table 5.5 kinds of Material Used in Addition to Textbook (N=37)

Materials	Responses	(%)
Grammar books	16	43.2
Sample extracts from books	5	13.5
Newspaper cuttings	5	13.5
Pictures/posters	4	10.8
My own grammar sheet	4	10.8
Hand books	1	2.7
Test papers	1	2.7
Story books	1	2.7

Results reveal that ‘grammar books’ were the most popular supplementary material used by teachers. It is observed that nearly 50% of the respondents did not choose to respond to this question. It is difficult to assess why they avoided this question. Perhaps teachers who did not respond are the ones who do not use any material for example, see 5.2.4 where 45% of the teachers said they do not use any supplementary materials.

In the interviews, teachers were also asked about the materials they used for teaching writing. 40% mentioned that they used grammar books for the development of writing skills, which confirms the findings from the questionnaires reported above;

40% reported they use nothing; and 20% mentioned the use of 'Advanced Functional English Books' (books which contain in addition to grammar exercises, model paragraphs, compositions and translation passages). In both questionnaires and interviews, teacher responses showed that grammar books were the most popular material. This again throws light on teachers perceptions about what they think is important and involved in teaching writing. The fondness for grammar books emphasises a central finding, i.e. teachers preoccupation with accuracy related aspects of teaching. Hence, findings from teacher questionnaires and interviews about the use of materials in class appear to be fairly consistent. Next, teacher views about treatment of error correction and feedback are presented.

5.2.5 Error Correction and Feedback

A number of questions pertaining to error correction and feedback were asked, in order to elicit information about the correction of written work, including the focus and the manner of correction. Teachers were also asked to indicate whether they gave written homework to students, whether they corrected it and provided feedback. They were asked about the kind of feedback they provide for students. These questions were put to teachers in order to get a profile of what teachers say they do in matters of error correction and feedback and to compare these later with their actual classroom practices.

About correction of written work in class, a large percentage (75%) of teachers reported that they correct written work in class, whilst 25 % say they do not. Responses were also collected on how teachers correct students work. Table 5.6 below sets out the results.

Table 5.6 Manner of Correction (N=60)

Category	Responses	(%)
Elicit responses from students & discuss errors	33	44.6
Individually correct each student's work	20	27.0
Make students correct each others work	7	9.5
Indicate/underline where mistake is made	7	9.5
Indicate mistakes with symbols	4	5.4
Choose the best written work & read it aloud	3	4.1

Nearly 50% of the respondents state that the most common approach is to elicit responses and discuss errors. Nearly 30% say they individually correct each students' work. It is surprising to note that only 9.5% of the respondents point out that they underline or indicate where mistakes are made on the text whereas samples of classwork showed that this mode is the most common and frequent manner of correction (see 5.4.6). Hence, in this regard there is a mismatch between perceptions and practice. Table 5.7 depicts teacher responses towards the focus of error correction.

Table 5.7 Focus of Error Correction (N=80)

Category	Responses	(%)
Grammatical accuracy	55	43.7
Overall effect	39	31.0
Spelling	20	15.9
Organisation	8	6.3
Vocabulary	3	2.4
Other	1	0.8

Table 5.7 shows teachers' responses towards the 'focus of error correction'. Here it is revealed that 'grammatical accuracy' (43.7%) has the highest frequency. This points out that errors associated with linguistic competence e.g. 'grammar', 'spelling' and 'vocabulary' (43.5% + 15.9% + 2.4 %), totalling 62%, constitute the principal focus of correction work. It is observed that 31% of the teachers attach

importance to the 'overall effect' of a piece of writing, (i.e. content, grammar and mechanics). It is further noted that 'organisation' is not regarded as an important focus for error correction. In addition the findings reveal that 68.8% (N=80) of teachers state that they set homework, whilst 31.3 % report they do not. In terms of correction of homework and providing feedback on written work, it was found that 70% teachers claim they correct homework and provide feedback, with only 18.8% who say they do not do so. However, in the classroom observations there was no evidence of setting homework at all. Again, on this issue, a gap between what teachers profess they do and what they actually do is noted.

Teachers were also asked questions about the different kinds of feedback in order to identify the nature of the feedback provided in class and, subsequently, to see what help this information provided to students. A list of different kinds of feedback was provided and teachers were asked to tick the ones commonly used by them. Table 5.8 summarises the responses obtained.

Table 5.8 Kinds of Feedback (N=56)

Kinds of Feedback	Responses	(%)
Written comments	30	30.6
Marks & Grades	28 + 12	40.8
Verbal comments	19	19.4
Affective comments	9	9.2

From Table 5.8 it can be clearly seen that marks and grades (40.8%) and written comments (30.6%) from teachers constitute the main forms of feedback to students. This is followed by verbal comments (19.4%). However, it can be observed that out of 80 respondents only 56, i.e. 70%, chose to respond to the question on kinds of feedback. It is not clear at this point whether the missing 24 (30%) cases are unfamiliar with feedback and did not understand this part of the question or whether they did not provide their students with any feedback and were thus reluctant to indicate this.

Turning next to the interview data, on the same questions, it was found that 50% of the respondents reported that they correct students' work and 50% mentioned that they provide feedback. Again, the major means of feedback identified were marks, verbal comments and written comments. If we compare the results of the teacher questionnaires and teacher interviews on error correction and feedback, the findings appear to be consistent from both data sources. In summary, the findings suggest there is a major focus on form correction (i.e. linguistic errors), and oral and written feedback (mainly marks and written comments). A brief discussion of the above findings are presented next.

5.2.6 Discussion

To summarise, there seems to have been a considerable amount of agreement amongst teachers concerning their approaches to the teaching of writing, in terms of specifically the methods they use, the aims they set, the roles they project and the means and ways of error correction and feedback.

It can be seen that in matters of methodology teachers project a 'form-focused' view of writing which links with the traditional approach where accuracy is seen to be the corner stone. This emphasis on form essentially ties in with the product approach to writing (see 2.3.1) where form and accuracy are predominant aspects. However, just as it is important to notice that the majority of teachers emphasise 'accuracy' as their main aim, it is encouraging to realise that teachers also appear conscious and aware of the role of meaning and communication (see Table 5.3) and use of activities such as group discussion (see 5.2.2).

As regards teacher roles, the data suggests class teachers do not seem to see themselves strictly in relation to the traditional roles. It is interesting to note that 56.3% of teachers (as revealed in the questionnaires) see themselves in the role of 'facilitator and guide.' They perceive I think that they are moving away from the narrow stereo-typical roles to that of more flexible, broad and open ones, at least theoretically if not practically. In terms of use of additional materials used in class, it was revealed that 50% teachers claim they use additional materials and

the most common kind is grammar books. Use of mainly 'grammar books' again give pointers towards a form-focused methodology.

Regarding error correction, these findings reveal that the overriding concern and main focus of correction work is aimed at grammatical accuracy, i.e. 'grammar' and 'mechanics'. It is important to notice that very little correction work is aimed at 'organisation', as evidenced by what teachers report. In terms of setting homework, teachers also indicated that they do give homework, correct it, and provide feedback on it but in actual practice, as will be seen in the classroom observations, they did not set out any homework (see 5.4.4). Teachers further specified the different kinds of feedback which they generally provide, i.e. mainly written comments/correction and marks.

In summary, I argue here that teachers views on writing seem to be predominantly form-focused. Having had exposure to traditional classrooms and traditional methodology only, they see matters of grammar and accuracy as central and indispensable to the writing process. Hence, their perceptions of the writing process tend to be form-dominated. However, it is encouraging to note that they acknowledge the importance of meaning (e.g. expression of ideas) as well. The next section reports findings from student perspectives on the same issues.

5.3 Perceptions of the Writing Process: Student Perspectives

5.3.1 Introduction

It may be recalled from sections 4.2 and 5.1 that one of the purposes of this study was to investigate i) the views students have on the writing process and ii) their perceptions of their own strengths and weakness in writing. With this end in view, questionnaires were distributed to 240 students. Information was sought on areas such as the methodology used by the teacher, materials used by students, views on how students felt about writing in class, their perception of the difficulties involved in writing, as well as views on private tuition, which is a common feature of the teaching and learning of English in the context (see 1.5.3). With the same objectives

in mind, interviews were carried out with 60 students. Results from the questionnaires are presented first, followed by those from the interviews. I discuss the findings in relation to the methodology for teaching writing first.

5.3.2 Methodology for Teaching Writing

In relation to classroom methodology, students were asked to indicate the ways in which teachers taught writing in class. In Table 5.9 below, I compare the findings between the teacher and student responses on this question.

Table 5.9 Student and Teacher Responses on Ways of Teaching Writing in Class

Categories	Student (N=180)	(%)	Rank	Teacher (N=80)	(%)	Rank
Write important points on the board	110	45.5	1	38	17.7	3
Ask questions	48	19.8	2	45	20.7	1
Give outline and students develop it	35	14.5	3	41	18.9	2
Students memorise model texts	11	4.5	5	04	1.8	5
Use model text for writing	14	5.8	4	10	4.6	4
None of the above	NA			3	1.4	6
Others	NA			3	1.4	6

NA = Not Applicable because students were not asked these questions.

Table 5.9 shows that overall there is a broad agreement between teachers and students about the ways in which writing is taught in class but that there are some differences in the order of importance of the top three choices. Whilst teachers regard ‘asking questions’ and ‘giving an outline’ to be the most frequent activities by which they teach writing, students perceive that ‘writing important points on the board’ and ‘asking questions’ are the most common ways. It is surprising to note that only a negligible percentage (4.5%) of both teachers and students circle the option of ‘memorising model texts,’ as it had been assumed (see 1.5.5) that this is the most common way of handling writing in the research context. Additionally, as teachers and Principals later point out (see Tables 6.2, 6.7, 6.3.3.1 and 6.3.3.4), this was identified as a significant problem.

In the interviews, students were also asked about the sort of help they got from teachers in the development of writing skills, as well as about the kind of help they thought would be useful. The majority of students reported that they thought lectures helped them and that they received specific help in 'grammar'. When their views were probed about what they thought would prove helpful, students mentioned a number of aspects amongst which 'grammar', 'vocabulary', 'spelling' were the dominant ones. This repeated emphasis on 'grammar', 'vocabulary' and 'spelling' seem to be a consistent pattern emerging from many of the data sets reported in this study (see Table 5.3 and 5.7). In addition, they emphasised the importance of correction of written work, teacher discussion of important points in both Bengali and English and regular classroom practice.

5.3.3 Strengths and Weaknesses in Writing

In order to find out students' views about their own writing capabilities and their problems, students were asked to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. In the interviews their opinions were sought on what aspects of writing were considered to be difficult and to indicate areas of weakness. They were also asked to provide their views on private tuition, to find out if difficulties involved in writing prompted them to seek help from the private tutors or whether there were other reasons behind it.

Students' were asked to rate themselves on a five point scale (i.e. very good, good, satisfactory, weak and very weak) on the macro skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. 'Grammar' was added to this list after the initial piloting, as students reported they faced difficulties in 'grammar'. For ease and facilitation in presenting the results, the above mentioned categories have been merged to form three broad groups: 'good', 'satisfactory' and 'weak'. The distribution of responses for this question is shown in Table 5.10 below.

Table 5.10 Student Self-Assessment: Ratings on Language Skills (N=238)

Skills	Good			Satisfactory			Weak		
	%	No.	R	%	No	R	%	No.	R
Speaking	16.2	41	4	31.3	76	3	51.26	122	2
Listening	58.40	139	2	32.73	78	2	8.82	21	5
Reading	59.66	142	1	30.67	73	4	9.66	23	4
Writing	29.83	71	3	39.49	94	1	30.67	73	3
Grammar	10.8	24	5	26.47	63	5	63.86	152	1

R = Rank

It is clear from Table 5.10 that students perceive themselves to be more comfortable with receptive skills, i.e. reading and listening, as opposed to productive skills, i.e. writing and speaking, with 'grammar' hanging as a common and constant source of problem. The overwhelming responses of student ratings on 'grammar' being the most problematic area is consistent with teachers' preoccupation with 'grammar' as evidenced by Tables 5.2, 5.5 and 5.8. However, one wonders 'why' and 'how' accurate is this self- evaluation of their own skills ? And this is an issue which was not explored in this thesis.

Given the focus of this thesis on writing skills, students were then queried about their writing abilities with reference to different aspects of writing. This was considered important in order to get more detailed responses from students. They were asked to identify the least difficult and the most difficult aspect of writing, and to rate themselves on a five point scale ranging from 'very easy', 'easy', 'difficult', 'very difficult' and 'don't know'. The main results, are summarised below.

Table 5.11 Student Ratings on Easy and Difficult Aspects of Writing (N=236)

Aspects	Easy/ Very Easy	%	Difficult/ Very Difficult	%
Expressing ideas	27	10.6	197	83.5
Vocabulary	29	12.3	192	81.4
Grammar	57	24.2	164	69.5
Organisation	83	35.2	147	62.3
Gathering ideas/information	92	39	135	57.2
Starting to write	127	53.8	102	43.2
Spelling	151	64	78	33.1

Table 5.11 clearly pinpoints that ‘expression of ideas’ and ‘vocabulary’ are top rated difficult areas. ‘Grammar’ is again marked by students as a major problem area, in agreement with the findings shown in Table 5.10. ‘Organisation’ and ‘gathering information /ideas’ also present difficulties. It is interesting to note that ‘starting to write’ is considered a difficult activity by nearly half the students, an area which generally receives little attention from teachers (see Table 5.2), and also evidenced by classroom observations (see 5.4.2 and 5.4.4).

Combining the categories further in Table 5.11 into two broad groups of form-focused and meaning-focused, we can see the overall picture (see 5.2.1).

Table 5.12 Form-Focused and Meaning-Focused Aspects (N=236)

Form-Focused	No.	%	Meaning-Focused	No.	%
Grammar	164	69.50	Expressing ideas	197	83.5
Vocabulary	192	81.40	Gathering information/ ideas	135	57.2
Organisation	147	62.3	Starting to write	102	43.2
Spelling	78	33.1	-		
Total	583		Total	434	

The numbers in Table 5.12 show that students perceive they have difficulties with both linguistic and meaning-oriented aspects of writing. To be more exact, form-focused aspects have greater prominence, as evidenced by the high responses in this category. This further corroborates previous results obtained in Table 5.3 and

confirms the tendency of students (like teachers) to reflect on the formal features of the language rather than with aspects that involve semantic processing and activities that facilitate the writing process e.g. ‘starting to write’. Furthermore, what is most striking is that consistently throughout the findings, results show weaknesses in ‘grammar’, ‘expression of ideas’ and ‘vocabulary’.

Next, students were asked to provide information about the two most difficult aspects in writing. Responses are detailed in Table 5.13 below.

Table 5.13 Students’ Views of Two Difficult Aspects of Writing (N=239)

Category	No. of Responses	(%)
Grammar	176	40.8
Vocabulary	107	24.8
Spelling	45	10.4
Organisation	41	9.5
Expression of ideas	26	6.0
Gathering information/ideas	21	4.9
Lack of confidence	7	1.6
Starting to write	6	1.4
Lack of writing practice	2	.5

Table 5.13 shows that the two main difficulties in writing are with ‘grammar’ and ‘vocabulary’. It is important to note that here only 6% of students consider ‘expression of ideas’ as difficult. This finding is significant in bringing to the surface the students’ perceived problems with ‘grammar’ and ‘vocabulary’. Once again the pattern seen in Tables 5.2 and 5.8 is repeated; the form-based categories (grammar, vocabulary and spelling) are reported to be more difficult together, being named by 85%.

Private tuition was explored as this is very much in practice in the Bangladeshi context. It is commonly assumed that the majority of students depend on private tuition for additional help in coping with their English syllabus. This was an open question and students could give their own views. Table 5.14 summarises the results obtained.

Table 5.14 Student Views on Private Tuition (N=239)

Views	No. of Responses (%)	
To improve weak areas	162	67.2
Time is limited in class	21	8.7
For practice purposes	12	5.0
To do well in exams	12	5.0
For getting notes	3	1.2
Not needed	29	12.0

Table 5.14 reveals that the main reason for private lessons is that students consider themselves to be weak in English. In order to remedy their weaknesses, they turn to private tuition. Students' comments in the interviews on the issue of private tuition further strengthen the findings about problems with 'grammar' and 'vocabulary', areas in which they have identified themselves as 'vulnerable'. As will be seen in (6.2), the teachers' views corroborate with those of the students' regarding weaknesses in writing.

In the interviews, students also identified specific problem areas. These are consistent with findings from the teacher and student questionnaires and the interviews. They reported having problems mainly with 'grammar', 'vocabulary', 'spelling' followed by 'inability to express ideas', 'organisation', 'inability to gather information/ideas', 'inability to start writing' and 'mother tongue interference'.

Having specified their particular areas of weakness, students were also asked to comment on those particular aspects of writing where they felt they needed most help. They were told that if they were given the opportunity to learn writing in small groups what would they ask their teacher to teach them. Students stated they needed support in the following areas: 'grammar', 'vocabulary', 'spelling', 'organisation' and 'expressing ideas clearly and appropriately'. Again the prioritising of form-related items is noteworthy. In addition, students felt they needed help in learning to speak in English and this finding correlates with findings from Table 5.10 where students perceived that they were weak in speaking.

It is clear by now that most of these aspects, e.g. 'grammar', 'spelling', 'vocabulary' are the most frequent and recurrent categories which teachers and students have pinpointed as problematic. Responses on enquiry into the issue of private tuition revealed that the majority of students felt that they needed private lessons and a minority stated these were not required. The main reason forwarded behind private tuition was to improve weak areas and findings testify that weak areas are mainly 'grammar' and 'vocabulary'. This has implications for pedagogy. The question to answer is why are students not developing the writing skill in class and why is there a demand for private tuition? (See 8.4.1 and 8.3)

5.3.4 Materials Used in Class

Students' views on the use of writing materials were also examined because it was important to know whether students confined themselves to the prescribed textbook or whether they went beyond this and used extra materials for the development of writing skills. The responses revealed that 78.4% students indicated that they use materials other than the prescribed textbook. Only 21.3% stated that they do not use any supplementary materials. Information was then sought on the kind of additional material used. The most common materials identified were grammar books, (36.6%), notes and guide books (30.7%) and composition books (15.1%). In the interviews, students were not asked particularly about additional and different kind of materials used by them or teachers in class. One point of similarity between students and teachers with regard to materials is in their common interest in the use of 'grammar books' (see Table 5.5). This gives further pointers to a pedagogy which is form- driven.

5.3.5 Writing in Class

In terms of writing in class, it was revealed that the majority of students enjoyed writing in English. Out of 240 respondents 66.4% preferred writing in English since, in their opinion, they enjoyed it. At the other end, 33.2% had contrary views and did not enjoy it. Tables 5.15 and 5.16 illustrate the reasons that students gave behind their enjoyment or dislike of writing in English in class.

Table 5.15 Reasons Behind Enjoying Writing in English (N=160)

Reasons	No. of Responses	(%)
Interested in writing in English	123	72.6
Good at spelling	10	5.9
Can gather ideas/information	10	5.9
Can organise my ideas	8	4.7
Good at English Grammar	8	4.7
Have confidence in my writing	6	3.6
Can find appropriate words	4	2.4

Follow up responses reveal that 72.6% of the respondents believe that their motivation in writing in English was their interest in the language. Table 5.16 below present reasons behind disliking to write in English.

Table 5.16 Reasons Behind Disliking Writing in English (N=86)

Reasons	No. of Responses	(%)
Weak in grammar	47	44.3
Cannot find and use appropriate words	19	17.9
Cannot organise my ideas	17	16.0
Weak at spelling	7	6.6
No confidence on my writing ability	7	6.6
Not interested to learn English	5	4.7
Cannot find information/ideas	4	3.8

Table 5.16 reveals that students do not enjoy writing in English mainly i) because they perceive themselves to be weak in 'grammar', ii) are unable to find and use appropriate words and, iii) are unable to organise their ideas. Their perceptions of their being weak in 'grammar' is identified as the major obstacle behind their dislike of writing in English. Therefore, students perceptions of the writing process are similar to that of teachers' perceptions in the sense that both attribute writing difficulties to matters of linguistic competence.

5.3.6 Discussion

Issues of class work and homework were also investigated, with a view to seeing the amount of time spent in writing, both in class and in home. About writing in class, 51.5% students reported that they were asked to write in class, whereas 48.3% said they do not. This shows there is a half way split in their responses. As regards home work, 45% of the respondents said they get home work and 54.4% said they do not get any homework. Responses show that on issues of homework student and teacher views are in agreement, however, as in the classroom observations there was no evidence of setting out homework.

Findings obtained from both the student questionnaires and interviews in relation to their perceptions about the writing process suggest a view of writing which is form dominated. Firstly, students conceive writing as form driven because they perceive themselves to be deficient in 'grammar' as evidenced by their repeated reference to accuracy related problems (see Tables 5.10 and 5.13). However, at the same time, they admit to their 'inability to express ideas clearly' as a major problem. Students state that they mainly rely on private tuition for making up for their deficiencies in 'grammar', 'vocabulary' and 'expression of ideas'. In addition the data shows that students regard productive skills to be more problematic than receptive skills. They have a positive attitude to writing as the majority of them perceive they are interested in English.

These views have helped to build a profile of student views on writing. In short, student views of writing are that they find writing difficult, face problems with both form-focused and meaning-focused aspects of writing but form-focused aspects of writing are regarded as more problematic. The next section examines the results obtained through classroom observations.

5.4 Perceptions of the Writing Process: Classroom Observation Findings

5.4.1 Introduction

Classroom observations were conducted with six teachers, (four male and two female) and a total of thirty classes were observed (in both HSC 1 and HSC 2).

Each teacher was observed five times. A classroom observation checklist (see Appendix 4.7) was used to observe the writing lessons in these classes. Field notes were also taken by the researcher. Table 5.17 summarises the number of teachers and classes observed in both years in this evaluation study.

Table 5.17 Number of Classes Observed (N=30)

HSC Year	No. of Teachers	Observations/Teacher	No. of Observations
1	6	3	18
2	6 (the same)	2	12

All the six teachers observed had B.A (Hons) and an MA in English Literature. One teacher was highly experienced, with more than twenty years of teaching experience. The rest could be said to be moderately experienced with between eleven to fifteen years of experience. The teachers did not exhibit significant differences in their teaching style except for one teacher who used pre-writing activities to some extent. Table 5.18 profiles the teachers observed.

Table 5.18 Profile of Teachers Observed (N=6)

a) Designation

Rank	Lecturer	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Professor
No. of Teachers	4	2	-	-

b) Academic Qualification

Academic Degree	B.A(Hons) Literature	MA. (Literature)	Ph.D.
No. of Teachers	6	6	-

c) Teaching Experience

Years of Exp.	1 – 5	6-10	11-15	16-20	Over 20
No. of Teachers	-	-	5	-	1

The aim in using classroom observation as an evaluation procedure was to examine the actual practice of teaching writing (see 4.6.2.1). In particular, the methods and materials teachers used, the roles they performed, and modes of error correction/feedback adopted and employed for the development of writing skills were observed. It was hoped that classroom observations would reveal if there were any discrepancies between teachers' perceptions of what they thought they did in class, as evidenced by responses to the questionnaires distributed or in the interviews, and what actually happened in class. Therefore, in addition to general information, like seating arrangements and teaching aids used, the focus of the observation checklist was specific. For example, the checklist enabled the researcher to look for the different strategies teachers employed, the roles they projected, the kinds of writing done in class, the use of materials, modes of error correction and means of feedback.

5.4.2 Methodology for Teaching Writing in Class

In this section the data collected during the observation of writing classes is analysed. These are presented in two phases. I present an overview of a typical pattern of a class and classroom teaching based on my field notes. In the second phase I describe specific aspects of the classes observed.

Typically a class is of forty minutes duration, and the class size varies from hundred to a hundred and twenty students in one class. This is the class size for private colleges. In government colleges the class size may exceed two hundred students. The classrooms are generally small, and desks and benches are arranged in rows for students to sit on. Normally four or more students sit on one bench. Some classrooms have chairs and a small table attached to it. The teacher's lectern is usually placed on a raised platform in front of the class. Behind the teacher's table is the blackboard.

The standard pattern is that when the teacher enters the class, students stand up and greet the teacher. The first two minutes are spent in quietening the students and allowing them to settle. The next four to five minutes are spent taking the roll call.

The teacher then writes the topic/question to be discussed in class on the board and lectures (using both Bengali and English) to the whole class on the topic in hand. Thus, a class or a lesson can be said to be broken down into the following steps; discipline, administration, identification of topic and explanation. During the explanation period the teacher sometimes makes use of the blackboard, as it is the only available aid. Occasionally teachers ask students to do some writing in class and, depending on time; some feedback may be provided. This is, in short, a picture of a typical English writing class.

In the classes observed, by the researcher, after administrative procedures, the teacher identified the topic to be discussed or written about. The teacher talked for approximately seven to ten minutes at the beginning of the class. The teacher asked students to do some written classwork, e.g. a grammar exercise or paragraph writing or question and answers. Students worked individually. Ten to twelve minutes before the bell, the teacher asked students to show their work. Due to time constraints, only a few students were able to hand in their work and accordingly few scripts got checked. Depending on time (usually 5 to 7 minutes), some oral feedback was provided. This was the usual pattern followed in most of the classes observed in the course of this evaluation study.

The classroom observations provided the opportunity to observe the specific strategies employed by the teachers to teach writing in class. These revealed that, in the majority of classes observed (8 classes), teachers listed, verbally, the main points of the lesson. In some of the classes (N=7), teachers used activities such as writing the 'important points on the board'. Again, in a few classes (N=4), one particular teacher asked questions on the topic. For example, if students were asked to write a paragraph on 'A book fair', the teacher reminded the students that a book fair was going on in town and asked them what the stalls looked like, how big the crowd was. On another occasion the same teacher had previously explained the poem 'To Daffodils' by Robert Herrick and followed this up in class by writing some short questions on the poem on the blackboard. The teacher first, asked students to answer the questions orally, and then to write their answers. In another class a different

teacher asked students to write a paragraph on 'Tree Plantation' and gave them verbal hints on what to write as a whole and, more specifically on what to include in the introduction and conclusion .

Observations further revealed that teachers tried to help students with ideas generation, mainly by lecturing or oral listing of the main and relevant points (15 classes), or by asking questions (four classes) on the topic in hand. In two classes, teachers helped students with vocabulary by giving out the meaning of difficult words and phrases. As a case in point, the teacher, when explaining the prose piece 'Reading for Pleasure', explained the meaning of hard words like 'queer' and difficult phrases like 'to be in the swim' in both Bengali and English.

In six of the observed classes, teachers did not use any of the above strategies. That is, they did not support student learning by listing points orally or on the board or by asking questions. In these classes, the teacher either explained a section of a prose piece verbally or gave students a topic without further guidance. They did nothing to help the students with generation of ideas for paragraph or letter writing. They simply wrote the topic on the board and asked students to write. It was observed in twenty eight (28) classes that the predominant interaction model in the classroom is teacher to student and these classes appeared to be mainly teacher fronted. The teacher's role in the writing classes is discussed below.

5.4.3 The Teacher's Role in Writing Classes

Apart from the predominating method, namely the lecture mode tendency, the observations revealed that teachers assumed three main roles. First, the dominant role of teacher that emerged in the writing classes is that of ' teacher as a source, and as a language informant'. For example, the teacher explained all the difficult words in the text and provided information on how to use these words in a sentence. It was observed that the teachers supplied the main points of the topic or question through oral listing or writing them on the board. For instance, if students were doing letter writing the teacher lectured on content points as well as the form of the letter, i.e.

they would explain how to begin the letter, what to write in the body and how to conclude it. Secondly, teachers worked as assessors or judges and corrected students work: circling, underlining and correcting their errors. Lastly, they perceived themselves as ‘controller of activities’. In 3 classes, teachers talked (lectured) for the whole period on different topics e.g. on a section of a prose piece from the textbook. In other words, these 3 classes were completely teacher-fronted classes where the teacher did all the talking and hardly any writing took place. The teacher came, read part of the text and explained it or asked students to make some sentences with some words or to identify prepositions .

5.4.4 Writing in Class

The teachers asked students to do different kinds of writing. The writing was geared to what was on the syllabus in the form of e.g. paragraph, letter, translation, question and answers on literary texts and grammar exercises (see Appendix 1.1). The distribution of the different kinds of writing done in class is shown below in Table 5.19.

Table 5.19 Kinds of Writing Done in Class (N=29)

Paragraph	Letter	Grammar Exercises	Translation	Question & Answers
14 classes	5 classes	5 classes	4 classes	1 class

Observations revealed that ‘paragraphs’ were the focus of fourteen classes, grammar exercises were practised in five classes, and translation was carried out in four classes. In one class students wrote questions and answers on a poem. The teachers asked students to do classwork on a number of varied topics. Table 5.20 below shows the range of different kinds of topics done in class.

Table 5.20 Kinds of Topics Done in Class (N=30)

Paragraph	Letter	Grammar Exercises	Translation	Question & Answers
1. Myself 2. My father 3. My best friend 4. A winter morning 5. How I spent my time yesterday. 6. A journey by train 7. Dangers of smoking 8. Domestic animals of Bangladesh 9. Tree Plantation 10. A tea stall (2) 11. Book fair. 12. My college library 13. Reading	1. Write a letter to your father asking for money to buy winter clothes. 2. Write a letter to your father asking for some money to buy books. 3. Write a letter to your friend to stop smoking. 4. Write a letter to your friend thanking him/her for the birthday present. 5. Write a letter to your friend inviting him /her to your sister's marriage ceremony.	1. Transformation of sentences (textual grammar from the prose piece 'A mother in Manville') Students were asked to make complex, comparative, interrogative, active and positive sentences. 2. Inserting appropriate prepositions 3. Inserting appropriate prepositions (textual grammar from the prose piece 'The Gift of the Magi' by O' Henry). 4. Joining sentences using 'too ' and 'enough'. 5. Using the right form of verb.	1. Three short passages for translation from Bengali to English. 2. Individual sentences for translation from Bengali to English	1. Short questions on the poem 'To Daffodils' by Robert Herrick. a. Why do the daffodils fail to please the poet? b. What is the fate of all earthly objects? c. With what does the poet compare human life ? d. What request does the poet make to the Daffodils? e. What is the mood of the poem 'To Daffodils' ?

The topics presented in Table 5.20 were the subject of written classwork set by teachers and performed by students' during the observed classes. It is also to be noted that these topics and tasks e.g. paragraph writing, grammar exercises are closely related to the examination, and to what is specified in the writing syllabus. This throws light on the fact that the writing syllabus is exam oriented to a large extent, and classroom teaching is geared towards guiding students towards what will be on the HSC examination (see 1.5.7 and 1.5.8).

Moreover, observations revealed that although teaching 'grammar' was the exclusive focus of 5 classes, teachers also highlighted grammar points in rest of the classes. To illustrate two cases in point: i) even when the students were writing answers to

literary questions, the teacher reminded them what tense they ought to use and to be careful with tenses in general, and told them that the phrase 'as if' is always followed by a past verb; ii) again during translation work teachers constantly reminded students what tense to use. Teaching vocabulary was the focus in four classes. For instance, teachers helped students by giving out the meaning of difficult words. 'Organisation' was the focus of two classes. Teachers highlighted the importance of the global organisation of paragraphs and letters. For, example, they explained how to go about the different parts of the letter e.g. salutation, body, ending; emphasised how a paragraph should have one theme. The aims of the instruction seemed to emphasise on rules more than how to generate content. This ties in with one of the characteristics of the traditional product approach to writing where rules and linearity of writing are the predominant characteristics (see 2.3.2).

It was observed that paragraph writing was conducted in eight classes. In one class, the teacher helped students to get started with writing by giving hints and clues. In majority of the classes (twentyeight classes) observed no model text was displayed. Only in two classes models of paragraph and letters were shown (e.g. a paragraph from the prescribed textbook was used as model). Moreover, no homework was given to students in any of the observed classes (N=30).

5.4.5 Materials Used in Class

In all thirty classes observed, with the exception of two classes, no writing textbook was used either by the students or teachers. In these two classes, the class textbook, **Higher Secondary English Selections for the Young** was used. Using this, in one of the two classes for example, the teacher read and explained part of a prose piece called 'Reading for Pleasure' by L.A.G Strong. He discussed the title and the main points of the same piece. He also asked students to underline the phrases and idioms in the essay and read and pointed out the sections where they could find answers to particular questions e.g. what should be the main purpose of reading books, why do people read books at school? And in the other class the same pattern was followed.

In none of the observed writing classes did the teachers use any supplementary material. Typically a teacher came into the class and asked students to either write a paragraph (e.g. told the students 'Write a paragraph on 'A Winter Morning') or a letter, or grammar exercises or explained part of a prose piece. For 'paragraphs and letters', they would typically write the topic on the board. For 'translation' they would either dictate the Bengali passage/sentences or write it on the board. For grammar exercises, the same procedure was followed, that is, the teachers dictated the sentences, or wrote them on the board. The teacher had the passage or grammar exercise written down on a piece of paper. It seemed that teachers did not need any kind of preparation for conducting the class. However, when asked in the questionnaires about what preparation they did in preparing for their lessons, 32.1% said they jot down key points, 27.1% said they prepare an outline, 24.3% said they prepare some questions, 12.9% said they write out a plan and only 2.9% said they do not need any preparation. This level of preparation was not evidenced in the classes observed. Students did their class work either on a piece of paper or in their exercise copies.

5.4.6 Modes of Error Correction

Approximately ten minutes of each class was devoted to correction work but there was no correction work in eight (26%) classes. Table 5.2.1 below presents a brief description of the ways in which teachers attempted to correct errors.

Table 5.21 Modes of Error Correction (N=30)

Mode	No. of Classes
Oral Correction (i) Teachers elicited responses from students and discussed commonly and frequently made errors individually/as a whole class	12
Written Correction (i) Teachers underlined mistakes (ii) Teachers corrected mistakes by substituting it with the right word or sentence. (iii) Teachers indicated where mistake was made (iii) Written comments provided by Teachers e.g. 'good', 'memorised', 'irrelevant'.	10

Table 5.2.1 above shows that out of thirty classes observed, twelve (40 %) classes focused on oral correction, ten classes (33 %) on written correction. No error correction was carried out in the remaining eight classes. For oral correction, the teachers asked the students if they had finished writing, and elicited answers to work done in class e.g. answers to questions or grammar exercises. Teachers would ask students to read out their paragraphs, letters or sentences, and offer oral correction to the individual student, as well as to the whole class in general. Occasionally they would write the correct word or sentence on the board. As regards written correction, teachers individually corrected each student's work and underlined mistakes. In most of the classes they corrected students' work by supplying the right word or tense or spelling. In some classes teachers indicated where the mistake was made. Only a few students turned in their work and about seven or eight copies or sheets were corrected.

The focus of written correction was mainly on grammatical errors (10 classes, 33%), mechanics (10 classes, 33%), vocabulary (2 classes, 6%) and content (1 class, 4%). These findings reveal that in matters of error correction, too, linguistic matters are given top priority for example, 'grammar' and 'mechanics' together (66%) constitute the bulk of the error correction work/feedback. Extracts from the specimens of class

work collected are presented below to demonstrate further the focus of error correction. The words underlined in italics are the corrections made by the teacher.

1. There is/ are a lot of people come to the exhibition and who pass their time nicely. So exhibition is held as an annual event in our country. Some stalls/ stalls are large and some stalls/stalls are small. This/these stall/stalls have varies/various kinds of books. And also their/there are food stall/s and handicrafts/stall of handicrafts. In our country book fair is held every year.

2. I am please/ pleased to know that you are well. I am going on well with my studying/studies. My examination is getting closer now. For this reason I need some extra necessary book/books. So I need some mony/money to buy this/these books. Therefore, I wish that you will give me some mony/money for buy/buying those books.

As can be seen from the samples above the main thrust of correction work is on grammatical errors and mechanics. These examples demonstrate that teachers attend to linguistic errors mainly. In this connection, it may be added that teachers paid more attention to local errors as opposed to global errors (see 2.4.2). In fact this researcher gathered that there was no evidence of teachers correcting errors of 'organisation' or 'cohesion' in the classes observed (see Table 5.7). It is to be recalled that in the questionnaires, teachers were also asked about the focus of correction work (see Table 5.7), and nearly half of the respondents singled out grammatical accuracy. In the classroom observations, also, it was revealed that all six teachers emphasised 'grammar', 'vocabulary', and 'spelling'. Therefore in this regard, there was a direct correlation between teachers perceptions of the importance of form and what they did in reality. All these are important indicators for the role of Bangladeshi teachers as evaluators and assessors, of the importance of the composed product and, thus, of the form-focused view of writing prevalent in the classrooms.

On the issue of feedback, it may be commented that error correction is considered as an important mode in the classes observed, although most of it concerned teacher identification of errors. During the observations, it was brought to light that the

main kind of feedback provided is verbal comments (12 classes), amongst which affective comments indicating praise, encouragement, affection, anger and ridicule were provided in three classes; error correction and written comments in (10 classes). As regards the latter two, teachers wrote comments such as 'memorised' and 'not memorised' on some students' copies, implying that the particular paragraph had been taken from a set of pass notes. One teacher wrote the comment 'good'. Affective comments such as 'it is a shame you cannot even write a paragraph about your parents' were also offered.

In eight classes no feedback was provided. It was further observed that in two classes seven minutes were allocated for feedback and in seven classes five minutes devoted to feedback. This feedback provided was basically summative in nature as it commented on the finished product. No homework was set and no revision work took place in any of the classes observed .

5.4.7 Discussion

The classroom observations have provided a picture of teachers' actual classroom practices. In general, it becomes apparent that traditional patterns of classroom teaching and learning exist in the Bangladeshi higher secondary classrooms. This conclusion has been reached in connection with the following findings.

On issues of methodology, classroom observations showed that the dominant mode of teaching is through lectures. This finding, however, shows a contradiction between results obtained from teacher questionnaires and interviews, where there is no mention of the lecture mode of teaching. In addition, there was no evidence of teachers providing support to students with 'starting to write', or on gathering information and ideas on the topic. In other words strategies of proficient writers , such as ideas generation or planning (except asking a few questions) or revising activities (see 2.2.1), were not encouraged in the classes observed.

In relation to the use of materials to support the writing process, no evidence was gathered that teachers used any additional materials in class. It is to be recalled that, on the questionnaires and in their interviews, teachers stated that they use additional materials in class (see 5.2.4). The textbook was used only in two classes observed. Thus, regarding the teachers' use of additional material in class, there is discrepancy between findings from what teachers profess they do and what they actually do in class. In addition, it also emerges that as aids, teachers used or had access to only the blackboard in the class (because this is what is available). The limited range of materials used shows that no technological equipment was used, and the age old traditional blackboard was the lone resource.

The prevailing teachers' role in the writing classes dominantly seems to be that of teacher as 'source as a language informant', mainly because the teacher delivers all the information through the lectures and serves as the purveyor of knowledge. This finding is not in harmony with findings derived from questionnaires and interviews where teachers mainly perceived themselves as facilitators and guides (see Table, 5.4). The teachers role as 'an assessor' also emerged through modes of error correction, and is quite significant, as it gives pointers to the traditional role where teacher is supposed to evaluate learner performance by acting as a judge of students' work. Teachers in the classrooms exhibited a 'traditional product centred approach' (Caudery, 1996) to writing because they mainly regarded student writing as a product to be assessed by the teacher (see 2.3.1). This role was further heightened and evidenced by modes of error correction.

Regarding error correction, it was revealed that teachers usually prefer oral correction, e.g. as evidenced by asking students to supply verbally the correct form of the verb or the appropriate preposition. For written correction they attempted to correct each student's work individually. As far as individual correction of students' work was concerned, the pattern emerged to be that out of a class of forty minute duration (with 100 students to 120 students) teachers reserve the last eight to ten

minutes for correction work in which they undertake the correction of students' work. During this time they are able to correct only eight to ten exercise copies/sheets of those students who turn in their work. Hence, it appeared that teachers preferred to provide oral correction as opposed to written in order to save on time. Furthermore, observations reveal that the treatment of error types by teachers show that the traditional categories of 'grammar' and 'mechanics' receive the bulk of attention by teachers. Teachers attended to errors of 'vocabulary' and 'content' but the frequency of correction of these errors was much less than those of 'grammar' and 'mechanics'. It was noted that the teacher did not attend to errors of 'organisation' and 'discourse' at all. This finding regarding error treatment also testifies to the focus on form as opposed to meaning in the writing classrooms. In this connection, it may be said that there seems to be a match between the focus of written work in class and the focus of error correction. There also appears to be a perfect fit between teacher perceptions of error correction and actual practice in class. Moreover, the feedback provided in class was basically summative in nature (i.e. on the composed product) and was provided after the writing had been turned in.

In essence, classroom observations have depicted what actually goes on in the classrooms. Because teachers regard 'grammar' as important they emphasise form more than meaning in the writing classes, and also because they focused on linguistic errors more than other errors, it may be said that teachers primarily adopt a product oriented approach to writing. Evidence from classroom observation also suggests that the current methods (mainly lecturing) used by teachers are essentially traditional, although there is slight evidence of awareness about changing methods to some degree (e.g. awareness about group discussion, see 5.2.2). Furthermore, teachers' role in the classroom was observed to be predominantly that of 'source and language informant', 'assessor' and 'controller of activities' (see 5.4.2). The combination of these three roles imply that the teacher is an authority figure and has a set definite position in the classroom where the teacher leads and the students follow.

It is important to emphasise that the purpose of analysis of the classroom observations in this evaluation study is not to make judgements on the quality of teacher performance. The aim is to identify patterns and trends of teaching and learning in general and to pinpoint the match or mismatch between teachers' perceptions of what they think they do and what they really do in their teaching practices.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has examined views on the writing process. The first section (5.2) has examined teacher perceptions of writing. The second section (5.3) has looked at student views on writing and the third section (5.4) has presented the results of classroom observations on the same issues. Teacher perspectives reveal that teachers' views of writing are mainly form-focused and as such these perceptions are influenced by their conception of writing. The methodology applied by teachers is traditional and product focused. Student perspectives indicate that students, too, view writing as form oriented. In diagnosing their own strengths and weaknesses students feel that 'grammar', 'vocabulary' and 'expression of ideas' are weak areas. These findings also bring to light students' problems with both dimensions of writing, i.e. form-focused and meaning-focused. Classroom observations further testify to the traditional environment, methodology, teacher roles, and modes of error treatment prevailing in the classrooms.

Collectively the findings of these analyses point to a pedagogy which is informed by traditional ideas on writing and the data suggest that the development of writing skills is largely controlled by a concentration on form. This raises questions for teachers, whether the focus of classroom instruction should be predominantly on form; whether the ways of error correction adopted and practised in classes prove beneficial in developing students' writing ability, and whether ways in which feedback is currently provided to students is helpful in pointing out their strengths and weaknesses in writing? What kind of support can teachers provide to assist

students in improving their writing skills? Some answers to these questions will be addressed in chapter eight. The next chapter presents the findings on learner needs, and syllabus evaluation.

CHAPTER 6

Learner Needs and Syllabus Evaluation: Analysis and Interpretation of Results

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented results concerned with the writing process. This chapter examines findings with reference to a) learner needs and problems, i.e. problems associated with student writing, and b) evaluation of the HSC writing syllabus.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section presents information in relation to the following research questions:

- What are the purposes for which HSC students need to write in English ?
- What are HSC students' perceptions of their writing problems and of their perceived and actual strengths and weaknesses in writing ?
- What are the perceptions of teachers and other professionals of students' writing problems and needs ?

The second section focuses on findings related to the evaluation of the HSC English syllabus for the development of writing skills in response to the following research questions:

- What is the English writing syllabus for the HSC students in Bangladesh ?
- What are views of teachers, students and other professionals of the writing syllabus and the textbook?
- To what extent does the existing HSC English syllabus cater for the needs of the students?

6.2 Perceptions of Learner Needs and Problems

At the outset it must be mentioned that a clear distinction between needs and problems was not differentiated for the questionnaire and interview respondents and, thus, for the purposes of this research, these have been used interchangeably.

As indicated in earlier chapters (see 1.5.1), the learners are students in the age group 16-18 who are studying at the higher secondary level (pre-university). The English language needs of these learners were investigated from a number of sources, i.e. from the learners themselves, teachers of English, college Principals and Heads of English Departments, and curriculum developers. Questionnaires and interviews were used to discover what were considered to be important needs for the development of writing skills and also to identify the problems learners faced with particular regard to writing.

6.2.1 Teacher Perspectives

Teacher perspectives of learner needs were elicited through questionnaires and interviews. In the questionnaire, one closed question and one open question sought to elicit information on what were considered to be the most important needs. Firstly, teachers were asked to rank in order of importance the three main writing needs of students. The findings are summarised below in Table 6.1.

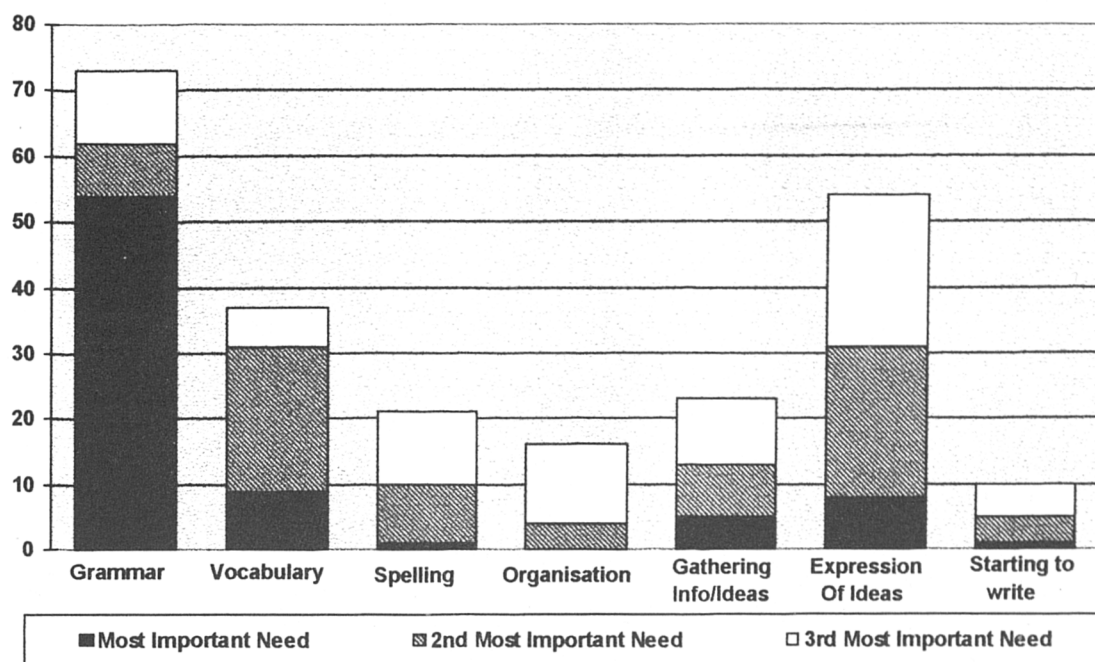
Table 6.1 Teacher Ranking of Student Needs (N=80)

Category	Most Important Needs			Total *	Rank
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd		
Grammar	54	8	11	73	1
Expression of ideas	8	23	23	54	2
Vocabulary	9	22	6	37	3
Gathering information & ideas	5	8	10	23	4
Spelling	1	9	11	21	5
Organisation	0	4	12	16	6
Starting to write	1	4	5	10	7

*this is the total number of teachers who chose each category as important regardless of the order

Table 6.1 reveals the perceived importance of 'grammar'. Out of 80 teachers, 73 regarded it to be the most important category. It is also observed that the majority of teachers (54 out of 78) considered 'expression of ideas' to be a significant category. Fewer, but nearly half of the teachers, regarded 'vocabulary' as important (N=37). The categories of 'gathering information and ideas', 'spelling', 'organisation' and 'starting to write' do not appear to constitute major needs. Figure 6.1 below shows the distribution of teacher responses.

Figure 6.1 Teacher Ranking of Student Needs (N = 80)



This Figure shows that ‘grammar’ is ranked overall as the most important need, with ‘expression of ideas’ second and ‘vocabulary’ third. The ranking of ‘grammar’ as top priority is in conformity with findings from previous data sets (e.g. Table 5.7). ‘Organisation’ and ‘starting to write’ are regarded as the least important needs. In order to gather further information on the same issue, teachers were asked to identify, via an open ended question, the specific writing problems students faced. The findings appear in Table 6.2 overleaf.

Table 6.2 Specific Writing Problems Students Face (N=80)

Category	Responses	(%)	Rank
Grammar	66	36.9	1
Vocabulary	33	18.4	2
Inability to express ideas	22	12.3	3
Spelling	18	10.1	4
Inability to organise ideas	13	7.3	5
Dependence on rote learning	12	6.7	6
Lack of classroom practice	7	3.9	7
Lack of confidence in writing	5	2.8	8
Mother tongue interference	2	1.1	9
Weak foundation at school	1	0.6	10

The findings show that ‘grammar’ is, once again, identified as the most difficult area of writing. It is rated first, with 36.9% of the respondents considering it to be a problem. This is followed by the need to develop ‘vocabulary’, ‘expression of ideas’ and ‘spelling’. As indicated earlier (see Table 5.3), and observed in Table 6.2 above, teachers have highlighted form-focused aspects ($36.9 + 18.4 + 10.1 = 65.4\%$) as problematic. ‘Organisation’ is consistently ranked low (see Table 5.2 and Figure 6.1) by teachers. ‘Mother tongue interference’ has been regarded as a problem too. A small number of teachers also commented on the causes of these specific problems. They identified the main causes to be lack of confidence, lack of classroom practice and a weak foundation at primary level. Teachers pinpointed the dependence on rote learning as a strategy to which students have recourse in order to pass examinations. However, on this particular issue teachers show some inconsistencies as in Table 5.2. Only a very small percentage of responses indicated that students memorise texts. On the whole there is a considerable degree of agreement between Tables 6.1 and 6.2 regarding major student needs.

Turning next to the findings gathered from teacher interviews on learner needs, it can be observed that these findings corroborate those of the questionnaire results. The main needs, identified in order of importance, are once again : ‘grammar’, ‘inability to express ideas’, ‘vocabulary’ and ‘spelling’. In the interviews, teachers were further asked to state their views about weak areas of student writing, as a means of double checking what teachers reported in the questionnaires. Again, the findings were shown

to be in agreement with identical aspects, e.g. ‘grammar’, ‘expression of ideas’, ‘vocabulary’ and ‘spelling’, indicated earlier as major areas of student need. Thus, data gathered from these different methods reinforce a very similar view of what is specified as important needs for students. In addition, teachers in the interviews also pointed out that the students are generally weak in all four language skills and suffer from lack of confidence.

6.2.2 Student Perspectives

In the questionnaires and interviews, students were first asked to identify the main purposes of writing. Their questionnaire responses appear in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3 Purposes for Writing in English (N=239)

Category	Responses	(%)
For higher studies	166	42.6
For examinations (HSC & other)	128	32.8
For jobs	55	14.1
For writing diaries	2	5.0
For writing letters to friends/relatives	8	2.1
For writing stories in newspapers/magazines	4	1.0
Other	27	6.9

The responses above demonstrate that the overwhelming demand for writing in English is for the purposes of higher studies and examinations. As indicated in 1.5.6, it is compulsory for students to write in English in order to pass HSC and other examinations and Table 6.3 above reveals that students are very much aware of this fact. Students have highlighted the importance of English for higher studies, because at the tertiary level, the medium of instruction in many departments is English, and all reference books are in English.

Another important purpose identified by students is the need to learn to write in English to secure better jobs. This shows that students are aware of long term goals and concerned about their vocational demands. Furthermore, students report that they needed English for personal development, to make oneself more accomplished and acceptable. This, however, is related to the previous point, i.e. with the issue of getting better jobs. Students also acknowledged the importance of English as an International

language and, hence, see the need to learn to write for the purposes of social communication, i.e. for correspondence and visits abroad (these responses were specified on the 'other' option on the student questionnaires). In addition to the above, other reasons for writing in English were for purposes such as writing stories in English.

As a means of corroborating these questionnaire responses, students were then asked in the interviews to state the purposes for writing in English. The interview findings confirmed the data from the questionnaires. The major purposes for writing were again identified as relating to examinations, higher studies and jobs. Students also stressed the importance of writing in English for the purposes of 'personal development' and for the purposes of 'communication', as "English is the lingua franca of the world". Thus there is 100% consistency in the findings from student questionnaires and interviews on the issue of 'purposes for writing'.

The interviews further probed the problems students faced in writing with a view to gathering more detailed information on student needs. Like the teachers (see Table 6.1), students also identified the same problematic areas. They particularly singled out 'grammar', 'expression of ideas' and 'vocabulary' as posing specific problems for them. In addition, they indicated that 'organisation', 'spelling' and 'starting to write' were difficult to handle. Mother tongue interference was regarded as a major obstacle too.

Thus, the interview findings corroborated the data from the questionnaires, identifying the major problems with 'grammar,' vocabulary', 'expression of ideas', 'organisation' and 'spelling'. There also appears to be a strong correlation between the results obtained from both teacher and student perspectives. However, there is lack of agreement between teachers and students about the importance of 'organisation'. Students appear to be more aware of 'organisation' as a problematic area of writing than teachers.

6.2.3 Principal and Head of English Department Perspectives

Principals and Heads of English Departments were also asked to express, firstly, how

important they thought it was for students to learn to write in English;. secondly, to state the purpose of learning to write in English; thirdly, to identify the main writing needs of students; and fourthly, to comment on the main problems students face in writing.

As regards the purposes for writing, they emphasised the importance of learning to write in English in the following order: personal development, communication, examinations, higher studies and jobs. These purposes are the same as those identified by the students but they are prioritised in a different order by this group respondent. Therefore, their list does not match the one drawn up by students (see 6.4) as regards the degree of importance attached to the purposes cited. For students examinations, higher studies and jobs are seen as more important than the aspects of personal development and communication which were highlighted by Principals.

Secondly, in response to the question of identifying the main writing needs of students, the Principals and Heads of the English Department came forward with the following observations. They believe that the most pressing need is to help students build up the ability to write correct sentences. They also highlight the importance of ‘vocabulary’ and ‘spelling’ in the development of writing skills. However, they also acknowledge that it is necessary for students to be able to express their ideas clearly and appropriately in writing. In addition, they stressed the need for regular practice in writing. It is noted here, that like teachers (see 5.2 and 6.2), Principals and Heads of English Department emphasise features that focus on the formal properties of the language. These views (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2) are in agreement with previous findings obtained in chapter five (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3) about accuracy related problems in connection with student writing. This in turn reflects a overall form-focused view of writing.

Thirdly, Principals and Heads of English Departments also emphasised that students had considerable problems with ‘grammar’, ‘expression of ideas’, ‘vocabulary’, ‘spelling’ and ‘mother tongue interference’. Thus, corroborating these views of teachers and students, like the teachers, they identified similar causes behind these problems which they attributed mainly to lack of confidence, lack of classroom practice and a weak foundation at primary and secondary level (see 6.2.1).

6.2.4 Curriculum Developers' Perspectives

Curriculum developers feel that, most importantly, students should be able to 'express their ideas'. In this connection, they also saw the need for students to perform specific writing tasks such as writing essays, letters, applications and reports. It is noted that curriculum developers have singled out 'expression of ideas' as the most important need. This reflects the fact that they feel learners should be involved above all, with aspects of semantic processing, in writing. In contrast, teachers, students, Principals and Heads of English Department have highlighted the importance of form-focused needs. Even though curriculum developers stress 'communication of ideas' as the foremost need of students, they also consider 'grammar', 'vocabulary' and 'organisation' as problematic areas.

6.2.5 Discussion

It should be pointed out that, for a variety of reasons, not all respondents were asked all the same questions. For example, students were not questioned about needs because it was felt they would find it hard to understand this term but they would be more familiar with the term 'problems' and could relate to these. Similarly, it was felt that it would be hard for students to identify the causes behind these problems and because of this they were not asked to comment on these. In addition, it was not considered appropriate to ask curriculum developers for their views on why students needed to write in English and the causes for these. This explains the gaps in the four boxes in Table 6.4 overleaf.

Table 6.4 below encapsulates the view of the different respondent groups in connection with students' purposes for writing in English, their main needs and the possible causes of the students' problems.

Table 6.4 Comparative Views on HSC Students' Writing Needs

Respondents	Purpose	Needs	Problems	Causes
Teachers		Grammar Vocabulary Expression of ideas Organisation Spelling Gathering information & ideas Starting writing	Grammar Vocabulary Expression of ideas Spelling Organisation Mother tongue interference	Lack of confidence Lack of classroom practice Weak foundation at school
Students	Examinations Higher studies Jobs Personal development Communication Writing (letters stories & diaries)		Grammar Expression of ideas Vocabulary Spelling, Organisation Gathering ideas Starting to write Mother tongue interference	
Principals & Heads of English Department	Personal development Communication Examination Higher studies Jobs	Grammar Expression of ideas Vocabulary Spelling	Grammar Expression of ideas Vocabulary Spelling Mother tongue interference	Lack of confidence Lack of classroom practice Weak foundation at school
Curriculum Developers		Expression of ideas	Grammar Vocabulary Organisation	

From this comparative detailing of results, and as suggested in the preceding discussion, it becomes clear that a considerable overlap exists amongst the perceptions of different respondents on the issues of purposes, needs, problems associated with student writing as well as the reasons behind these. First of all, looking at the purposes for writing, it emerges that these may be classified into three main groups as shown in Table 6.5 below.

Table 6.5 In School Needs, Out of School Needs and Vocational Needs

In School	Out of School	Vocational
Examinations Higher studies Writing e.g. letters, applications, essays, reports.	Personal development Communication	Jobs

These three broad groupings, i.e. In School, Out of School, and Vocational, reveal that students are concerned more with In School and Vocational needs. This result is consistent with the findings of the English Language Workshop (Harrison, 1976) which identified the importance of similar needs, i.e. those concerned with study and occupational needs for the students in Bangladesh. However, Principals and Heads of English Department perceive Out of School needs, i.e. social needs, to be more important for students. Thus, there is some disparity of view between students and principals. This is an issue which needs to be addressed by curriculum developers because if the purposes for writing are not clearly defined for the students and teachers the development of writing will not take place.

As regards students' needs in the development of their writing skills, all respondents except the curriculum developers, who single out 'expression of ideas' as the dominant need, have unanimous views on the importance of form-focused needs, i.e. 'grammar', 'vocabulary' and 'spelling'. However, all other respondents acknowledge the importance of 'expression of ideas' too, with 'organisation' regarded as the least important of needs by most respondents (see Tables 5.2 and Figure 6.1).

Moving on to specific difficulties associated with students' writing, problems were identified in areas of 'grammar', 'vocabulary', 'spelling' and 'expression of ideas'. Mother tongue interference was identified as an obstacle as well. The focus of the majority of respondents is in terms of student needs related to form-focused aspects of writing. Indeed, there seems to be remarkable consistency in findings from different perspectives on learner needs and problems, all of which have important implications for the teaching of writing skills in HSC classes. Chapter eight will take up these findings and on the basis of these findings suggest implications for pedagogy (see 8.7). The next section focuses on syllabus evaluation.

6.3 Syllabus Evaluation

One of the aims of this study is to evaluate whether the existing writing syllabus caters for the needs of the HSC students. The syllabus here refers to both the syllabus documentation, i.e. the current syllabus, and as well as its classroom implementation. It was mentioned earlier that a new syllabus has been drafted (see 1.5.4) during the writing up of this thesis. It is to be noted that the research questions of this study are not directed at the Revised Syllabus, although pertinent sections of the Revised Syllabus will be critiqued in chapter eight (see 8.2.6).

This section explores, in the first instance, the views of different respondents on the syllabus and the textbook used in HSC classes. It then goes on, in the second instance, to examine the extent to which the pre-1998 syllabus meets the needs of the HSC students. Information was elicited from the range of stakeholders on the following issues:

- strengths and weaknesses of the syllabus
- usefulness of the syllabus in relation to university entrance exams
- usefulness of the syllabus in developing writing skills
- useful/important/easy/difficult items on the syllabus
- strengths and weaknesses of the textbook
- possible changes or modifications to the syllabus and textbook.

In addition to these focal points, the group of curriculum developers were asked additional questions about syllabus objectives and whether they evaluated and, if so, how they evaluated the syllabus. It is important to note that some questions were not asked of all respondents for a number of reasons. For example, students were asked to point out only the easy and difficult items on the syllabus. It was found out during the trialling phase that questions on strengths and weaknesses of the syllabus, and modifications to the syllabus, were above the students comprehension level and thus they were dropped from the main student questionnaire (see 4. 6.1.2.3). First, teacher viewpoints are presented.

6.3.1 Teacher Perspectives

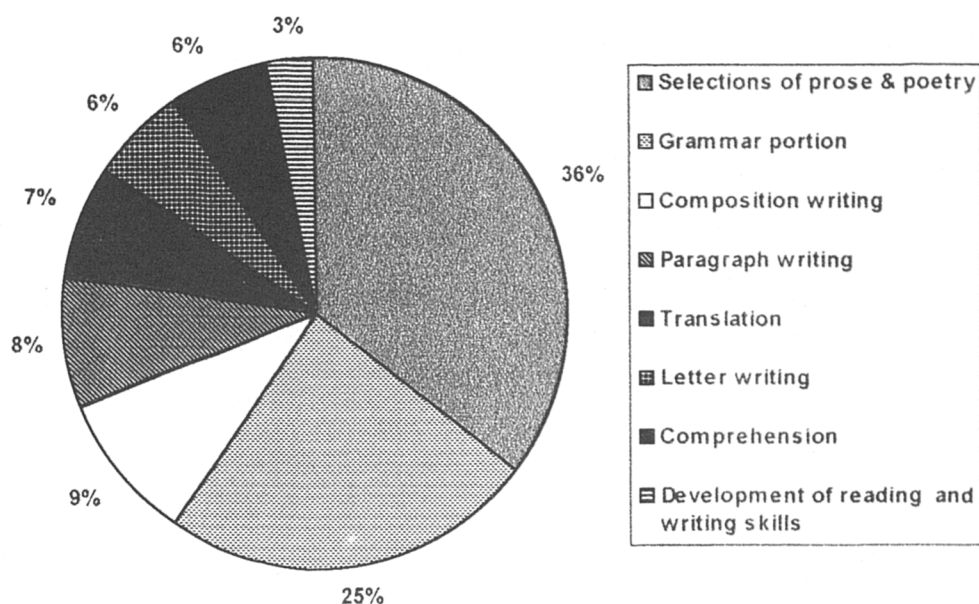
6.3.1.1 Syllabus Strengths and Weaknesses

Table 6.6 below summarises the findings about the strengths of the syllabus and is followed by a graphical display of the percentages of responses in the form of a pie chart.

Table 6.6 Strengths of the Syllabus (N=59)

Category	Responses	(%)
Selections of prose and poetry	34	35.4
Grammar	23	24.0
Composition writing	9	9.4
Paragraph writing	8	8.3
Translation	7	7.3
Letter writing	6	6.3
Comprehension	6	6.3
Development of reading & writing skills	3	3.1

Figure 6.2 Strengths of the Syllabus



As Figure 6.2 clearly shows, it is the selections of prose and poetry, combined with the grammar items (36% + 25%) that are considered to be the main strengths of the syllabus. Other items such as letter, paragraph, composition writing, translation and comprehension are also considered to be strengths but to a much lesser extent. In addition, it is important to note that only 3% perceive that the syllabus is helpful in the development of reading and writing skills. This throws light on the fact that the syllabus does not largely contribute to the development of writing skills. The interview results corroborated these findings about strengths of the syllabus.

Teachers also identified a number of weaknesses in the syllabus. Table 6.7 summarises these with the results in pie-chart form presented in Figure 6.3.

Table 6.7 Weaknesses of the Syllabus (N=65)

Category	Responses	(%)
Encourages rote learning	19	22.1
Limited coverage of selections of prose & poetry	11	12.8
Lack of emphasis on grammar items	10	11.6
Lack of writing exercises	8	9.3
Advanced level of selections	8	9.3
Literature bias of the syllabus	5	5.8
Selections should be changed	5	5.8
Syllabus needs to be revised	4	4.7
Lack of speaking & listening component	4	4.7
Mismatch between HSC & SSC syllabus	4	4.7
Useless items	4	4.7

Figure 6.3 Weaknesses of the Syllabus

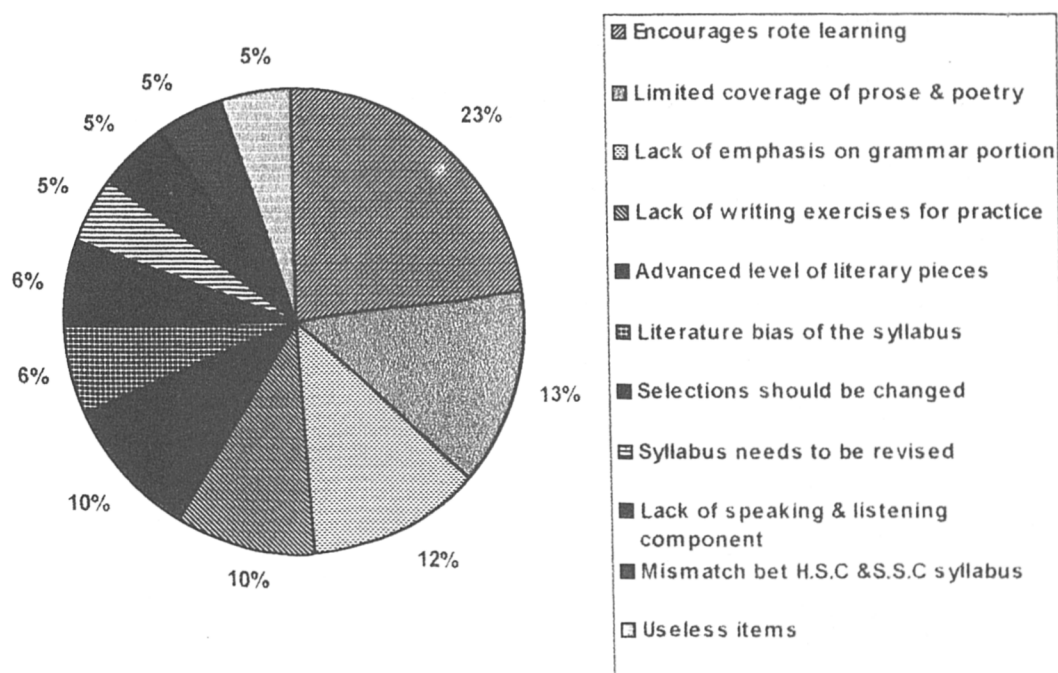


Figure 6.3 shows that there is an almost even spread of weaknesses around a number of areas, i.e. those mentioned by 5 or 6% and by 10 to 13% of the respondents. The rote learning bias of the syllabus, has been considered to be a major prominent weakness (23%). In this connection, there is strong consistency of results obtained from both methods in the evaluation study, i.e. interviews and questionnaires. However, one

additional weakness, namely the predictable nature of examination questions, obtained through interview findings may be added to the list of existing weaknesses. This point was further corroborated by the markers while examining the HSC Examination Compositions (see 7.4.1).

6.3.1.2 Usefulness of the Syllabus for University Entrance

Next, teachers were asked about the usefulness of the syllabus for entrance into the university and to make any additional comments thought relevant. It is interesting to note that a slightly larger number of the respondents, i.e. 52.3% believe that the syllabus does not provide help for entrance into university, whilst 46.3% believe that it does. This signals a clear divergence of views on this issue which further links with the In-School views mentioned earlier. Table 6.8 records the responses of the additional comments provided by respondents.

Table 6.8 Follow up Comments on Whether Syllabus is Helpful for Entrance into University (N=71)

Category	Responses	(%)
Well structured syllabus	13	16.3
Questions in exam are based on the syllabus	9	11.3
Exposure to university level texts	8	10.0
Entrance exams are written tests	3	3.8
No development of writing skills	16	20.0
Syllabus has problems	9	11.3
Encourages rote learning	8	10.0
No development of four language skills	6	7.5
Weak foundation at school	8	10.0

According to Table 6.8 above, the additional comments reveal that the main points in favour of the syllabus as regards preparing students for entrance into university are as follows:

- It is a well structured syllabus. By a 'well structured syllabus' respondents mean that the syllabus consists of appropriate and suitable writing items and hence,

perceive there is scope for teachers to make students practice (through paragraphs, compositions, letters, translation and comprehension) writing in class. In addition these types of items, e.g. letter writing, translation, appear on the entrance tests.

- questions in the examinations (HSC and university entrance) are based on the syllabus.
- the syllabus exposes students to university level texts and entrance exams are written tests.

In terms of weaknesses, it was articulated that the syllabus does not promote the development of writing skills, but encourages rote learning and, in general, there is no development of language skills. One of the reasons as to why the syllabus does not help entrance into university was seen to be the lack of a strong foundation at school. This means that students do not learn what they are supposed to learn at school, and as a result, they have a poor base in English and hence cannot cope with the HSC English syllabus.

6.3.1.3 Usefulness of the Syllabus in Developing Writing Skills

Teachers were also asked about the extent to which the syllabus was helpful in the development of writing skills. They were provided with the opportunity to make additional comments on the same question. The results show that the majority of the respondents (60%) believe that the syllabus does not help in this area. However, 36.3% believe that it does. The additional comments are summarised in Table 6.9 below.

Table 6.9 Follow Up Comments on Whether the Syllabus is Helpful in the Development of Writing Skills (N=69)

Category	Responses	(%)
Well structured syllabus	22	26.2
No development of writing skills	27	32.1
Encourages rote learning	19	22.6
Problems with syllabus	10	11.9
Problems with assessment	6	7.1

Table 6.9 reveals that only 26.2% of the respondents have positive views on this issue and perceive that the syllabus helps in the development of writing skills on the grounds that it is a well structured syllabus (see 6.3.1.2). However, the remaining 73.7% (32.1 + 22.6 + 11.9 + 7.1) feel that the syllabus is not helpful. As apparent from the table above, two major reasons are associated with negative views. Firstly, the syllabus does not cater for promoting writing skills and, secondly, the rote learning bias of the syllabus has been again emphasised (see Table 6.7 and Figure 6.3) as a detriment to the development of writing skills.

6.3.1.4 Useful Items on the Syllabus

Teachers were further asked to identify the two most useful activities on the syllabus. Table 6.10 below summarises these results and Figure 6.4 provides a graphical representation of the same.

Table 6.10 Two Most Useful Items on the Syllabus (N=63)

Category	Responses	(%)
Paragraph writing	38	27.9
Composition writing	24	17.6
Grammar items	20	14.7
Translation	20	14.7
Comprehension	14	10.3
Letter writing	8	5.9
Question & answers	7	5.1
Sentence making	4	2.9
Explanation	1	0.7

Figure 6.4 Important Items on the Syllabus

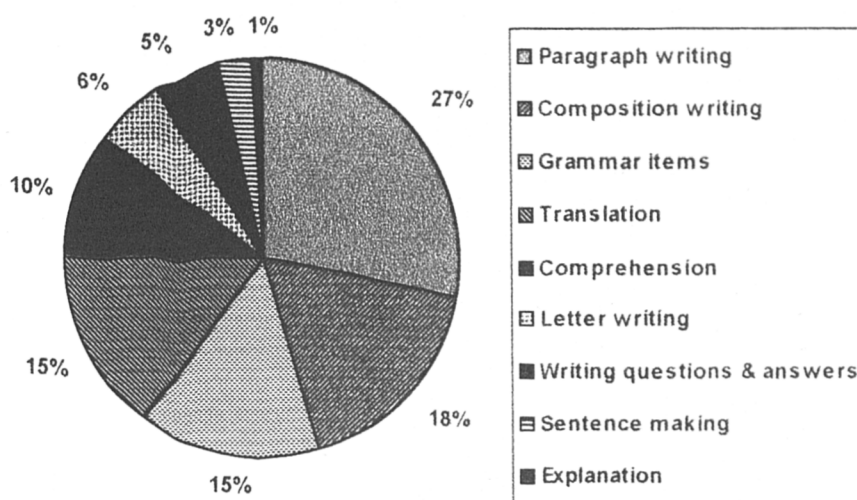


Figure 6.4 reveals that paragraph writing is considered as the most useful item on the syllabus followed by composition writing, grammar exercises and translation. Classifying the above items into the two broad categories of Extended and Sentence Level Writing, see Table 6.11, gives a clear idea of what these activities help to achieve in terms of developing writing skills.

Table 6.11 Extended and Sentence Level Writing

Sentence Level Writing	Extended Writing
Grammar items	Paragraph writing
Sentence making	Composition writing
Comprehension	Letter writing
Translation (individual sentences)	
Question & answers	
Explanation (of a quote)	

Table 6.11 demonstrates that the majority of items on the syllabus reinforce sentence level construction (see 2.3.2). This provides further evidence for the preponderance of form-focused elements in the syllabus.

The interview findings corroborated the importance of the same items on the syllabus identified through the questionnaires i.e. paragraph, composition, grammar exercises, translation, comprehension and writing questions and answers.

6.3.1.5 Modifications to the Syllabus

In the interview, teachers were further asked if they had any suggestions regarding modification or changes to the syllabus. They proposed that the syllabus should:

- have a wider coverage of selections including some from Bengali culture;
- replace existing selections of prose and poetry by simplified versions;
- cater for the four language skills;
- take into consideration the importance of translation;
- include more grammar items.

Most of these suggestions can be seen as an extension of teacher views articulated earlier. For example, teachers consider selections and grammar items (see Figure 6.2) as strengths, and hence, they argue here for a broader and simplified version of these selections as well as the inclusion of additional grammar items.

6.3.1.6 Textbook Evaluation

Next, teachers were asked questions about the textbook they used and the extent to which it fulfilled the needs of their higher secondary school students. They were also asked for follow up comments to support their responses. In answer to whether the text book fulfils writing needs, 67.5% respondents stated that the textbook does not help in the development of writing whilst 27.5% felt that the textbook is helpful. Table 6.12 summarises the follow up comments.

Table 6.12 Follow Up Comments on Whether the Textbook Helps in the Development of Writing Skills (N=55)

Categories	Responses	(%)
Textbook helps in writing development	14	17.5
Fit between textbook & syllabus exists	2	2.5
No development of writing skills	16	20.0
No textbook for grammar	13	16.3
No development of language skills	5	6.3
No emphasis on use of grammar	4	5.0

Additional comments about the usefulness of the textbook in relation to the development of writing skills show that 20% (17.5% + 2.5%) think that the textbook promotes writing skills. On the other hand, the rest (47.6%) of the comments reflect negative views towards the textbook. 16.3% report that there is no textbook for grammar which interestingly shows again teachers' concern with 'grammar' (see Tables, 5.2, 5.5 and 5.7).

In the interviews 50% of the interviewees felt that the textbook helped in the development of writing skills when all items were explained thoroughly and if students practised and went through the text minutely. This reflects a particular view of learning especially associated with rote learning. However, an equal 50% felt that the textbook did not help much and was above the level of the students. Thus, it can be said that in the interviews teachers were split fifty-fifty as regards the usefulness of the textbook.

In the interviews, teachers considered the selections of prose and poems to be the main strengths of the textbook and the limited and advanced nature of these selections were highlighted as the prime weaknesses. In terms of changes to the syllabus 76.3% of the respondents perceive that certain aspects of the textbook need to be changed whereas 18.8% feel that there is no necessity for change. Teachers were also asked to indicate those aspects that needed to be changed. Table 6.13 sets out the results.

Table 6.13 Perceived Changes Needed in the Textbook (N=61)

Specific Aspects	Responses	(%)
Wider coverage of selections	20	29.0
Change existing selections	12	17.4
Inclusion of interactive exercises, questions & activities	12	17.4
Focus on development of language skills	11	15.9
Focus on more grammar items	6	8.7
Integration of literature and language items	5	7.2
Use of simplified texts	3	4.3

The findings above, when compared with the data in Table 6.7, reveal a correspondence between the identified weaknesses of the syllabus and those weaknesses in the textbook identified by teachers.

Teachers were further asked whether they used a Teachers' Book and, if not, whether they would like one. They were also asked about the ways in which it would help them. Findings reveal that 87.5% of the respondents state that they do not have a Teachers' Book. On the issue of whether they would like to have a Teachers' Book, the majority of teachers (78.8%) expressed their desire for one. Table 6.13 records the ways in which a guide was perceived to be useful.

Table 6.14 Ways In Which a Teachers' Book Will Help (N=61)

Category	Responses	(%)
Give guidance	55	68.8
Give confidence	2	2.5
Ensure uniformity	2	2.5
Tips on grammar	2	2.5

The results indicate that the majority feel that a Teachers' Book would help them with useful and practical guidelines (e.g. lesson plans and activities) for general teaching purposes.

In addition, teachers were asked questions about training. The findings show that 50% of the teachers have had no training. The other 50% received training in general foundation courses (inset, which do not cover writing) and no training at all in the teaching of writing. The majority of them (64%) expressed their willingness to participate in training which would specifically help them with the teaching of writing skills.

6.3.2 Student Perspectives

6.3.2.1 Easy and Difficult Items on the Syllabus

In the questionnaires, students were asked to state whether the items on the writing component of the syllabus were easy or difficult, and to identify what they considered to be easy and difficult. By easy items were meant those items which students perceived they could handle themselves without help from others e.g. teachers, private tutors. Overall results showed that half (50.2%) the students considered the items on the syllabus to be easy and nearly the remaining half regarding them to be difficult. Table 6.15 lists the easy and difficult items as perceived by students.

Table 6.15 Easy and Difficult Items on the Syllabus
Easy items (N=119) Difficult items (N=113)

Easy Items	(%)	Difficult Items	(%)
Letter writing	47.7	Letter writing	3.8
Paragraph writing	32.8	Paragraph writing	18.1
Translation	12.6	Translation	22.5
Composition writing	6.9	Composition writing	44.0
		Grammar items	10.0
		Question & answers	1.1

The fact that the students considered almost as many items ‘Easy’ as they did ‘Difficult’ is an indication that the overall level of the items on the syllabus is approximately the same. Table 6.15 shows that letter and paragraph writing was judged to be easy whilst the students evaluated composition, translation and grammar as difficult.

The same questions were repeated in the interviews for triangulation purposes. The interview findings corroborate those obtained from the questionnaires: 50% of the respondents considered the items on the syllabus as easy and 50% regarded them as difficult. Letter, paragraph, composition, comprehension, translation, grammar, questions and answers were identified as easy items by 50% of the interviewees and 50% identified these same items as difficult.

6.3.2.2 Textbook Evaluation

Regarding the textbook, students were asked if the textbook helped them in developing their writing skills. Results show that 84.2% respondents report that the textbook helps in the development of writing skills whilst 14.9% state it does not help, thus suggesting that the majority of students seem to be satisfied with the textbook so far as development of writing skills is considered.

In a similar vein, students were also asked in their interviews to point out the activities and exercises in the textbook which promoted writing skills. 50% said paragraph writing and grammar exercises helped them. 30% said the prose pieces helped them to build vocabulary. 10% thought writing answers to questions was a good activity. The remaining 10% thought nothing helped because the textbook contained no exercises.

6.3.3 Principal and Head of English Department Perspectives

In the same way, Principals and Head of English Departments were asked to express their views regarding the HSC syllabus and textbook, strength and weaknesses of the syllabus, and the need to modify the HSC syllabus.

6.3.3.1 Syllabus Strengths and Weaknesses

In line with teacher views (see Figure 6.2 and 6.3), findings reveal that the selections, together with the grammar items, paragraph writing and comprehension, constitute the main strengths of the syllabus whilst prominent weaknesses pinpointed are the advanced level of selections, the literary and rote learning bias of the syllabus, the gap between SSC and HSC syllabus and the lack of practical language work in class. Thus, views of teachers and Principals regarding the weaknesses of the syllabus entirely coincide.

6.3.3.2 Syllabus Modification

Again, in tune with teacher findings (see 6.3.1.5), most of the interviewees suggested considerable modifications to the syllabus. In particular, they suggested simplified version of the selections and inclusion of more grammar items. However, one Principal proposed the need for a different syllabus for the different streams (Science, Commerce and Humanities) with one General English paper common to all groups and one paper specific to each stream. He criticised the use of literary texts, for instance, pointing out that Commerce students do not benefit from learning about Shakespeare or Browning and think they should have English which is geared towards helping them with Business or Economic English, or the sort of writing they are expected to face in their area. This same view was endorsed by another teacher of the English Department at Dhaka University.

6.3.3.3 Textbook Evaluation

Regarding the textbook and, again, in conformity with teacher beliefs, Principals/Heads of English Department expressed that the selections of prose and poetry were difficult, narrow and not related to culture of the students. In addition, they thought more annotations in the textbook were desirable. Like students, they pointed out that there

were no exercises in the textbook. Two of the Principals commented that the textbook was unsuitable for the students in the sense that it was above their proficiency level. However, one Principal thought that the selections were satisfactory because students were exposed to standard reading material.

6.3.4 Curriculum Developers' Perspectives

Six members associated with the National Curriculum and Textbook Board were interviewed to find out their views on the syllabus and textbook. In addition to the usual questions, members associated with the NCTB were asked questions about the objectives of the syllabus and whether the syllabus had been previously evaluated or not.

6.3.4.1 Syllabus Strengths and Weaknesses

Regarding the strengths of the syllabus, one member commented that there were no apparent strengths in the syllabus. Others (N=4), like the teachers and principals in the study, considered the selections (prose and poetry), grammatical items, paragraph writing, composition and writing answers to questions as strengths. Another member stated that the syllabus was helpful in the development of reading and writing skills.

The literary and advanced nature of the selections (prose and poems) and the rote learning bias of the syllabus were highlighted as the major weaknesses, a finding which corroborates the views of teachers and principals (see 6.3.1.1 and 6.3.3.1). Curriculum developers further reported that the syllabus objectives were not clearly specified, and there was no coverage of language skills in the syllabus. Apparently, reading prose and poems, writing answers to questions, letters, paragraphs, essays and selected grammar items were some of the main objectives of the syllabus. One interviewee suggested that getting through the examination was a primary objective of the syllabus. This view neatly ties in with the findings of the classroom observations (see 5.4.4), where teachers made students write on those items and topics which are on the syllabus and eventually would be on the examination e.g. paragraph, letter writing and grammar exercises. Most of the views articulated by curriculum developers regarding the syllabus are in harmony with the opinions gathered from the other perspectives, e.g. teachers and principals (see Figure 6.3 and 6.3.4).

Like students, the curriculum developers expressed the view that paragraph and composition writing, grammatical items, translation and comprehension were important items on the syllabus as these helped students to learn to write sentences and narratives correctly. Responding to issues of changes to the syllabus, the curriculum developers came up with a long list of additions and suggestions. They suggested that the syllabus should specify:

- clear objectives
- methodology for teaching
- evaluation procedures for assessment of written work
- frequent classroom practice
- tutorial examination and monthly tests
- skills development with a focus on writing activities
- additional grammar items.

The curriculum developers have specified a more comprehensive and useful list of suggestions for the modification of the syllabus, in contrast with teachers and principals who mainly argued for a wider and simplified version of the selections, additional grammar items and the development of the four language skills. Curriculum developers have focused some important and indispensable aspects of classroom instruction e.g. methodology for teaching, evaluation procedures and frequent classroom practice. These features need to be specified in the syllabus for positive enhancement of the teaching and learning situation.

6.3.4.2 Syllabus Evaluation

Curriculum developers were asked if any evaluation of the syllabus had taken place. 40% interviewees reported that there was no actual field evaluation or planned exercise but there was a hurried project, through which some data were collected, regarding the proficiency level of the students and opinions about the textbook. This is in line with the goal-oriented approach to evaluation discussed in 3.2.1.1. 60 % of the interviewees however, said they did not know of any formal evaluation of the HSC writing syllabus. The reasons forwarded for not being able to conduct a proper evaluation were financial, issues of time constraints, and shortage of experts.

6.3.4.3 Textbook Evaluation

Expressing their views about the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook, the curriculum developers perceived that the selections of prose and poetry were the main strengths of the textbook because they perceived the selection to be 'good'. At the same time, they considered these to be the main weakness because they thought these were too difficult (advanced) and unrealistic (i.e. did not relate to students' lives) and, hence, not useful to the students. They also believed that a Teachers' Book would prove to be very useful. These views about the textbook confirm those articulated by other groups of respondents.

6.4 Discussion

The preceding sections have presented the analysis of findings in relation to the HSC writing syllabus and the textbook used in conjunction with this. Table 6.16 below summarises the focal points explored above to give the reader an overview of what has emerged.

Table 6.16 Comparative Views on the Syllabus

Respondents	Strengths	Weaknesses	Important Activities
Teachers	Selections of prose & poetry Grammar items Letter writing Paragraph writing Composition Writing Translation Comprehension.	Rote learning bias Limited coverage of selections Lack of emphasis on grammar portion Lack of writing exercises for use in class, Advanced level of selections Literary bias Mismatch between HSC & SSC syllabus Predictable nature of exam questions	Paragraph writing composition writing Letter writing Translation Comprehension questions & answers Sentence making Explanation Grammar items.
Principals	selections of prose & poetry grammar items comprehension paragraph writing.	Advanced level of selections Literary bias, Mismatch between HSC & SSC syllabus Rote learning bias of syllabus Lack of language focus	
Curriculum Developers	Selections of prose & poetry Grammar items Paragraph writing Composition Writing question & answers	No specified objectives Advanced level of selections Literary bias Rote learning bias Exam-oriented No development of language skills	Paragraph writing Composition writing Grammar items Translation Comprehension

Table 6.16 demonstrates consensus in the views of the different respondents. The recurrent strengths of the syllabus, according to the most frequent mentions across groups, are mainly selections of prose and poetry and grammar items. In addition, paragraph and composition writing, questions and answers, and comprehension are also considered as strengths, constituting useful and important items on the syllabus. The prominent weaknesses identified by majority of respondent groups are the advanced level of selections, the literary and rote learning bias of the syllabus and the lack of development of the four language skills. It is interesting to note that respondents consider the selections of prose and poetry a major strength as well as a prominent weakness of the syllabus. From the above summary of results, it may be argued that the

weaknesses of the syllabus outweigh its strengths. Despite the strengths and important items on the syllabus, the range of informants in the study perceive that it is not serving the purpose of students so far as writing development is concerned (see Figure 6.2 and 6.3.4). Table 6.17 below summarises the viewpoints gathered on the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook.

Table 6.17 Comparative Views on the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Textbook

Respondents	Strengths	Weaknesses
Teachers	Textbook helps in writing Good fit between textbook & syllabus Grammatical items in the textbook Textbook helps if explained thoroughly and if students practice	No promotion of writing skills No emphasis on language skills Advanced level of selections Limited coverage of selections
Students	Textbook helps in writing Grammar items in the textbook Prose pieces help to build vocabulary writing answers to textual questions helps	Textbook does not help writing Textbook contains no exercises
Principals & Heads of English Department	Selections are satisfactory	Literary focus Limited coverage of selections Advanced level of selections No exercises in the textbook selections unsuitable for students
Curriculum Developers	Selections are good	Advanced level of selections Unrealistic and unsuitable selections

Table 6.17 demonstrates that the overriding strengths of the textbook have been associated with a) grammar items b) vocabulary and c) the literary pieces. However, regardless of the strengths, the informants perceive that the selections in the textbook are advanced and of limited coverage. In addition, the textbook does not contain exercises for the development of writing skills.

Modifications to the syllabus and textbook suggested by most respondent groups are ranked below in order of priority:

1. a wider coverage of selections, including stories from Bengali culture
2. the use of simplified texts
3. a focus on the development of language skills

4. inclusion of more grammar items
5. inclusion of writing exercises in the textbook
6. the integration of language and literature items
7. the additions of more annotations in the textbook.

Despite criticising the presence of too much literature in the syllabus it appears that respondents are in favour of a more comprehensive coverage of the literary pieces. In addition they suggest simplified versions of these pieces. It is interesting to note that they also want more grammar items on the syllabus, a constant finding which is corroborated to a significant extent in chapter 5, where the respondents expressed their overt concerns about grammar (see Tables 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.7, 5.10 and 5.4.4). However, it is encouraging to note that they ask for additional writing exercises, although these would have to be the appropriate type, i.e. ones which will teach students good writing strategies. All respondents felt the absence of a Teachers' Book and proposed one. They believe a Teachers' Guide would instil confidence, ensure uniformity and provide essential guidance for teaching and learning.

6.5 Summary

6.5.1 Learner Needs

This chapter consisted of two major sections. The first section provided information on purposes, needs and problems related to student writing (6.2). The findings have revealed that the main purposes for writing are academic, vocational and social. Crucial learner needs highlighted are to do with 'grammar', 'vocabulary' and 'expression of ideas'. Students face particular problems in writing with specific regard to 'grammar', 'vocabulary', 'spelling', 'expression of ideas' and 'organisation'.

6.5.2 Syllabus Evaluation

The second section (6.3) summarises views gathered on the syllabus and textbook. The findings reveal that respondents showed contradictory attitudes towards the selections in the syllabus. They appreciated having the selections as one of the strengths of the syllabus but simultaneously considered these to be a weakness. because they perceived they were too advanced and unrealistic. Another shortcoming of the syllabus pointed out was its rote learning bias. Although items on the syllabus such as paragraph

writing, letter writing and reading comprehension are regarded as useful and important, the overall feeling is that the syllabus does not promote the development of writing skills. Similar views were endorsed about the textbook. The 'selections' in the textbook were again identified as both a strength and a weakness. They were identified as strengths because they exposed students to good reading material and helped to build vocabulary. On the other hand they were considered to be a weakness because they were mainly of an advanced level. In addition lack of writing exercises in the textbook were pointed out as a major drawback. A list of suggestions for modification to the syllabus and textbook were proposed. The main recommendations for the syllabus are to do with the comprehensive and simplified selections of prose and poetry, inclusion of the four skills and additional grammar exercises. As regards the textbook a wider coverage and simplification of the selections was suggested.

This chapter has presented the reader with findings from two important sections, namely learner needs and syllabus evaluation. The first section has highlighted important purposes for writing as well as signalling important needs and writing problems of students. Identification of writing purposes at the outset are vital if a syllabus or program is to be successful. Moreover, student needs have to be identified if writing development is to take place. The needs identified in this study carry significant implications for classroom pedagogy (see 8.7.2). The findings from syllabus evaluation reveal that there is a gap between what students need and what the syllabus is providing them with at the present. The current syllabus is literature-oriented and form-focused. The question is, is it proper to have a predominantly literature and form-oriented syllabus for these students? Will a focus on these two aspects alone help them to develop writing skills and cope with the academic and vocational demands that will be placed on them? The question is what sort of writing activities in the syllabus and textbook will enable them to develop as independent and successful writers since we have now explored their needs and problems. The final chapter which presents the findings of this evaluation study presents the results obtained from the analysis of the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions.

CHAPTER 7

Writing Tasks and Public Examination Compositions: Analysis and Interpretation of Results

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the writing samples, i.e. the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions gathered for the purposes of the study. These have been analysed in relation to the research question which seeks to find out about students' strengths and weaknesses in writing. The main purpose of this analysis is to discover the strong and weak areas of student writing, and in the process, define more precisely the level of the learners' proficiency in different aspects of writing. The aim is also to suggest a framework for guidelines for a suitable marking scheme for higher secondary level teachers for the marking of students' written work for classroom contexts.

A subsidiary aim is to discover to what extent the Writing Tasks reflect students' real problems with 'grammar' and, in particular, to see which grammar problems impede 'task fulfilment'. A further motivation is to compare the holistic and the analytic marking schemes. It will be recalled (4.6.4.2) that the Examination Compositions were already marked according to the holistic method of marking and had numerical scores assigned to them. The marking scheme designed for this evaluation study is an analytic one, and was used to mark both the Examination Compositions and the Writing Tasks. Marks obtained from the two marking schemes are compared to see which of these provide more information about students' abilities.

As mentioned in 4.4.4.3, three raters were involved in the marking. Two of the raters were native speakers of English and very experienced teachers and specialists in the areas of English language Testing and Writing. The third rater was the researcher. A moderation meeting (see 4.6.4.3) was arranged, at which 10 scripts were trialled for standardisation purposes. In a subsequent meeting, further discussion took place. It was also decided to analyse only ten samples from the

Examination Compositions and 30 samples from the Writing Tasks, due to time constraints. Raters were required to give marks for all the criteria (for details see 4.6.4.3) outlined in the marking scheme.

This chapter firstly describes the results of the interrater reliability, and secondly compares the scores of the two marking schemes (holistic and analytic). Thirdly, it discusses the findings from the analysis of the Examination Compositions and the Writing Tasks. Finally, it describes the results of grammatical error analysis which were carried out for the Writing Tasks only.

7.2 Interrater Reliability

7.2.1 Overview

To examine interrater reliability, a correlation analysis was conducted. The results of marker reliability for the Examination Compositions and the Writing Tasks are shown below in Tables 7.1 and 7.2 respectively.

Table 7.1 Interrater Reliability for the Examination Compositions (N=10)

	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3
Rater 1	-	.92**	.73**
Rater 2	.92**	-	.81**
Rater 3	.73**	.81**	-

** $p < .001$

Table 7.2 Interrater Reliability for the Writing Tasks (N=30)

	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3
Rater 1	-	.84**	.79**
Rater 2	.84**	-	.75**
Rater 3	.79**	.75**	-

** $p < .001$

Tables 7.1 and 7.2 demonstrate that the results are statistically significant ($p < .001$ in all cases). The correlations were in the range of .73 and .92 for the Examination Compositions and .75 and .84 for the Writing Tasks. This shows that the marking was fairly consistent across the raters, and that the marking scheme worked satisfactorily. The correlations were higher between raters 1 and 2 than between raters 1 and 3 and raters 2 and 3 in both cases.

As can be seen from Tables 7.1 and 7.2 above, the interrater reliability was higher for the Examination Compositions than for the Writing Tasks. This may be explained by the fact that the Examination Compositions were more uniform, as students had an opportunity to rehearse these topics in advance. It is the trend at the HSC level that English examination compositions are predictable and students usually memorise possible answers using examination 'cribs' (see 1.5.6). In the Writing Tasks which were specially designed for the study the students did not have the opportunity to do so, as they had to write on the spot and did not have any prior preparation.

Even though raters 1 and 2 achieved high correlations of .92 (on the Examination Compositions) and .84 (on Writing Tasks), the interrater reliability of the other raters was not considered very high ($r = .73 - .81$ and $r = .75 - .79$ respectively) since the literature suggests that interrater reliability should be in the high .80's or .90's (Hatch and Lazarson, 1991). It may be said that the results did not reveal exceptionally high correlations as had been expected, considering the phases through which the marking scheme evolved, the experience of the raters, the thorough and elaborate discussions amongst the raters and the standardisation meetings. This further reinforces the fact that the teaching experience of raters does not necessarily guarantee high interrater reliability and, as such, signals important implications for the marking of written work. Issues to be taken into account include: rater training, compulsory moderation meetings and revision of marking schemes (see 8.7.4).

7.2.2 Marking Criteria Categories

It will be recalled that there were six categories in the analytical marking scheme designed for this study (see 4.4.4.3). To examine in detail how raters performed on different categories of the marking scheme (e.g. 'grammar', 'mechanics'), further analyses were conducted. The following two sections present the results of the interrater reliability for the Writing Tasks (7.2.2.1) and for the Examination Compositions (7.2.2.2).

7.2.2.1 Writing Tasks

The reliability coefficients of the different categories of the marking scheme for the Writing Tasks are presented below in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3 Interrater Reliability for the Different Categories of the Marking Scheme for Writing Tasks (N=30)

Categories	Raters 1 & 2	Raters 1 & 3	Raters 2 & 3	Average
Grammar	.76**	.74**	.78**	.76
Mechanics	.65**	.57**	.61**	.61
Vocabulary	.65**	.57**	.61**	.61
Organisation	.79**	.57**	.61**	.70
Cohesion	.89**	.72**	.88**	.83
Content	.84**	.66**	.70**	.73

** $p < .01$

Overall, the results for the interrater reliability analysis of the Writing Tasks for the different categories are similar to the results presented above, i.e. in Tables 7.1 and 7.2. Again results indicate that raters 1 and 2 are more highly correlated. Between raters 1 and 3 and between raters 2 and 3 there is less consistency. Reliability between raters 1 and 3 tend to be lowest. Nonetheless, the results obtained were statistically significant at $p < .01$.

What is more striking about the results is that for the Writing Tasks, the average interrater reliability is lower in 'mechanics' (.61) and 'vocabulary' (.61) than the other components. The interrater reliability for 'grammar' (.76), 'content' (.73) and 'organisation' (.70) is in the middle. The interrater reliability coefficient is the highest for 'cohesion' (.83). Since the marker reliability is lower in 'mechanics' and 'vocabulary', as compared to other components, it may be commented that raters may have had difficulty in applying the marking scheme to these former categories. The scorer reliability coefficient is the highest for 'cohesion', and it can be said that raters had considerable agreement in marking this category. This would suggest that this category may be easier to grasp when it comes to marking written scripts. It is interesting that 'mechanics' and 'vocabulary' seem to have caused greater disagreement amongst the raters than 'cohesion' because generally speaking these are the 'traditional' and 'familiar' areas of language and one would think these were the most easily identifiable.

7.2.2.2 Examination Compositions

The analysis of Examination Compositions, reveal similar characteristics of interrater reliability as were shown for the Writing Tasks. The results are set out in Table 7.4 below.

Table 7.4 Interrater Reliability for Different Categories of the Marking Scheme for Examination Compositions (N=10)

Categories	Rater 1 – 2	Rater 1 - 3	Rater 2- 3	Average
Grammar	.56	.54	.57	.55
Mechanics	.74*	.36	.57	.55
Vocabulary	.90**	.66*	.72*	.76
Organisation	.90**	.73*	.85**	.83
Cohesion	.95**	.65*	.62	.74
Content	.95**	.82**	.85**	.87

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Again, it is clear that the interrater reliability was higher between rater 1 and 2 than between raters 1 and 3 and raters 2 and 3. However, raters failed to achieve a statistically significant level of reliability for the categories of 'grammar' and 'mechanics'. This may be partly due to the small sample size (N=10). On the other hand, for the categories of 'vocabulary', 'organisation', 'cohesion' and 'content,' the interrater reliability reached a statistically significant level except that between raters 2 and 3 for the category 'cohesion'. This shows that there was greater consensus in the Writing Tasks. Comparatively 'organisation' (.83) and 'content' (.87) achieved a higher interrater reliability than 'vocabulary' (.76) and 'cohesion' (.74). It may be said that different categories pose different degrees of ease or difficulty of marking for raters as some categories achieved higher interrater reliability than others.

Again, categories where higher reliability is achieved varied depending on the task, e.g., 'cohesion' in Writing Tasks and 'organisation', and 'content' in Examination Compositions. Nevertheless, high reliability on 'organisation', 'cohesion' and 'content' and low reliability on 'grammar', 'mechanics' seem to be the pattern. This finding is interesting because it is easier to mark seemingly more mechanical and

tangible areas like ‘grammar’ and ‘mechanics’ because they are conceived as more traditional, common and familiar categories. On the other hand, categories such as ‘organisation’ and ‘cohesion’ which are regarded as higher order areas can be, perhaps, perceived to be more diffuse and difficult to grasp and hence can be supposed to achieve a lower level of uniformity. It is surprising that markers had more ease in marking higher order concerns as opposed to lower order ones. It would be worth conducting more research in these areas and investigating further what caused these differences.

7.3 Comparison Between the Two Rating Schemes (Holistic and Analytic)

It is also of research interest to compare the two marking schemes, that is the holistic and the analytic approaches. It is to be noted that the holistic method of marking is the one used in Bangladesh in the marking of written work. It is my perception that this system does not yield adequate diagnostic detail for students and teachers alike (about abilities in writing) as it only gives a score and as such cannot offer useful information about specific strengths and weaknesses in writing. On the other hand, it is argued that the analytical marking scheme (see 2.4.3) is more informative as it shows the breakdown of marks for the different elements involved in writing, and that this detailed description can help to build a profile of student abilities. This subsection presents the findings obtained through comparison of the two marking schemes. In addition, a discussion of rater comments on the Writing Tasks is also presented

As mentioned in 4.6, the Examination Compositions had already been marked holistically, i.e. these scripts had been graded by the examiners in Bangladesh with a score marked on the text. In this study, these scripts were marked a second time by the three raters involved in the marking of the Writing Tasks, according to the analytic scheme (see Appendix 4.10). In order to compare the two marking schemes, the researcher performed a correlational analysis in the following phases:

Phase I Holistic versus analytic marking scheme (the total scores of the holistic marking and analytic marking were correlated)

- Phase II Holistic marking scheme and the six categories of the analytic marking scheme (the holistic scores were correlated with the scores of the six categories, i.e. grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, organisation, cohesion and content)
- Phase III Holistic marking scheme and all the sub-categories of the analytic marking scheme (it will be recalled that there are sub-categories within the six categories of the marking scheme, see Appendix 4.10).
- Phase IV Correlational analysis of all the sub-categories of the analytic marking scheme to examine the extent to which detailed information is required for capturing writing ability. This phase also set out to examine the construct validity of the marking scheme.

Phase 1

The results of the first phase revealed that the correlation of the total scores between the holistic and analytical marking scheme was $r = .73$. As pointed out in section 7.2.1, the high .80s or .90s are the figures to be expected when comparing two tests which are supposed to be measuring the same thing. Therefore, in this case, since the scripts were marked twice, .73 is not considered exceptionally high and, hence, it suggested that the two marking schemes are assessing different aspects of writing. It is worth examining the characteristics of students' scripts in more depth to see what characteristics in particular are captured in the two marking schemes (see 7.4).

Phase II

The results of the second phase, i.e. the correlation between the holistic marking and main categories of the analytical marking scheme, are presented in Table 7.5 below.

Table 7.5 Correlations Between the Holistic Marks and the Main Categories of the Analytic Marks

Categories	r
Grammar	.84
Mechanics	.82
Vocabulary	.83
Organisation	.88
Cohesion	.79
Content	.86
Average	.84

$p < .01$

It is observed that the correlations are higher here than in the first phase. The mean of the correlation coefficients between the six main categories of the analytical marking scheme and the holistic marking is .84. Amongst the categories, 'cohesion' has the lowest correlation (.79). This suggests that there is less overlap between the holistic marking and analytical marking in 'cohesion' than in the other categories. From this we may infer that 'cohesion' is less clearly reflected in the holistic marking.

Phase III

For this phase, student scores in all the sub-categories (e.g. 'grammar accuracy', 'grammar complexity') were correlated with the total scores in the holistic marking. Table 7.6 presents the correlation coefficients and the range of values for each category.

Table 7.6 Correlations Between Holistic Marking and Sub-categories of Analytical Marking

Category	Sub-category				Range of Correlation	Average
	Accuracy	Appropriacy	Range	Complexity		
Grammar	.85**	.81**	.85**	.85**	.81-.85	.84
Mechanics ¹	.82					
Vocabulary	.83**	.83**	.83	.78**	.78-.83	.82
Organisation	.86**	.87**	.83	.86**	.83-.87	.85
Cohesion	.75*	.80**	.76*	.76*	.75-.80	.77
Content	.83**	.81**	.83**	.82**	.81-.83	.82

* $p < .05$ ** $P < .01$

¹ Mechanics was not assessed in different sub-categories

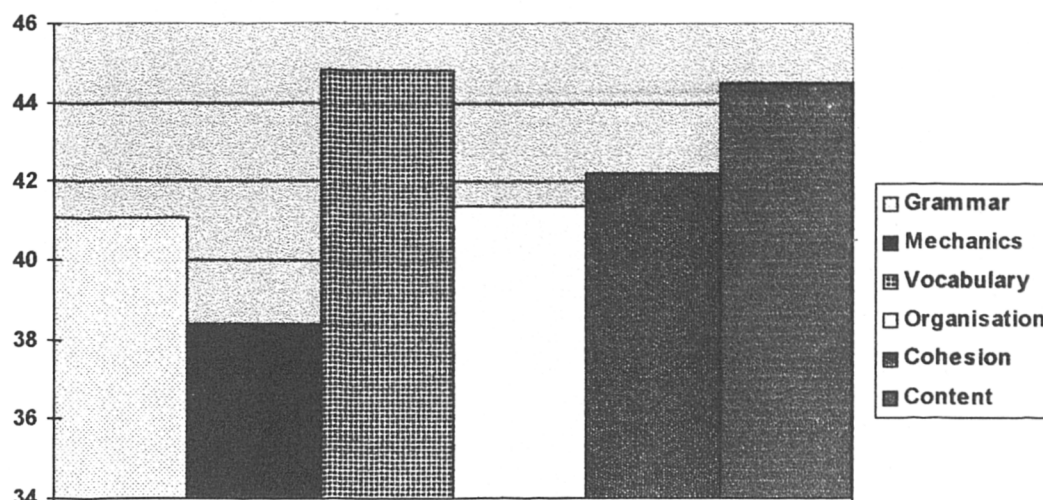
Table 7.6 indicates that the correlation coefficients are slightly higher in 'organisation' and significantly lower in 'cohesion'. 'Grammar', 'mechanics', 'vocabulary' and 'content' are intermediate. However, overall these figures are very similar, i.e. the lowest is .75 and the highest is .87, which points to a very small spread. On the whole, nearly all the sub-categories of the analytical marking scheme appear more or less equally correlated with the holistic marking scheme.

It is further shown that the three sub-categories of 'cohesion', i.e. 'accuracy', 'range' and 'complexity' are the lowest ($r = .75-.80$). In addition, the sub-category 'complexity' of 'vocabulary' also has a fairly low correlation with holistic marking, i.e. $r = .78$. We may interpret this to mean that these sub-categories of 'cohesion' and the sub-category 'complexity' of 'vocabulary' may not be well reflected in holistic marking.

It seems that the holistic rating scheme, is in several respects, working in a similar direction to the analytic rating scheme. However, the holistic scheme fails to address some of the areas which are captured in the analytic scheme, particularly, 'cohesion'. This seems to be a grey area which is not clearly reflected in the holistic marking scheme. The advantages of using an analytical scheme are further illuminated by examining the students' performances according to the different categories on the analytic marking scheme.

Figure 7.1 shows students' performances in different aspects of writing on the Examination Compositions.

Figure 7.1 Examination Compositions (N=10)



The above figures on the vertical axis gives the students' average marks (for their writing performance). Students' scripts were marked by three raters on a scale from 1 to 5 in each of the 4 sub-categories. The marks range between 12 (1 x 4 x 3) and 60 (5 x 4 x 3).

Students' performance in 'vocabulary' and 'content' as evidenced by Figure 7.1 is high, as opposed to 'mechanics' in which the average score is the lowest. This finding leads one to suggest that the analytic marking scheme may be useful in reflecting students' abilities in these different aspects of writing (Hamp-Lyons, 1995, see 2.4.3). By way of contrast, it could be argued that a holistic score does not capture these different shades of performance.

It was revealed in the discussions of the foregoing three phases that the analytic scheme appears to be more informative in comparison to the holistic scheme. It provides a more detailed picture of student abilities and on this basis it is suggested, that it may serve as a useful tool for providing formative and diagnostic information to classroom teachers.

Phase IV

Establishing the reliability of the marking scheme is critically important but at the same time marking schemes, in turn, should reflect a sound theory of language ability and thus demonstrate construct validity. Evidence for the construct validity of marking schemes has been little reported in the testing literature. The study's marking scheme hypothesised different elements of writing, and the analyses carried out in this final phase is related to how this writing ability is perceived. It examines correlations between the marks given for the different sub-categories, with a view to determining the construct validity of the marking scheme itself.

In this final phase correlational analyses were conducted between all the sub-categories. Appendix 7.1 contains all the correlation coefficients of the different sub-categories. The main findings are summarised below. The degree of correlations within all the sub-categories is very high. The majority of correlation coefficients, i.e. 60%, were over .95, whilst the lowest was .75. All the results were significant at $p < .01$.

In the following areas correlations were higher than .98:

- four sub-categories of 'vocabulary'
- four sub-categories of 'cohesion' .
- four sub-categories of 'content '
- three sub-categories of 'organisation'.
- sub-categories of ' vocabulary' and sub-categories of 'content'
- sub-categories of 'vocabulary' and 'cohesion' except 'vocabulary: accuracy' and 'cohesion: accuracy'.

The only categories which did not correlate highly with all the other sub-categories are 'grammar' and 'mechanics' ($r = .78 - .97, .78 -.89$) respectively. It is observed that all the four sub-categories of ' vocabulary', (e.g. accuracy) are highly correlated with one another in the range of .98 - .99. The extremely high correlation within the sub-categories of 'vocabulary' and 'content' raises the question if it is necessary to have these sub-categories at all. The above results seem to suggest that, overall,

‘vocabulary’, ‘cohesion’ and ‘content’ may be measuring the same thing and, this is an issue which needs further validation and investigation. However, ‘cohesion: accuracy’ does not correlate so highly with any of the ‘vocabulary’ sub-categories and ‘vocabulary:accuracy’ does not correlate highly with the sub-categories of ‘cohesion’. Regarding sub-categories of ‘organisation’, the results revealed that out of six combinations three exceeded 99. This seems to support they measure nearly the same thing.

One possible explanation of the overlap between the categories of ‘vocabulary’ and ‘content’ may be that when marking ‘content’ markers may have been influenced by ‘vocabulary’ and vice versa. This might be the result of ‘halo effect’ mentioned in 2.4.3., which makes it difficult to judge each of the aspects independently of others. Moreover, since ‘content’ involves the number of ideas and the way those ideas are developed, it is probable that each time writers introduced a new idea they would be introducing new vocabulary as well. In that case there would be a link between the number of ideas and a range of vocabulary. It is possible that, when marking, this fine distinction was blurred, and thus markers may have looked at two (hypothetically) distinct constructs as one and the same thing. Whilst realising that ‘vocabulary’ and ‘content’ are separate entities and yet being aware that they are highly correlated in the above analysis we are caught in a dilemma. The question is how we should treat content? Should we retain it since it is an important element of writing in its own right or do we eliminate it. However, care is needed when interpreting these high correlations. High values need not *necessarily* reflect redundancy, and we may keep vocabulary and content as separate categories. This calls for further investigation of the identity problem (e.g. how teachers frame knowledge, how they react to students in/experience etc.).

Bearing in mind that teachers are always hard pressed for time and overburdened with marking, a simple and more accessible scheme will be more welcome and manageable for teachers in Bangladesh. Furthermore, since adoption of an analytic marking scheme will slow down the marking process (see 2.4.3) it is suggested here that for reasons of practicality it is sensible to remove sub-categories which show overlap. The sub-categories of ‘grammar’ are not highly correlated with other sub-

categories, suggesting that it has the most distinct and independent sub-categories. Overall the correlations are high within the sub-categories of the four other categories (vocabulary, cohesion, content and organisation) and the most practical solution at this stage is to omit these sub-categories and keep them only as broad categories. This would reduce the total number of sub-categories from 20 to 4, (i.e., only 'grammar' with 4 sub-categories) which would certainly ease teachers' work load without diminishing the construct validity of the marking scheme itself.

The above investigations have been exploratory, arising primarily from the need to see whether an analytical scheme could prove more satisfactory and revealing than a holistic scheme and if it can be applied to the research context. Results show that an analytic scheme provides more detailed information as compared to the holistic scheme. Further, the evidence provided for the construct validity of the marking scheme, by shedding light on what is redundant and overlapping within the criteria sub-categories, lends support for using and refining this scheme for classroom contexts. However, it is to be noted that only the internal validity of the marking scheme was explored through correlational analysis which is a limitation of this part of the study (see 9.3).

7.3.1 Rater Comments

It will be recalled (see 4.6.4.3.1) that the marking scheme had a section for rater comments. Analysis of these comments (see Appendix 7.2) have highlighted, for example, that students scored differently on different aspects of written language. In some scripts students obtained e.g. 2 in 'accuracy' but achieved 4 in another aspect, e.g. 'range'. This indicates the fact that students may well develop variously in different elements of writing. Another instance of this is where some students have a score of 2 in 'organisation' but 4 in 'content'; this again could be explained by the fact that they have reached a satisfactory level in one area and still have weaknesses in another. Another case in point is that it may be said that students do seem to have strengths in one area (e.g. vocabulary) and are weak in another area (e.g. grammar). The point is that the methodology needs to gear itself to build upon the strengths and improve upon the weaknesses. A further comment is the observation that if students write in simple sentences, they may well avoid mistakes in the use of cohesive

devices and, thus, may appear at first glance to be more accurate writers. However, it is part of writing development to write longer, more complex sentences, even at the risk of error. A marking scheme ideally needs to take account of both accuracy and complexity and an analytic marking scheme seems more capable of accommodating different aspects and dimensions of writing.

In essence, the raters' comments reflect the fact that teachers should try to get an idea of strengths and weaknesses to give students indications of how to improve the areas they need to improve in and to encourage them in areas where they are developing.

7.4 Findings From the Examination Compositions and the Writing Tasks

7.4.1 Results of the Examination Compositions

It has to be borne in mind that the Examination Compositions were different from the Writing Tasks in a number of ways. Firstly the subjects were different. Secondly, the scripts had already been marked and had holistic scores (marked out of 20) on them, whereas the Writing Tasks were designed specially for the purposes of the study and were marked for the first time. Lastly these compositions had been rehearsed and prepared for the public examination. This point emerged during the marking process and all the markers realised instantly that the compositions were memorised by heart and, hence, it was perceived that they were not reflective of the development of writing ability (see 1.5.6). In this case, therefore, they were clearly different from the Writing Tasks in which students had no chance for prior rehearsal and no idea what they would have to write about. Despite these differences the researcher considered it worthwhile to examine these examination scripts to explore potential areas for further investigation.

The original marks, (the possible range of which is 0-20) obtained by the students on the Examination Compositions are shown in Table 7.7 below.

Table 7.7 Original Marks of Examination Compositions

Scores	Students
17-20	0
13-16	0
9-12	5
5-8	4
1-4	1

In this study, the Examination Compositions were re-marked, this time by using the analytical scheme (see 4.6.4.3.1 for discussion of this scheme). Table 7.8 below gives the result of the overall performance of students in the Examination Compositions marked by the analytical scheme. An overall score was calculated by averaging all the scores given to all the categories. The scores for each sub-category given by the three raters were averaged and classified according to the 1- 5 level scale prepared for the purpose of the study (see 4.6.4.3 and Appendix 4.11).

Table 7.8 Overall Writing Performance of Students on the Examination Compositions (N=10)

Scale	Range	Students	(%)
Very Good (5)	5 ~ 4.5.	1	10
Good (4)	4.4 ~ 3.5	6	60
Satisfactory (3)	3.4 ~ 2.5	2	20
Basic (2)	2.4 ~ 1.5	0	0
Inadequate (1)	1.5 ~ 1	1	10

Overall the results show that the remarking of the Examination Compositions provide a greater spread and range across the scale of 1 to 5 than in the holistic marking. 10% of the students are at each of the two extreme ends of 5 (Very Good) or 1 (inadequate); a majority of the students (60%) on a scale of 4 (Good), and none on the scale of 2 (Basic). Although the sample size, is admittedly, very small there appears to be some evidence that the analytic marking allows better discrimination between students' different abilities over the whole range of values in contrast with holistic scoring.

7.4.2 Results of Writing Tasks

The results of the overall performance of students in the specially designed Writing Tasks (see 4.6.4.1) are shown in Table 7.9 below. Again, as in the Examination

Compositions, the overall scores were calculated by averaging the marks given by the three raters and grouping them under the banding scale (see Appendix 4.11) prepared for this study.

Table 7.9 Overall Performance of Students on the Writing Tasks (N=30)

Scale	Range	Students	(%)
Very Good (5)	5 ~ 4.5	0	-
Good (4)	4.4 ~ 3.5	3	10
Satisfactory (3)	3.4 ~ 2.5	8	27
Basic (2)	2.4 ~ 1.5	14	40
Inadequate (1)	1.4 ~ 1	5	17

As can be seen from Table 7.9 above, the students' performances in the Writing Tasks indicate a wide range and variation, revealing mixed proficiency levels of students, with students ranging from 1 to 4. No students fell in the highest group of '5' (Very Good). Only 10% of the students achieved the scale of '4' (Good).; 27% scored '3' (Satisfactory); 40% scored '2' (Basic). Nearly 17% of the students scored '1' (Inadequate). What can be seen from Table 7.9 are the low mean scores. Though this was not the objective of the analysis, the results show the clustering of responses around a lower range scale of '2' (Basic). The overall impression gathered from these scripts is that, in general, the level of student performance in writing is low in the Writing Tasks. From this result it is possible to infer that students are not achieving satisfactorily in terms of their writing abilities. Figure 7.2 below provides a further description of how students scored on the different aspects of writing on the Writing Tasks.

Figure 7.2 Writing Tasks (N=30)

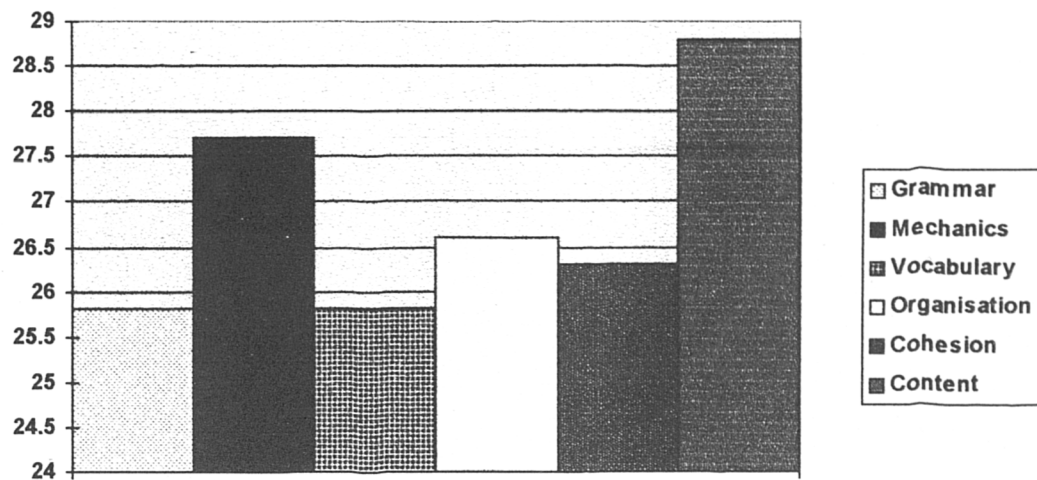


Figure 7.2 shows the average student performances on different aspects of writing (for the writing tasks) on a scale from 12 to 60, as calculated for Figure 7.1. The areas of 'content' and 'mechanics' are relatively strong, while 'organisation' and 'cohesion' are fairly weak and 'grammar' and 'vocabulary' are the weakest (areas).

Perhaps no collective judgement can be made on the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions, as the sample size, subjects and the tasks are different (a limitation of this study, see 9.3.2) but the relative differences on student performances are striking as can be seen by a comparison with Figure 7.1. Particularly notable is that 'vocabulary' identified as the weakest area in the Writing Tasks is the strongest in the Examination Compositions. 'Mechanics' meanwhile is the weakest in the Examination Compositions but the second strongest in the Writing Tasks. These disparities with the increased scores can be largely explained by the fact that the Examination Composition scripts were prepared, a finding corroborated by the raters who commented that the answers were of a more 'stereotypic nature'.

The lower scores on 'grammar' and 'vocabulary' in the Writing Tasks than in the Examination Compositions may be explained by a similar explanation that students made more mistakes in 'grammar' because they were not prepared and had to write spontaneously on a given topic under time constraints. The same applies for

‘vocabulary’. Nevertheless, students seemed to be consistent in ‘content’ regardless of task type. This may be related to the conditions under which students were writing, i.e. they had to produce writing under time pressure (one class period, i.e. 40 minutes) and without prior preparation. Sato (1985) compared three tasks in oral production and discovered that when there is no rehearsal the attention is on content rather than linguistic forms and this finding has some bearing on the findings from the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions in this study, i.e. students tend to have no problems with what to say but how to say it. However, further studies in this area might look into a larger sample size and use a more systematic research design with uniform subjects and tasks. This was not possible in this study, firstly because this had not been included in the original list of research questions and, secondly, it was not possible due to time and space constraints to add this at a later stage.

Even though the two data sets are not comparable and the results not strictly generalizable because of lack of consistency in subject groups and task types, the findings offer a number of insights. For example, firstly, it has been shown that it is crucial that teachers as examiners and markers of writing should have a clear understanding of what areas are involved in writing, as this will enable them to look for those elements which are essential in a quality text (2.3.2). Secondly, the study raises issues about the role of rehearsal and memorisation, and this in turn has important implications for testing and learner performance (see 8.2.4). Thirdly, the establishment of reliable criteria for marking and agreement amongst raters is a vital part of good professional practice. Therefore, standardisation procedures (see 2.4.3.1 and 8.7.4) and rater training are essential. The study has also touched upon the issue of the construct validity of the marking scheme and as such recommends it for further piloting and validation, particularly if it is simplified and the categories reduced in some ways.

7.5 Grammatical Error Analysis

Analysing the grammatical errors is a minor focus of this work, but a brief analysis was undertaken to see what kind of grammatical errors were predominant in the Writing Tasks. The 30 Writing Tasks were re-examined a second time by the

researcher to examine in particular the grammatical mistakes students had made. The motivation for this analysis emerged from the findings in the previous chapters (see Tables 5.10, 5.12, 6.2) where i) students' perceived themselves to be weak in grammar and ii) teachers also ranked 'grammar' as the overwhelming need of their students.

7.5.1 Typical Grammatical Mistakes

A list of grammar points was prepared as the basis for the analysis of scripts. This was based on Shackle's (1987) list, and was chosen because the author describes the most important and typical grammar mistakes of learners who speak Indian languages. However, the list was modified because some of the grammatical features highlighted, e.g. case and gender, (these were based on the contrast between Hindi and English) were not pertinent to Bengali and hence these were not included. The modified list is shown in Table 7.10 below.

Table 7.10 Grammar Trouble Spots

● Tense
● Prepositions
● Number
● Subject verb agreement
● Articles
● Word order
● Modal verbs
● Subordinate clauses
● Conjunctions
● Pronouns
● Relative pronouns

An analysis of the Writing Tasks was carried out by the researcher and a native speaking English teacher. This analysis was conducted by counting frequencies of grammatical mistakes according to the pre-defined categories e.g. tense, articles .

7.5.2 Findings of Grammatical Error Analysis

Findings from the error analysis are provided in Table 7.11.

Table 7.11 Number of Grammatical Mistakes in Writing Tasks (N=30)

Grammar Points	Mistakes	(%)
Tense	103	49.3
Prepositions	25	12.0
Number	21	10.0
Subject verb agreement	20	9.6
Articles	15	7.2
Word order	10	4.8
Modal verbs	7	3.3
Subordinate clauses	3	1.4
Conjunctions	3	1.4
Pronouns	1	0.5
Relative pronouns	1	0.5

Firstly, from the above table, it can be observed that the most frequent errors were in the area of tenses in general. Specifically, students were uncertain about using past and future tenses. They also made wrong uses of the past participle. Some examples of this type of error are listed below with the mistakes shown in italics:

1. I Md. Harrisul Islam *is* a student of Commerce. When I *have passed* SSC examination I *take* Commerce for HSC. I *choose* commerce as my subject and I decided to study *in* commerce.
2. I am a student of Humanities. I am interested *to* this subject. Because I *want to higher education in the subject of* English. English is the international *languages* of the world. I shall *choise* other subjects *of the* English. I want to study *in* English Honours. If I have to get a good job, I will *learning* english. I shall try to get a job *for a teacher*.
3. When I read in class eight I decided that I must study *will* Science. And when I passed class eight I *admission* class nine with science. Science *differents subjects is* Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Math etc.

These sentences show that students are not properly conversant with the use of the tenses, which in turn leads to further complications in their use of English e.g. where verbs are necessary students are prone to use nouns and vice versa, and the failure of the student to apply the correct form of the verb.

Secondly, problems with appropriate uses of prepositions (25 mistakes) and articles (15 mistakes) were noted. However, there was a lower preponderance of these kinds of errors, as compared to tense errors. Misuse or omission of articles and prepositions were observed e.g. 'so when I was child'.

Thirdly, subject verb agreement (20 mistakes) and number (21) errors were also noticeable as in the following examples:

1. Bangladesh is a very poor country. In Bangladesh many *peoples* are farmer. Actually *those we are students they have many duties*. I have made up my mind to become a doctor. My parents *are always appreciate this ambition*.
2. My father said that in future you will go to the village and practice there. *The mans* of the village are very poor. I was helped the poor person because they are helpless. They didn't have *too money to pay the visit to doctor*. *In this reason I have made up my mind to become a doctor and for this I am study Science*.
3. I have *an* good ambition that I can help the students and others people. I want to help the nation because our national economic condition is not good. I want to change *this conditions*.

Lack of subject verb agreement shows that a duplication of words, particularly nouns, may also lead to a confusing use of a verb which results in a collapse of the structure. The 'number' mistakes throw up situations where the noun does not tally with the demonstrative pronoun e.g. "this conditions".

Fourthly, it was shown that the scripts were characterised by fewer mistakes in the following linguistic areas: word order, modal verbs, subordinate clauses, conjunctions, pronouns and relative pronouns. However, a very small number of mistakes for these categories may suggest that students did not know how to apply these linguistic forms in writing. Or, perhaps they did not try to use those areas of grammar with which they had difficulty. In particular, absence of conjunctions and pronouns, in their written work reinforces the fact that they are weak in the use of cohesive devices, as evidenced by the findings from students' performance on the Writing Tasks where 'cohesion' is identified as a weak area (see Figure 7.2) and data obtained from classroom observations where teachers paid no attention to discourse errors (see 5.4.6 and 5.4.7).

In addition to the above findings, L1 interference was also observed. Students attempted to convey vocabulary and ideas directly from L1 to L2, leading to the feeling that the text had been literally translated. For instance, the majority of

students wrote ‘I am studying **in** Science’ and ‘I read **in** Science’. ‘Studying **in**’ is not a typical English structure, but this structure exists in the students’ L1 and it may be interpreted that students were using transfer strategies. The example quoted above, (i.e. I read **in** Science”) is literally translated from the Bengali phrase ‘ami Science ae porhi’ (‘read’ should be replaced by ‘study’, but the general phrase for ‘study’ in the cases of most students is the literal Bengali word ‘porhi’).

This qualitative assessment of the Writing Tasks throws light on the fact that while students may be fairly clear about their ideas, too great a concentration on grammatical aspects by the students themselves upsets the presentation. It could further be commented that students were committing more local errors than global errors (see 2.4.2.).

7.6 Summary

This chapter has presented a number of findings from the analysis of the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions. As demonstrated in 7.2, the interrater reliability may be considered satisfactory. In the analysis of the two marking schemes (7.3), it was shown that the analytic scheme gave a more detailed picture of students’ performance in different aspects of writing and helped to reveal the weaker areas of ‘grammar’, ‘vocabulary’, ‘organisation’ and ‘cohesion’. This leads to the suggestion that the analytic marking scheme should be recommended for teachers for use in classroom contexts as it can serve as an effective tool for providing constructive feedback.

Findings from the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions (7.4) revealed that the overall scores are low in the Writing Tasks in relation to those obtained by students in the Examination Compositions. In the Writing Tasks students performed very well on ‘content’ but their scores on ‘grammar’, ‘vocabulary’, ‘cohesion’ and ‘organisation’ were considered to be low; scores on ‘vocabulary’ and ‘grammar’ components were the lowest. In the Examination Compositions students also demonstrated their strength in the area of ‘content’ which is in agreement with findings from the Writing Tasks. In addition they scored well on ‘vocabulary’. Their weaknesses were reflected in the areas of ‘mechanics’, ‘grammar’, ‘cohesion’

and 'organisation'. An analysis of grammatical mistakes in the Writing Tasks (7.5) showed that students have problems with basic grammar structures e.g. tenses, subject verb agreement.

The next chapter presents a discussion of all the findings obtained in this study and makes specific recommendations in relation to curriculum reform and language teaching pedagogy.

CHAPTER 8

Discussion and Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

This study has been concerned with the evaluation of the writing component of the current HSC English syllabus. Chapter one presented the critical features of the HSC teaching and learning context, identified the major motivations behind the study and highlighted its significance. A brief account of the development of the Revised English Syllabus was also provided. Chapters two and three presented reviews of the relevant literature; they provided the theoretical framework for this evaluation research. Chapter two examined the research into writing processes and the structure of written texts and described the main approaches to writing pedagogy. Issues arising from studies of implementation of the process approach in Asian contexts (e.g. Hong Kong, Malaysia) were also highlighted. In addition, specifics of classroom practice with special reference to methodology, and the assessment of written work was discussed. Chapter three provided an overview of the different approaches to evaluation outlining purposes, dimensions and paradigmatic choices in evaluations. A number of evaluation case studies were then reviewed to draw on the characteristic features of evaluations and to inform the design of the present study. Chapter four presented the design features of this evaluation case study in which a descriptive and exploratory approach was adopted. The study utilised triangulation procedures from two perspectives. Firstly, a triangulation of methods was employed in the study by using a number of different research instruments, i.e. questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, analysis of the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions. Secondly, a triangulation of sources from a range of stakeholders was utilised e.g. teachers, students, principals and curriculum developers. Chapters five, six and seven have presented the results of the study. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were used to establish the findings.

This chapter now addresses the research questions presented at the beginning of the thesis (see 1.7) and, based on these findings makes specific recommendations for

curriculum reform and pedagogy. The research questions are discussed in the following five sections.

8.2 Syllabus Evaluation

8.2.1 Introduction

This study has attempted to evaluate the writing component of the current HSC English syllabus. Evaluation of the contents reveal that the syllabus focuses mainly on the writing skills (see Appendix 1.1) and is not integrated with other areas of language use for instance, speaking, reading and listening. As indicated by the respondents themselves (see 6.3.4), the syllabus does not specify aims, methodology, assessment and evaluation procedures. It comprises a number of selections of prose and poems; grammatical exercises (e.g. the use of the right form of verbs, transformation of sentences, use of appropriate prepositions, making sentences and narration) paragraph, composition, letter writing, translation and reading comprehension. The contents outlined above reveal that the entire writing curriculum is merely an inventory of items consisting of 3 pages (see Appendix 1.1). The main objective of the syllabus, although not explicitly stated, is geared towards getting students through the HSC examination (see 5.4.4 and 6.3.4.1).

The stakeholders in the HSC curriculum are not satisfied with the English syllabus and point to the lacunae in it. They are in favour of a syllabus which incorporates the four language skills. Based on observations and data drawn from several sources, three major criticisms can be levelled against the current syllabus. These are discussed below.

8.2.2 Literature Focus

The predominance of literature in the syllabus has been criticised. It is regarded here as both a strength and weakness of the syllabus. It is interesting to note that the teachers who participated in the study were predominantly from a literature background. Out of 80 teachers, 76 (95 %) had an MA in English literature (see 4.4.2). This partly explains the reason for supporting literature in the syllabus, as these teachers have not been exposed to language courses. Responses to the issue of too much or too little literature

in the syllabus are both interesting and contradictory. A certain amount of ambiguity is involved in their perceptions, as respondents are not consistent on the issue of the role of literature in the development of writing skills. Does it have a role in promoting writing skills? Or, is it more useful to use a variety of text types that students should be able to write in relation to the demands they will face for writing in class as well as for writing in life outside the classroom? It is, perhaps, not so much the content which creates the problem but the methodology employed and the ways in which literary texts are currently exploited in the teaching of writing (see 5.4.4 and 5.4.5). My view is that we should not dismiss literature completely, firstly because it forms part of a strong literary tradition in Bangladesh. In addition most teachers are literature oriented and familiar with this literary content. Secondly, literature provides good language models and a varied body of written material which deals with fundamental human issues and has universal appeal. Thirdly, if accompanied by appropriate methodology, literature can be enjoyable for example, working with poems (see Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). This literary material can be used in the classroom to promote the development of writing skills, in conjunction with writing exercises that provide exposure and training in composing strategies. A possible solution is to introduce a greater integration of language and literature and to teach language through literature. (For further reference on the role of literature in ELT see for example, Widdowson, 1975; Brumfit, 1983, 1985 and for pedagogic suggestions see Maley and Moulding, 1985; Brumfit and Carter, 1986; Collie and Slater, 1987; Carter and Long, 1991; Mcrae, 1991 and Duff and Maley 1990).

However, use of the literature genre as the exclusive vehicle for the teaching of writing may not be appropriate if the goal is to develop writing skills which students can use effectively in their academic and occupational fields. One aspect of syllabus discussed by Principals and teachers (6.3.3.2) was the possibility of differentiation according to subject discipline or different streams e.g. Science, Commerce, Humanities. I feel that this approach would benefit students, as they belong to distinct discourse communities and guidance in writing relating to subject specific disciplines will help students to move a long way in meeting their English for Specific Purposes (ESP) needs. In

addition, this will help to quell low motivation due to a perception that they are being forced to take compulsory English classes which content/discipline wise they do not need or, at least, do not perceive a need for this. For example, it was mentioned earlier (see 1.5.3) that Science students do not seem to be interested in English but if genre and topics related to their discipline are introduced it could stimulate their motivation in language learning.

This could be undertaken particularly in relation to two elements of the syllabus. Firstly, the list of suitable genres could be specific to disciplines or streams. For example, Science students will need instructions, certain types of descriptions such as classifications and process descriptions whereas Humanities students might benefit more from creative writing and descriptions of people, places and systems. The other aspect of differentiation which would be beneficial is in the selection of appropriate topics to be covered in the syllabus. The topics should be chosen, perhaps through a needs analysis, within respective fields so that students develop writing skills within their discipline areas. Some topics such as environmental issues, population awareness, pollution, deforestation might be suitable for Science and Commerce students. Literature, religion, culture could be more suitable for Humanities students. In this way, the syllabus could be shaped more specifically to suit the interests of particular student groups and would have a beneficial effect on motivation. Curriculum developers and teachers can enhance motivation amongst students by including genres and topics which provide an academic orientation to their respective disciplines.

8.2.3 Types of Exercises

An analysis of the contents of the syllabus, as well as its classroom implementation, reveals that most of the exercises in the syllabus are traditional and emphasise form-focused activities (see 2.3.1, 5.2.2, 5.4.4 and 5.4.6). These are mainly sentence level reinforcement and discrete point tasks (see 5.4.3 and Table 6.3.1). Such exercises do not necessarily help all students to develop the writing skills. There does not seem to be an easy relationship between doing controlled exercises and being able to transfer the practice to writing longer stretches of discourse (Tribble, 1996). Moreover, one-off

paragraph writing, controlled composition and letter writing and usage rules (see 5.4.3) do not necessarily develop composing strategies (2.2.1). ‘Form’ is important but, in order to develop writing skills, what is also basically required is to give students exposure to activities and tasks which will help them to build composing strategies. That is, to introduce activities that will involve students in contextualised pieces of whole writing and to acquaint them with the strategies and activities in which successful writers have been shown to engage in. An example of this would be planning and reviewing (see 2.2.1 and 2.3.2.1).

However, it is interesting to note that the majority of respondents in this study believe that the grammatical items on the syllabus are one of its major strengths (see Table 6.16). Even though grammar items already constitute a substantial portion of the syllabus, the participants advocate the inclusion of additional grammar items in the syllabus (see 6.3.6). This proves that ‘grammar’ occupies a central and fundamental position in the teaching and learning of writing at the HSC level. In addition, the collation of perceptions of teachers, students (see 5.2.4 and 5.3.3) and other stakeholders, combined with data from live classroom observations in this study, further testify to the fact that ‘grammar’ is the engine that drives, and is perceived to drive, everything in the writing classroom.

8.2.4 Rote Learning

It will be recalled that one marked feature of the HSC context is that the questions on the English Examinations are predictable and that students memorise answers to get through their examination (see, 1.5.7). Groups of respondents in this evaluation study have been critical about this rote learning bias of the syllabus which encourages memorisation (see 6.2.1, 6.3.1 and 6.3.4). This tendency was also noted by the raters while marking the Public Examination Compositions (see 7.4), in that these pieces of written work had been largely rehearsed and learned by heart. In the classroom observations on two of the classwork sheets the teacher had commented ‘not memorised’ and ‘memorised’, respectively (see 5.4.6). From this it may be inferred that students have the tendency to cram set and pertinent composition answers or paragraphs.

The point to be made is that memorisation neither develops writing skills nor writing abilities. It largely tests students' ability to copy and reproduce. If memorisation is encouraged, students with good memories will score better on the examination than students who are actually developing quite reasonable writing skills but who are making mistakes in trying to express themselves quite genuinely in the examinations. Encouragement of memorisation as a strategy to cope with writing is unfair, misleading and demotivating, as it can never help students to learn the art of composing.

The actual topics that come up in the examination should not be predictable, otherwise it is not a test of writing. We do not want a test of memory but a proper test of writing and this is a dilemma for both tests of oral and written production. What we are looking for is a widening out of the genre that relates to real life situations or to use of English across the curriculum. We are looking for the development and testing of writing skills which engage learners in the writing of whole contextualised pieces of communication - letters, reports, descriptions, essays and so on. And we are looking for activities that do not allow memorisation in writing but strategies to cope with the whole process of writing.

In the light of the above discussion it can be concluded that the current HSC syllabus is not a balanced one. It relies to a large extent on the literary genre and does not meet the needs of the different streams of students pursuing the HSC course. In addition there is a reliance on sentence level writing more than extended writing tasks (see Table 6.11). Moreover, the extended writing tasks are also not practised in class in line with the strategies used by successful writers. As stated earlier, the tendency is to learn answers or compositions by heart or to practice writing one-off paragraphs (5.4.4). All these facts point to a syllabus that neither promotes the development of writing skills nor helps in preparing students for entrance into the tertiary level. No wonder there is a big gap between the entry and target competence levels of undergraduates in English (see 1.5.1). The syllabus defeats the main objective of the higher secondary stage which is regarded as a preparatory stage for higher education (see 1.3.4).

All groups of respondents are aware of the shortcomings of the syllabus and have proposed a number of suggestions, amongst which wider and simplified versions of selections (prose and poems), additional grammar items, specification of teaching methodology, evaluation procedures and frequent classroom practice are noteworthy.

8.2.5 Textbook

With regard to the textbook, the findings reveal that a substantial number of respondents in this evaluation study are dissatisfied with the textbook. It is not meeting the needs of the students mainly because the use of literary texts is considered inappropriate for the majority of the students and the selections of these texts are regarded as advanced and unsuitable. In addition, the textbook contains no purposeful exercises for writing practice. Moreover, the absence of a Teachers' Guide is felt by nearly all the participants. A Teachers' Guide is perceived to be immensely beneficial for providing guidelines for teaching.

Respondents suggested a number of modifications to the textbook. They advocated writing activities, additional grammar items, wider and simplified version of selections. A textbook with suitable exercises which will introduce students to the various activities involved in writing (see 2.3.2.1) should be compiled or introduced. Alternatively commercially available materials may also be used. Since there was no evidence of the use of additional materials in class, the availability of supplementary writing materials may also help teachers and students in the development of writing skills. A Teachers' Guide is recommended. However, in this connection, decisions regarding at what level this should be initiated remains to be taken e.g. at the national or institutional level. Moreover, the question of piloting of Teachers' Guides also needs to be taken into consideration and appropriate procedures for this designed.

8.2.6 Revised Syllabus

It will be recalled that the syllabus has been revised (see 1.5.4, 1.5.5 and 6.3) while this thesis was in the process of being finalised. Its implementation is proposed for the year 2001. The Revised Syllabus begins with a list of aims (see Appendix 1.2). The specific

objectives of teaching and learning English are expressed in terms of the four language skills, and a communicative teaching and learning methodology is suggested. The introduction of the four language skills can be seen as a positive feature of this Revised Syllabus since it addresses a deficiency highlighted in the current one. In addition a variety of genre has been introduced (see Appendix 1.2). However, it is quite difficult to see how some of the items in this Revised Syllabus may relate to what students will need or will have to do when they leave college. The aim pointed out in section 1.1 of the Revised Syllabus “is to ensure that students enjoy acquiring English and are able to use it effectively in real life situations outside the classroom” (see, Appendix. 1.2). This does not, however, appear to quite relate to the inclusion of ‘narratives’ or ‘dialogues’ in the syllabus. A dialogue, for example, relates to the study of dramatic art forms e.g. stage plays and film scripts and is not a helpful item as all students might not benefit by it. However, it could be useful for ‘Humanities’ students who, after leaving college, want to have a degree in literature. For the other streams, it would be appropriate to include more expository writing. For example, a list that includes text types like comparison and contrast (see 2.3.3 and Appendix 2.2), problem solution, different types of expository writing like descriptions of contemporary events or people or objects, classification of types of description, definition, describing a process or system would be helpful, for developing writing skills as within the educational (academic) context, students would need these types of writing. It is to be recalled that one of the findings of this evaluation study is that students prioritised academic needs (6.2.2 and 6.7) and in terms of the genre some of the above e.g. comparison and contrast would relate to their ‘In School Needs’.

The section on structures in the Revised Syllabus (3.1) is not very different from what is listed in the current syllabus. It is, again, a list of grammatical features, e.g. the passive mode, 1st conditional, 2nd conditional. However, it is encouraging to note that the objective is to teach these structures implicitly through regular use within realistic contexts. The rest will depend on how syllabus objectives will be translated into classroom practice (see Lawrence’s evaluation study in Zambia 1990, 3.4.6). The whole section on vocabulary (3.3.c) in the syllabus is helpful, because learners themselves

have expressed in the present study that ‘vocabulary’ is important and they have problems with ‘vocabulary’. Moreover, it is good to see there is provision for Teachers’ Guides and Students’ Workbook, in the syllabus thus already fulfilling two main recommendation from this evaluation study e.g. emphasis on vocabulary as a classroom aim and provision of Teachers’ Guides (see 8.7.2).

It is important to note that nothing has been mentioned in the Revised Syllabus about what marking criteria are to be used in the assessment of writing. Specification of clear marking criteria is vital if the development of writing is to take place. One of the findings of this study is that an analytic marking scheme, which uses a wider set of criteria, is useful in highlighting areas which would otherwise go unidentified (7.3). An explicit and specific set of marking criteria, such as the one used in the study, helps to provide a detailed description of the areas of writing in which students are weak or strong. This information can be manipulated by teachers for remedial work. The marking scheme used in this study, subject to further revision and modification, is recommended for teachers for use in classroom contexts.

The guidelines for the format of the writing examination in the Revised Syllabus is very disappointing. Students can practice writing by producing sentences from substitution tables or by reordering sentences but it will not lead to students producing accurate sentences in a continuous piece of prose. In addition, a disadvantage of such controlled writing is that insufficient emphasis may be paid to complete texts and students will not have the opportunity to develop their ability to revise and edit texts (see 2.3.2.1). Moreover, as stated earlier (8.2.3), work at this level may not transfer to higher levels of text organisation (Tribble, 1996:94). Guided writing and controlled writing tasks should be complemented by other types of extended writing to have a balance of product, process and genre goals (see 2.3.3).

The guidelines for textbook writers, as specified in the Revised Syllabus, are strong on the characteristics of a communicative textbook and communicative activities. However, the writing exercise types are not at all appropriate because these do not help

students to become involved in extended texts. As mentioned earlier it may not be possible to develop writing skills effectively through such exercises (e.g. answering questions without and with clues to form a paragraph) as they may not provide opportunities to students to write meaningfully, i.e. with purpose and audience in mind. If textbooks are written according to what is specified in 8.6.4 (see Appendix 1.2) of the Revised Syllabus e.g. gap filling, reordering tasks, writing from a model, little will be done to promote the development of writing skills. The writing exercises neither match the characteristics of a communicative textbook, outlined in 8.5 (of the Revised Syllabus), nor are there any activities that encourage students to adopt the strategies that good writers use. For example, there is no scope for the generation of ideas and no activities for planning, organising, drafting or revision in the writing exercise types outlined in the Revised Syllabus. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that students already have effective strategies for these things. If writing materials which promote writing skills are to be produced much more needs to be done than is suggested in the revised curriculum.

This Revised Syllabus is, in many ways, an improvement on paper on the current one, as indicated in the above discussion. Indeed, I think it is a positive step forward. However, despite this improvement there are some areas which need to be addressed and further developed. Five areas are highlighted below.

1. The syllabus assumes a transfer of skills from first language to second language. It assumes that students have developed effective writing process strategies through their mother tongue and they can transfer these skills to the second language. This does not appear a very sensible assumption to make because this is not so in most parts of the world and there is no reason why Bangladesh should be different. Even today there is no training of writing strategies in Bangladeshi colleges.
2. There is a discrepancy between the aims of the Revised Syllabus and the writing activities suggested for the writing examination and textbook. Current writing research shows that proficient writers employ the various strategies in planning,

drafting and revising written texts. None of these activities are indicated in the Revised Syllabus. Activities which correspond to these strategies (with necessary adjustments), for example, generation of ideas, structuring, reviewing (see 2.3.2.1) should be incorporated into the textbooks as exercises for exposure and practice opportunities. This will help students to develop writing skills and will provide support to handle writing independently and confidently.

3. No criteria have been laid down for the assessment of writing, an area which has been a major focus of this thesis. The Revised Syllabus should specify on what basis students' written work will be judged. It is important that both teachers and students know what these criteria are. Criteria for formative and summative assessment should thus be specified clearly.

Formative assessment is indispensable for tracking students' development and discovering their strengths and weaknesses with regard to specific aspects of writing. Specifying criteria for summative assessment of writing is also vital as students operate in an academic setting where examination serves the gatekeeping function and students' future lives depend on test results. Students ought to know on what criteria their written work will be assessed in the Public Examination and what constitutes a weak or good answer.

4. It is important to note that this evaluation study identified a number of major weaknesses in student writing, i.e. 'grammar', 'vocabulary', 'organisation', and 'cohesion'. Two of these areas are addressed in the Revised Syllabus e.g. 'grammar', 'vocabulary' but there is no provision to include work in the areas of 'cohesion' and 'organisation'. Students need to be exposed to tasks which help to develop 'cohesion' and 'organisation' in their written work. For example, activities which teach students to use cohesive markers appropriately e.g. using connectors of contrast such as on the other hand, alternatively or concession e.g. however, nevertheless (see Appendix 8.3).

5. The Revised Syllabus does not mention any evaluation activities for monitoring its success or failure. There should be provision for systematic and principled evaluation of the syllabus for both formative and summative purposes. This is important because it is through evaluation procedures, that this study has been able to provide a detailed picture of a range of stakeholders views on the writing syllabus as well as its implementation in the classroom. This systematic and in-depth investigation in turn, has revealed the specific strengths and weaknesses of the syllabus and has given pointers for areas where attention is needed. Such data are needed to bring about change and improved performance.

Finally, the syllabus needs to cater for the needs identified in this evaluation study. It should aim to strive for a balance between product (e.g. controlled or guided writing), process (e.g. activities for planning, structuring, reviewing) and genre (e.g. process description, comparison and contrast) goals (see 2.3). In addition the ESP dimension should not be overlooked and topics and genre related to the interest of different streams should be included. Another suggestion is the teaching of language through literature, a consideration which needs to be build up in further syllabus developments.

8.3 Student Views on Purposes, Needs and Problems

Students themselves clearly feel that the two overwhelming needs for writing are for academic purposes, i.e. the need to get through the HSC examination and to succeed in English in their higher studies (6.2.2). In addition, they want to learn to write in English in order to get better jobs. These findings show that the writing needs of the majority of students are academically oriented and students seem to be intrinsically motivated as well. This motivational need probably stems from the fact that all lucrative job advertisements in Bangladesh ask for graduates with fluent command in speaking and writing. The results of this evaluation study show that students perceive themselves to be deficient in both these skills (see 5.3.3). Thus, student responses on this issue indicate a realistic demand for English. However, other respondents, such as administrators, are aware of a wider range of needs and signal personal development, communication and good job prospects as vital needs for students.

The data, therefore, reveals the disparity of perceptions between what students feel they need and what administrators regard as important. Students, in outlining their academic and occupational needs in writing, envisage two things. Firstly, that they need English for both short term (examination) and long term (jobs) needs. A finding that corroborates the results of a study undertaken by the British Council (Raynor, 1995). Secondly, in emphasising these needs they expressed an awareness of the utilitarian importance of English as a gateway for education and employment. This awareness is a positive sign of student realisation and acceptance of the value of English in their academic and future lives. This positive aspect requires further development (of student motivation) in writing skills through certain changes in teaching methodology and curriculum reform (in consonance with the social and educational background), so that learning can be maximised. The next step is for policy makers, curriculum designers and teachers to chalk out a course of action and decide how to address and accommodate student needs and to help them become confident and fluent writers of English.

The following areas of writing are perceived to be problematic, namely, ‘expression of ideas’, ‘vocabulary’, ‘grammar’ and ‘organisation’ for students studying at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh. Before discussing these areas, I would like to mention that in the U.K, also, there is considerable concern over undergraduate native speakers who cannot write acceptably, as evidenced by the discussion on the Linguistic Association of Great Britain (LAGB) electronic Writing list. The problems of student writing are by no means limited to bilingual or second language writers but extend to native speaker writers as well.

Students in this evaluation study have expressed the view that they are unable to ‘express their ideas’ in writing. As mentioned earlier (see 4.3) ‘expression of ideas’ is a term used by both teachers and students in the Bangladeshi context. On the surface, ‘expression of ideas’ means simply ‘to get ones ideas across’ but at a deeper level it has a more complex interpretation. It involves ideas of cohesion, coherence, appropriacy, clarity and logical development of ideas: all the elements in the writing process that

make up a unified piece of writing. Thus, students perceive they encounter difficulties in expressing themselves clearly and appropriately in English. The majority of respondent groups agree on this area of student difficulty.

‘Vocabulary’ is highlighted as another problematic area of writing. Students’ perceptions of their being weak in ‘vocabulary, i.e. 81.4% students regarded ‘vocabulary’ as a difficult area of writing (see Tables 5.12 and 5.14) was corroborated and confirmed by findings from analysis of the ‘Writing Tasks’ (see Figure 7.2). ‘Vocabulary’ has always posed obstacles for foreign language learners and this discovery in the case of Bangladeshi learners is perhaps no new revelation (see studies by Chandrasegaran 1981, Weir 1988). Furthermore, what immediately strikes the reader as one scans the data is the disparity between the teacher perceptions on the questionnaires and those of the interviews on the issue of ‘vocabulary’. Whereas, the majority of teachers rate ‘vocabulary’ as one of the problematic areas (5.2.1 and 6.2.1) on the questionnaire, only 10% of teachers see it as an important classroom aim in the follow up interviews. In addition, classroom observation data revealed that in only 12% classes teachers focused on vocabulary items e.g. verbal explanation of difficult words and only 6% of the focus of written correction was on vocabulary items (see 5.4.2 and 5.4.5). Students rate ‘vocabulary’ as an area where they would appreciate support and teachers also consider it important but, classroom observations revealed that it is neither an important classroom aim nor part of the syllabus.

As indicated earlier, students regard ‘grammar’ as a major stumbling block in writing. ‘Grammar’ is an area which needs to be addressed as it has emerged very strongly from all the data sources elicited in this study. Not only students have expressed concern with ‘grammar’, but also all other parties (see 6.2, 6.2.3 and 6.2.4) are concerned with ‘grammar’ and consider it to be detrimental in the development of writing skills. In fact, ‘grammar’ in Bangladesh appears to be centre stage at the higher secondary level.

However, one has to be careful because sometimes teachers and students all focus on ‘grammar’ because that is how they perceive the problem and, perhaps the only way

they know how to articulate the 'language problem'. The perceptions that the problems are overwhelmingly grammatical relate to the existing approach and to the prevalent view of writing which is form-oriented. McKay (1984) points out that an important reason behind this grammatical concern is a tendency to focus on grammatical capacity because this is the most easiest to deal with. Grammatical errors are also easier to identify and indicate. These also provide remedial solutions as opposed to other aspects of writing such as poor organisation and to suggest clear cut ways. The point to remember is, as White and Arndt (1991:2) have stated, "grammar is important - but as a tool, a means, and not as an end in itself". The perceptions of teachers and students and other participants in this study is that 'grammar' is an end. In order to promote writing skills teachers and other stakeholders have to move away from this perception. They need to know, as insights from writing research shows (see 2.2.1), that writing difficulties may also be the results of difficulties with composing skills rather than with linguistic skills.

It is interesting to note that these perceptions are supported by research in higher education in the UK. Creme and Lea (paper presented at the Writing Development in Higher Education Conference April, 1998) suggest that it is a myth that students lack basic skills and that teachers are mistakenly over-concerned with surface features of the language. They contend that these mistaken views determine the ways in which issues around writing are perceived, and addressed by both teachers and students, and that fully fledged acceptance of these perspectives hinders good practice.

Despite considerable importance and attention to grammar, as shown by the items on the syllabus and classroom practice (in this study), students are weak in 'grammar' and writing in general because "focusing on language errors in writing improves neither grammatical accuracy nor writing fluency" (White and Arndt, 1991:2). 'Grammar' should definitely be part of the syllabus but not as a pivot around which everything revolves and mastery of form should not be the measure for evaluating writing.

The analysis and interpretation of the 'Writing Tasks' (see 7.4) reveal that when one actually looks at student writing itself, there are clearly other areas too, besides

‘grammar,’ that need to be addressed in the writing curriculum, e.g. ‘cohesion’, ‘organisation’, ‘vocabulary’. This is not to say that one is overlooking the grammatical problems that have emerged as a result of the grammatical analysis (see 7.5). Problems with tenses, subject verb agreement, numbers, prepositions, articles, mother tongue interference should be attended to and classroom methodology should be geared to help students overcome these. The point is one should not be obsessed with grammar problems alone, as students displayed weaknesses in other areas too e.g. ‘cohesion’, ‘organisation’. This is where teachers should move beyond their current perceptions of writing approaches and draw upon insights both from research into the composing processes and from recent trends in pedagogy. That is, they should look into ideas about what makes a skilled writer and what it is that makes a quality written text (see 2.2.1 and 2.3.2).

8.4 Perceptions of the Writing Process

8.4.1 Student Perceptions

Students have a traditional (see 2.3.1) view of writing which is essentially form-focused (see 5.3.2). The views articulated by students have been characterised as traditional because they describe an attitude towards writing which is mechanical and form-oriented and does not emphasise the importance of creating meaning in text. For example, students perceive that help with ‘grammar’ ‘vocabulary’ and ‘spelling’ (see 5.3.2) will help them to improve their writing skills. Students expressed particular concern with ‘grammar’ and this overt concern with ‘grammar’ is a reflection of the fact that it is the yard stick by which they measure their writing performance (see 5.3.3). As mentioned earlier, current research on writing shows that what may be more important in writing is not linguistic competence but competence in the composing processes (see 2.2.1).

Students attitudes towards writing in general seem to be quite positive as they perceive they are interested to write in English (see 5.3.5). However, the majority of students believe that private tuition is necessary to cope with English. This is an issue which needs to be addressed. The question is; why do students feel strongly about private

tuition? Does this point to an inferior school system, and is the college system as well failing to provide them with the sort of support they need? In Greece there is a similar situation where students overwhelmingly prefer private language lessons (Karavas, 1993), although schools offer compulsory English. However, the reasons behind the popularity of private English centres in Greece is different from that of Bangladesh. Students go for private schools in Greece because these offer certificates and degrees. In Bangladesh this is not the case. Students resort to private tuition mainly because they are weak in English and require additional help to get through examinations and they perceive the need for English in terms of their economic and social mobility. The quality of English education provided in colleges, the lack of confidence in both public education and the examination system has created this need. In addition, there is also a strong demand for English at the tertiary level as students are willing to spend a lot of money on private coaching sessions and language schools (Raynor, 1995).

8.4.2 Teachers' Perceptions

Teachers' perceptions of the writing process as well as the classroom methodology they adopt are also along the lines of traditional approaches to writing. Teachers are unaware of current research in writing. There was no evidence gathered in the study via classroom observations, of students going through the different stages of writing e.g. planning, redrafting or revision in which successful writers engage (see 2.2.1).

In terms of teachers perceptions and practice, there is a certain reliability and agreement to an extent in some cases but there is also a mismatch between their perceptions and practice in some cases. For instance, they perceived themselves as fulfilling the roles of facilitator and guide but in actual practice they functioned as transmitters of information and evaluators of the written product. An aggregate of perceptions (i.e. of teachers and students) show a reliance on grammar books (see 5.4.3). Teachers claimed they used supplementary writing materials in class but in action no materials were used and lecturing was the predominant mode of teaching.

The focus of most of the classes, as perceived by teachers and, in reality, through the classroom observations, was on linguistic features and the thrust of error correction was

also on for example, tense, spelling (see 2.3.1 and 5.4.5). Error correction itself was regarded as an important mode of feedback. Particularly in terms of teachers' perceptions of helping students with feedback, it was noted that teachers reported they provide feedback in the form of grades and marks. In their actual classroom practices, teachers confined themselves to underlining and circling errors (mainly grammatical and mechanical) and sporadically writing comments such as 'good'. The point is teachers do not know what students do with such circling. How is this information used by students? It may be said that none of these methods of offering feedback are very effective as they do not provide adequate information to students about their particular strengths and weaknesses in writing and as such, this does not help to move the development of writing forward. In addition in the writing classes "simplistic assumptions about organisation and ordering of information" (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996:86) was noticed (see 5.4.1 and 5.4.3). Moreover, typical one shot writing assignments were practised in class.

In summary, on the basis of teachers' perception and their actual practices as well as on the students' perceptions in this evaluation study, it becomes possible to characterise the teaching of writing in Bangladesh in the following way. The main approach to classroom teaching is teacher-centred, that is through lectures, with teachers using a linear model of teaching which views writing as a preconceived activity. The overall focus of writing is to produce correct sentences and the emphasis is usually on developing accurate patterns in grammar. Error correction concentrates on features of linguistic competence and limited summative feedback is provided. These methods reflect an approach to writing which is largely form-driven. Therefore, in relation to the discussions of writing found in the literature (2.3.1), it is possible to characterise the approach of writing as a traditional product-centred approach.

8.5 Strengths and Weaknesses in Writing

Students' self-assessment of their language skills (5.3.3) revealed that they considered themselves to be stronger in receptive skills and weaker in productive skills. Students

appear to suffer from lack of self-confidence (see 6.2.2 and 6.2.3) with regard to English as 99% of the students answered the questionnaires in Bengali.

The analysis of the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions showed that, irrespective of task types, student scores were both consistent and higher in the 'content' category on the marking criteria. From this it can be concluded that 'content' is their main strength in writing. This means that students have ideas and background knowledge for what they would like to communicate but they do not have the means to do. This strongly suggests that students need methodological support and guidance in the composing processes and frequent writing practice for improving their writing skills.

As mentioned earlier, 'grammar' has been identified as the major weakness in writing. The results of grammatical analysis further showed weaknesses with special reference to tenses, subject verb agreement, numbers, prepositions and articles. Examination of students' actual writing samples revealed that in addition to 'grammar' 'vocabulary', 'cohesion' and 'organisation' were other weak areas of student writing. The curriculum needs to be tuned to incorporate activities and tasks in these areas to help students overcome problems in these particular aspects.

8.6 Fit Between Students' Needs and the HSC English Syllabus

It may be concluded that the writing component of the syllabus is not catering to student needs. Firstly, there is no provision for helping students in areas besides 'grammar', i.e. in the areas of 'expression of ideas', 'vocabulary', 'cohesion' and 'organisation'. Secondly, students do not have the opportunity to practice activities such as 'generation of ideas' or 'revising' as paragraphs and compositions are practised as one shot pieces of writing. In addition, these are assessed as final products, so there is no scope to move beyond this limited and preconceived notion of writing. Moreover, in the teaching of the above items there is a concentration on form, rather than encouraging students to write purposefully and meaningfully. Thirdly, students have limited exposure to genre and topics and there is a strong literature orientation in the syllabus. Students need to be exposed to a variety of genre because they have prioritised academic and vocational

needs. Currently, the syllabus does not meet these requirements and there is lack of harmony and mismatch between student needs and the objectives and contents of the syllabus.

8.7 Recommendations for Curriculum Reform and Language Teaching Pedagogy

From the foregoing discussion based on the analysis of the data, it seems that it would be sensible to make recommendations in two major areas i) curriculum reform and 2) language teaching pedagogy with special reference to the development of writing skills. In curriculum reform, recommendations are made for teacher training and learner training. For pedagogy, specific recommendations are made for classroom aims, and classroom instruction, and assessment. Some further points and suggestions are provided below.

8.7.1 Curriculum Reform

8.7.1.1 Teacher Training

Any development or curriculum improvement has to be built into the roots of the existing curriculum and teaching practices. It is the teachers who play major role in bringing about learning in the classroom (see Fullan 1993; Markee 1997) through their choice of learning experiences and the support they provide to learners. No matter how good the curriculum intentions and materials may be it is teachers in interaction with students who bring them alive and who create and manage the learning experience through which learners construct, use and reconstruct knowledge (Clarke et al., 1994).

In-service and Pre-service training of teachers is indispensable, as there is no point designing a sound curriculum, or revising an existing one, if teachers do not know how to implement it. Little development will take place if teachers have to work with inadequate curriculum plans, poor materials and examinations (Clarke et al., 1994).

Hence, bringing about professional development through teacher preparation, education, induction support and in-service training is essential.

Teacher training is recommended for teachers operating at the HSC level firstly, because the professional development of teachers is the most crucial element for effective curriculum renewal (Stenhouse, 1975); secondly, 50% of the teachers in this study reported that they have had no training (see 6.3.1) in the teaching of writing skills. Those who have received training have attended general foundation courses and as such have had no exposure to courses specifically designed to teach writing skills. It is imperative, therefore, that writing teachers be exposed to the aspects of current practice in writing. It is highly encouraging to note that 64% of the teachers in the study have expressed a desire to participate in English language training, with a particular focus on the teaching of writing skills.

The teachers' role is of prime importance in the teaching learning process but other parties e.g., administrators, curriculum developers should collaborate with these teachers to help the former to maximise teaching. The Ministry of Education and the NCTB should draw up a professional development plan to ensure that the capability of teachers and other contributors to the education process is improved. Policy makers, administrators, curriculum developers, materials writers, examiners and others should also engage in ongoing professional development.

The foregoing section has offered suggestions to the Ministry of Education and the NCTB. Perhaps, as an alternative it is also worthwhile a realistic perspective to consider values of institutionally based INSET innovation as contemporary approach within teacher education/management of change (see Hopkins 1989; Ruddock 1991).

8.7.1.2 Learner Training

In addition to teacher training, it is recommended here that there should be provision for learner training. This is because learners are the main recipients of the educational system and there should be support for them too, when there are curricular changes. Teacher training is a familiar concept for the Bangladeshi context but learner training may be something new. Learner training is defined as follows:

Learner training aims to help learners consider the factors that affect their learning and discover the learning strategies that suit them best so that they may become more effective learners - take on more responsibility for their own learning. It focuses their attention on the process of learning (Ellis and Sinclair, 1989: 2).

Generally speaking in any context learner training is seen as desirable because it helps learners to develop strategies so that they can take more control of their teaching and manage their own learning in a more responsible way. Learner training activities can be used with both very motivated students or with less motivated students. It helps very motivated students because they are already keen to learn and hence introduction to learner training activities gives them greater insights to improve themselves. For less motivated students, these activities develop awareness through various strategies and, in turn, help students to become more involved in what is going on in the classroom. In addition to a Teachers' Guide, both the 'Learner and Teacher' Books by Ellis and Sinclair (1989), or other commercially available materials are recommended as example source materials for learner training courses.

In order to demonstrate the value of learner training with particular regard to writing the Writing Tutorial called 'Criteria' (see Sherman, 1994:42-49) is a good example of procedures to raise awareness in learners about the marking of a piece of written work. Here learners are required to look at a number of compositions, to imagine themselves as assessors and grade the work; this is then compared with the original marking. In this way students are familiarised with the criteria which actual examiners have used, e.g. accuracy, range, interest of content, clarity. Then, based on this criteria, students self evaluate their own writing and compare it with their teachers marks and opinions. This is the kind of learner training activity that encourages awareness of what constitutes a good piece of writing. This is not relying on peer editing which is difficult in traditional classrooms with large numbers. It is actually providing opportunities for students to address their own writing skills and identify ways of improving their own written work.

8.7.2 Classroom Aims and Instruction

The findings from the majority of data sets, as amply indicated elsewhere (see 6.2, 6.2.4 and Table 5.12), reveal that students are weak in 'grammar' and 'vocabulary'. In addition the analysis of the Writing Tasks reveal that students have significant problems with 'organisation' and 'cohesion'. Thus, major classroom aims to improve writing skills can be teaching of 'vocabulary', 'grammar', 'cohesion' and 'organisation'.

The specific tasks and activities recommended below focus on areas of writing which have been perceived to be problematic for the students. I present activities which are considered useful and suitable for the age and linguistic level of HSC learners, and which are appropriate in content both topic wise and culturally. For the moment teachers could use these without adaptation, as they are constrained by time as well as expertise to design their own, new, activities.

8.7.2.1 Vocabulary

Attention to vocabulary development and increasing and building learners' vocabulary should be an important aim. I would like to recommend the use of 'vocabulary notebooks', suggested by Schmitt and Schmitt (1995). This strategy appears to be an effective way towards vocabulary development and can be applied in large Bangladeshi classrooms. I feel it is a kind of self-help strategy that learners can use independently once the teacher has introduced it.

The notebook can be arranged in a loose leaf binder or on cards (these can be substituted by making normal paper cards too) and so that they can be moved and rearranged according to necessity. Students can start with writing words in pairs in the notebook. Students can learn the L1 translation of a L2 word from the teacher and if they know a L2 synonym they can write that as well. Once the word has been learned from the L1 translation or L2 synonym students can expand or enrich the word by associating it with other things. A number of things can be done to internalise and remember the word.

The following can be done:

- semantic maps will help students in visualising the relationship that exist between the new word and the words they know.
- students can increase their awareness by keeping a tally of the word they hear within a week and also by keeping a tally of the word that seem to collocate with the new word.
- roots and derivatives of the word's family can be learnt by studying what affixes are used to change its parts of speech.
- students might quickly sketch a keyword illustration to prompt recall of the word. They could make notes on, stylistic aspects of the word or write a sentence illustrating its use (Schmitt and Schmitt, 1995: 137-138). Figure 8.1 below illustrates what a card will look like.

Figure 8.1 Front and back of a Vocabulary notebook Card (Schmitt and Schmitt, 1995:138)

Card 1 (front)		Card 1 (back)	
L1 translation of <i>invite</i>	keyword illustration (<i>ippai</i> = full)	part of speech, and pronunciation	semantic map
		invite (v.) [invart]	
Number of times <i>invite</i> heard in 7 days	ask: informal invite: more formal Stylistic note	ed past ation n ing adj Derivative information	invite friends invite trouble host invites Collocations
Card 2 (front)		Card 2 (back)	
L1 translation of <i>horror</i>	keyword illustration (<i>horu</i> = dig)	part of speech, and pronunciation	semantic map
		horror (n) [horar]	
intense fear, dread	The family watched in horror as their house burned. Example sentence	id adj ibly adv ify v Derivative information	horror movie horror struck inspire horror Collocations

Students regularly record the type of information illustrated above, and can make use of these to create and draw new words.

8.7.2.2 Grammar

In addition to discrete point grammar teaching, with which teachers are familiar, it is recommended here that teachers encourage students to work on ‘grammaticisation’ tasks. ‘Grammaticisation’ is a word coined by Batstone (1994) which utilises ‘grammar’ both as i) product, i.e. grammar taught in its discrete parts as controlled language, as is the current position in Bangladesh and as observed in this study and ii) process, involving a genuine focus on meaning and on self-expression. This approach, to quote Batstone, (1994:224) “involves repositioning ‘grammar’ so that it evolves as the product of learners own processes of working with words”. In this approach, learners go from ‘lexis’ to ‘grammar’. Learners are presented with words and pictures which do not form a complete narrative. The task is to combine and add to the existing list of words through the deployment of grammar and to make up their own version or interpretation of the story. There is a context gap in the exercise and as such each learner’s version will be different. This encourages learners to shape their particular formulations creatively and as clearly as possible. Such grammaticisation tasks will enable the students to go beyond a conventionally prescribed task: such as fill in the blanks with preposition or transformation of sentences (see 5.4.3). Instead they will move on to an exercise which demands their original contribution as they will engage in activities which focus on their self-reliance in the application of grammar. Appendix 8.1 gives an example of a ‘grammaticisation’ task.

8.7.2.3 Cohesion and Organisation

The most effective way of helping students develop cohesion and organisational skills is to offer practice at the text level, that is to encourage the writing of extended texts. I have chosen some writing tasks from Hedge (1988) which contains many practical and insightful resources for writing instruction. Hedge (1988) believes that if the context of

the writing is clear, all the devices and organisational features can be practised in a meaningful way. In addition, the tasks below have been specially chosen because they emphasise the type of writing required by students for examination purposes on the basis that the majority of students in this study identified academic needs to be of priority (see 6.2.2).

The first example (Hedge, 1988: 143) focuses on how to use connectors of concession. Most of the Writing Tasks examined in this study were rated low on 'cohesion' (see 7.4.2) and grammatical analysis of these tasks further showed that these were characterised by a lack of cohesive devices (7.5). Therefore, I feel students need to be trained in this area. For this activity (see Appendix 8.2), the context is provided to the students as well as the sample letter. The task is to write a letter demonstrating the appropriate use of connectives, in particular connectives of contrast.

We have also seen from the Writing Tasks that students did not perform very well according to the marking criteria of 'organisation' (see 7.4.2). An activity from Hedge (1988:114-116) which focuses on the overall organisation and development of ideas is provided in Appendix 8.3. This is about reporting an event which will require students to work on paragraphing and in the process help them to organise and develop their ideas.

In addition to developing specific writing skills such as the examples above, teachers should provide opportunities to enable students to practice writing frequently and writing instruction should promote extensive practice within a set of related context using challenging tasks (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). Teachers need to provide practical examples to learners that they have to learn to communicate meaningfully in writing keeping purpose and audience in mind (see 2.3.2.1). The idea is to integrate product, process and genre features in writing; and to encourage students to follow the three stages of pre-writing, writing and revision; and not to see writing as a one time activity or be over concerned with matters of form. If students submit their written work in three drafts (with required adjustments) their writing will show signs of improvement as

the teacher can give feedback on areas where they need help for example, 'organisation'. This practice will also enable to help students see the value and benefit of revision in their written work. Research on the writing processes provides many important insights into the ways skilled writers perform and the ways in which learning to write can be improved. It has also shown that good writers plan longer, review and reassess plans (see 2.2.1), consider the reader's point of view in planning and revise in line with global goals rather than merely editing local segments (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996).

In terms of teacher methods, this study has shown that the majority of time was spent on lecturing of the main points (see 5.2). This is a very traditional way of teaching writing as it constrains the effective development of writing skills. There are more effective ways of helping students in the various stages of the writing process (see 2.3.2.1) and certainly with ideas generation. Different sorts of activities are used these days with ideas generation (see White and Arndt, 1991 for details). Those activities have to be selected which are most feasible (e.g. can be negotiated) and where the teacher only needs a blackboard and chalk for instance, generating ideas on a black board or making a Mind Map. A teacher can also take a topic and get the students to work quietly perhaps in pairs or using the class as whole.

In addition, to retaining traditional features of the product approach e.g. controlled writing, instructional approaches which emphasise relevant topics, class discussion, planning activities, revision and multiple drafting (with necessary modifications) should be encouraged to teach students the strategies of composing. Students should be made to practise a range of writing tasks and learn to work with a variety of genres and rhetorical issues (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). As regards feedback it is suggested that written comments and conferencing will be helpful in providing guidance and information to students about specific problem areas in their writing.

8.7.3 Assessment

Assessment of student learning is an integral part of teaching. It involves making

judgements to determine how individual students are progressing towards learning targets, to identify strengths and weaknesses, and diagnose areas for improvement in order to come up with ways of assisting them to make further progress.

In order to assess a piece of writing, the specification of assessment criteria is essential (see Sherman 1994, 8.7.1.2). The marking scheme used in this study has provided a framework for the assessment of writing which takes into account a number of criteria which are involved in effective writing (see 2.3.2.2, 4.6.4.3, 7.2.2 and 7.3). It has been shown that the analytic approach identifies the different aspects of writing, e.g. 'cohesion' and 'organisation,' and in this way makes contribution towards areas which would not be otherwise spotted.

The results of the Examination Compositions and the Writing Tasks have shown that students scored differently on the different categories of writing. Ideally, if what we are trying to do is to encourage skilled writing, we need to help students become aware of their specific strengths and weaknesses. This would suggest a marking scheme which facilitates this goal. It is argued here that the marking scheme used in the study can provide the basis for diagnosing student strengths and weaknesses in writing. It can provide a useful formative profile of student abilities. Descriptions of learner performance (see 7.4) in separate aspects of writing e.g. 'grammar', 'organisation' will not only give pointers to teachers to provide help where it is needed but will also develop an awareness in the students of the particular area of weakness and encourage them to improve themselves.

Another area which needs to be emphasised is that, as assessors, teachers should be careful about maintaining marker reliability. Teachers should agree amongst themselves what constitutes a good answer and what constitutes a weak answer. Hence, rater training and standardisation meetings are essential (see 2.4.3.1 and 7.4.2).

To ensure interrater reliability teams of teachers should work together to mark a set of scripts. Teachers from different regions can come together to hold standardisation

meetings which involves the marking of scripts and a comparison and discussion of the results across all raters can be arrived at. One standardisation meeting may not suffice. Before every examination teachers should have a short meeting to discuss standardisation procedures. There should be a number of follow-up meetings where marking problems of some scripts should be discussed and senior and experienced teachers should sample check scripts to ensure reliability of rating. A schedule of a standardisation meeting is provided below.

1. In the first meeting the staff should discuss:
 - a) the aims and problems of marking written work
 - b) the categories of the marking scheme and the method of marking
 - c) the banding scale.
2. In the second meeting the assessors should carry out a trial marking of 15 sample scripts and subsequently discuss both consensus and problem scripts. A half-day marking workshop could be organised for this purpose.
3. In the third meeting raters can again reassess 5 of the original scripts. The results can be discussed and compared for purposes of interrater reliability (Underhill, 1987; Alderson et al., 1995).

These procedures should be repeated at regular intervals, on each occasion using five old tests for remarking and five new ones. In addition, it is also important to maintain intra-rater reliability (each marker should agree with him or her-self marking the same performance on a different occasion) and maintain consistent marking standards over time.

8.8 Discussion

A key question to raise here is how much of what is suggested above can really be successfully adapted for the Bangladeshi HSC context. From one perspective it is difficult to assess the extent to which changes can be made, and to identify what actually is feasible in the absence of gaining wide stakeholder acceptance (e.g. from the Ministry of Education, NCTB, teachers and students) for these 'novel' ideas and their

implementation. Implementation of innovation is not the focus of this thesis, nevertheless, curriculum evaluation is linked with curriculum renewal which in turn triggers the change process. In describing the background to the Revised Syllabus (see 1.5.5), I have indicated that it is important to consider socio-cultural factors before making changes to the curriculum. I have also highlighted issues arising from attempts at curriculum renewal and implementation of innovations (e.g. process approach) in other contexts (e.g. Malaysia, 1993; Hong Kong, 1995, 1996, see 2.3.2.4).

Ideally, there should be a combined and collaborative effort to work out changes at both national and institutional levels for productive outcomes, through experimental schemes and piloting. However, the ideal is nearly always different from the reality and the phenomenon of change is a complex force. Holliday (1994a, 1994b) discusses this gap between the ideal and the realities of classroom situations and points out the difficulties and constraints of importing BANA (British, Australasia, North America) language education technologies (which are instrumentally oriented and integrationist e.g. skills-based, discovery-oriented collaborative pedagogy, see Bernstein, 1971, cited in Holliday, 1994a) into the TESEP (tertiary, secondary and primary) local contexts of the rest of the world (which are collectionist e.g. didactic, content-based pedagogy, see Bernstein, 1971, cited in Holliday, 1994a). Holliday (1994a) argues that before transferring technology from the West it is useful to pay attention to the social needs of people who will use it and to consider the social and educational milieu which influence these needs. For example, in Bangladesh, this would mean taking cognisance of teacher-centred classes, strongly dominated by the backwash effect of examinations and the use of traditional teaching material which is heavily focused on grammar (e.g. see 1.2, 5.2.6, 5.2.7, 9.2.2 and 9.2.4). Otherwise, Holliday (1994a) contends, it becomes difficult to relate foreign methodologies to the realities of the TESEP classroom. For instance, he cites the example of the teacher from Pakistan who tried to introduce group work into her university class but the outcome was the “disruption of the etiquette of interaction within the classroom culture” (p.106). The teacher realised that student reaction ought to be taken into consideration in the design of methodologies and the gap between methodologies and student needs ought to be bridged. Holliday (1994) cites different

examples of unsuccessful language technology implants, points out the dangers involved in blind technology transfer, and talks about the possibility of 'tissue rejection' (Holliday, 1994a). This caution has implications for changes in TESEP contexts in general, and Bangladesh in particular. For example, in Bangladesh there is already a change, i.e. the emergence of the new communicative English syllabus (see 1.5.5 and Appendix 1.2). In addition, suggestions are provided in this thesis for the introduction of workable features of the process approach (see 8.7.2.3 and 9.2.5). Moreover, studies of implementation of the process approach in Malaysia and Hong Kong (see 2.3.2.4) have also shown that it is important for innovations to be compatible with the social and educational goals of a country and with the existing teaching philosophy. Before I go on to discuss some of the changes recommended in this thesis, I would like to make a comment on the changes made to the Revised English Syllabus.

The objectives of the Revised Syllabus (the development of which was detailed in 1.5.5, and subsequently critiqued in 8.2.6) are to focus on a communicative and learner centred approach to teaching and learning. 'Learner centredness' and 'communicative methodology' belongs essentially to the BANA culture and Holliday (1994a, 1994b) argues that full fledged borrowing of these notions into the TESEP culture has often resulted in failure (he narrates his own experience in Egypt as evidence of this). Holliday (1994a, 1994b) argues that the communicative approach in its narrow form fails to meet the needs of state education because it is prescriptive, limited, and unworkable in foreign contexts which have their own idiosyncrasies. Holliday (1994b) states that the terms 'communicative' and 'learner-centredness' have often been misinterpreted by TESEP teachers and that notions such as 'communicative equals group work' or 'learner centredness' implies 'getting rid of the teacher as a major focus in the classroom' are myths which should be disposed off (Holliday, 1994 a: 165). He upholds that a communicative approach in its wider form "contains the potential for culture sensitivity which can be enhanced and developed to suit any social situation surrounding any TESEP classroom" (Holliday, 1994a: 165). The main thrust of Holliday's argument is that foreign methodologies in general, and a communicative approach in particular, contain the necessary adaptability, provided they are informed by

local knowledge and adjusted and tailored according to the needs of the diverse, social and educational contexts (Holliday, 1994a, 1994b).

Factors that need to be considered before making changes are a) feasibility, b) acceptability, c) and relevance (Kelley, 1980) of the new methodology to the social context of the classroom and to the teachers' and students' culture (see Holliday, 1994 b). It is important to take account of the existing influences and the prevailing culture in order "to avoid conflict, promote understanding, and develop commitment by all concerned" (White, 1987:213).

As mentioned earlier, syllabus change attempts at the HSC level (see 1.5.5) in Bangladesh in the late eighties met with resistance and were not accepted because a language based textbook written by Bangladeshi writers was introduced. The Bangladeshi college teachers have had a long standing practice of teaching literary texts (see 1.5.5) and the teaching of literature (and grammar) is part of their existing teaching philosophy. The introduction of a language-oriented textbook by local authors was unacceptable and ultimately had to be withdrawn (see 1.5.5). This demonstrates that the process of change is complex and slow, and there has to be a *gradual* move to introduce other kinds of texts while retaining literature and grammar. The suggestions in this thesis (see 8.2.2) do not ask for abolishing literature but propose, in addition to literary texts, the inclusion of a variety of other text types, a range of topics and genre, and for the teaching of language through literature (see 8.2.2). Nor is there any suggestion here to eliminate grammar from the curriculum. Rather the argument is to focus not only on grammar but also on meaning and contextualised pieces of writing (via some process features e.g. planning, reviewing and conferencing activities).

It remains to be seen whether there will be a similar reaction to the communicative approach proposed in the Revised Syllabus. This will be in part determined by the extent to which the Revised Syllabus will build on existing teacher practices, beliefs, attitudes, and needs of students, in part on teacher training which can support the development of

new beliefs and attitudes, and in part on the skilful negotiation and adaptation of the communicative methodology in the classroom.

In this thesis (e.g. see 2.3.2.4 and 8.7.2.3) I have argued for exploring features of the process approach which have potential for the development of writing skills in HSC classes. However, this may be seen as importing BANA technology into a TESEP classroom (although the seeds of innovation have already been planted via, for example, the Revised Syllabus). The process approach demands innovation particularly in the role expectations it places on teachers and students - expectations radically different from the traditional expectations (Brock, 1994). Studies of implementation of the process approach in different contexts (e.g. Malaysia 1993; Hong Kong 1995, 1996, see 2.3.2.4) have analysed some potential constraints in implementing such innovations as well as some positive aspects which worked and resulted in improved attitudes when adapted to a particular context. For example, in the Hong Kong study (Pennington et al., 1996, see 2.3.2.4), central features of the process approach viz., peer feedback and teacher student conferencing proved useful when carried out in the native language. This demonstrates one way in which cultural adjustments have to be made when an innovation, such as a process approach, is introduced into a new culture. The Hong Kong (1995,1996) and the Malaysian (1993) studies suggest that cultural factors, teacher factors (e.g. attitudes, inadequate training), student factors (e.g. low proficiency level) and organisational factors (e.g. large classes) are important variables in the successful implementation of such an approach (see 2.3.2.4).

Data gathered but unexploited for the purposes of this study also show that similar constraints (e.g. as reported in the Malaysian study, see 2.3.2.4) exist in the Bangladeshi educational context. However, it is to be borne in mind that Malaysia and, especially, Hong Kong are extremely wealthy and well resourced countries as compared to Bangladesh. As a consequence, implementation of such a view of writing may be more problematic in Bangladesh. In this research Bangladeshi college teachers were asked to identify the most significant problems they faced in their every day teaching (see Q. 39

in Appendix 4.3). Their responses were classified into the following five categories concerning the teacher, the student, the syllabus, the examination and infrastructure related problems, as shown in Table 8.1 below:

Table 8.1 Significant Problems Teachers Face (N= 80)

Teacher Problems	Student Problems	Syllabus Problems	Examination Problems	Infrastructure Problems
Low proficiency Low motivation Lack of training Lack of professionalism	Weak students Mixed ability students	No development of writing skills No scope to provide feedback	Examination Driven syllabus Rote learning bias of exams	Large classes Meagre salary Heavy workload Shortage of teachers Lack of resources Lack of guide books for teachers Limited hours for English

The existence of the above factors will definitely inhibit the successful implementation of any innovation. This includes the implementation of a process approach to writing in my context. In a rigid form, this may not be welcome and may meet with resistance due to the unfamiliarity and difficulty of the new approach as well as to the constraints outlined above. In studies of implementation reported in this study (e.g. Johnson, 1993; Brock, 1994; Pennington and Cheung, 1995), the importance of adequate teacher training has been emphasised and recommended as a possible strategy in overcoming some of the problems in the implementation of change generally, and the process approach to writing in particular (see 2.3.2.4).

It is to be noted that significant steps for the provision of teacher training are being taken by the government (ODA Report, 1990; Raynor Report, 1996) in Bangladesh. Examples of these are the setting up of teacher training institutes in different parts of the country, as well as workshops and short orientation training courses (see 1.2 and 1.5.5) run by NCTB experts to train up master trainers who in turn will train other teachers. The newly set up ELTIP project (June,1998) also attempts to strengthen MOE's

institutional capacity to develop teacher training programmes (see 1.5.5). This could potentially strengthen the uptake of education in general in Bangladesh and pave the way for the implementation of suitable features of the process approach for the development of writing skills. Thus, for changes to be effective, the teacher as a principal and key agent of disseminating learning must receive utmost priority. In this regard the Bangladeshi teachers' role in bringing about change (by helping students to write independently) is crucial and central.

We can neither change everything radically nor should we aim for such a drastic change. Rather, the view presented here is that we have to be careful and selective in what we are borrowing from BANA contexts because wholesale adoption of western ideas are unlikely to yield beneficial results. In this connection it is also important to remember that "the spread of an educational innovation involves mixing and retranslation of ideas into new frameworks for understanding and action" (Pennington et al., 1996:243; see 2.3.2.4). This kind of local reinvention is to be expected in Bangladesh which has its own contextual constraints (e.g. see 1.2, 1.5.1, 1.5.2, 1.5.3, 1.5.5 and Table 8.1). For this reason, I have suggested utilising a restricted range of features (which should be negotiated and adapted according to teacher and student needs) of the process approach (e.g. planning activities, see 8.7.2.3 and 9.2.5), in conjunction with the traditional method. I have not argued for complete adoption of this approach. In addition, my argument is for an *integrated* approach to the teaching of writing, i.e. a combination of product, process and genre approaches which will be further tailored to suit the realities of my particular context (see 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 2.3.3).

8.9 Summary

This chapter has discussed the main evaluation research questions posed in this thesis. On the basis of this study's findings some recommendations have been made for curriculum reform and pedagogy in the area of teaching writing. Findings show that the current syllabus intentions do not match student needs and demands. Neither the syllabus, the textbook, nor the methodologies give substantial help in promoting writing skills. As a result, students are not developing and have significant problems with

various aspects of writing, e.g. 'grammar', 'organisation' and 'cohesion'. In addition, the syllabus is not helpful for students who are bound for higher education. The Revised Syllabus is an improvement on the current one but there are still gaps in it which need to be addressed. In particular, it is deficient in certain areas, e.g. the specification of marking criteria for student working. It also does not relate fully to the needs identified in this study, one that requires a balance between product, process and genre goals. Only those features of the process approach will be borrowed which can be adapted to meet the specific requirements of teachers and students.

Based on the findings, teacher training and learner training are recommended for curriculum development. As one example Ellis and Sinclair (1989) Teacher and Learner Books are recommended as source material for learner training courses. Taking into consideration the needs of the various HSC streams, it is recommended that the syllabus include genre and topics in line with the requirements of the different student groups. An appropriate textbook which focuses on composing activities and suitable writing exercises is recommended along with Teachers' Guide and supplementary writing materials. Teaching of language through literature has also been suggested (see 8.2.2).

Specific suggestions for classroom pedagogy have been made for the teaching of 'vocabulary', 'grammar' 'cohesion' and 'organisation'. Some general guidelines for writing instruction have also been provided. Written comments and conferencing have been recommended as appropriate and suitable forms of feedback from teachers to students for improving their writing skills. In addition to recommending the marking scheme developed in this study for teachers, rater training and compulsory moderation meetings have also been suggested.

Finally, I have suggested general caution on the borrowing of methodologies from the BANA culture into the TESEP territory. In agreement with Holliday's (1994a, 1994b) argument I have suggested that these methodologies be negotiated in accordance with the requirements of the TESEP social situation. Further, I have argued for an integrated

approach to the teaching of writing, only attempting to introduce those features of the process approach which can be tailored to suit the needs of students, teachers and the educational and social context in general. Moreover, attention has been drawn to the hindering features (e.g. contextual constraints, infrastructure problems, see 1.5.2, 1.5.5 and Table 8.1) and helping factors (e.g. provision of teacher education, see 1.5.5 and 2.3. 2.4) in bringing about change. The concluding chapter summarises the findings, implications and limitations of this study.

CHAPTER 9

Summary, Implications and Limitations

9.1 Introduction

In this final and concluding chapter I summarise the findings that have been obtained from the different investigations pertaining to this evaluation study, and highlight some of the implications and limitations associated with them.

9.2 Summary of Findings

The aim of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the writing component of the HSC syllabus through a collection of the HSC stakeholders' perceptions about it and its implementation in the classroom. The main findings are summarised below in relation to the research questions which underpinned this investigation (see 1.7).

9.2.1 What is the English writing syllabus for HSC students in Bangladesh ?

The current syllabus reflect the contents of a traditional writing curriculum e.g. one which includes questions and answers on literary pieces, paragraph, composition and letter writing, translation, reading comprehension and a list of discrete point grammar exercises. Its implementation in the classroom shows a product orientation and does not meet the needs (e.g. expression of ideas, vocabulary and organisation) identified by students in this study. Moreover, the syllabus as pointed out by the range of audiences in this study, reflects a literature bias which is perceived not to be conducive to the development of writing skills. The Revised Syllabus which became available during the final stages of this thesis is an improvement on the current one in that it specifies aims and objectives clearly, makes provision for the guidance of the four skills and Teachers' Guides and Students' Workbook. In addition it also incorporates a vocabulary section which was perceived to be important for the development of writing skills. However, it still lacks a number of elements for which a need has been identified in this study. These include absence of marking criteria, suitable writing activities and a lack of a range of genre and topics for the different streams.

9.2.2 How is the development of writing skills perceived and implemented at the HSC level in Bangladesh?

Firstly, writing needs *per se* are generally perceived in terms of academic, vocational and social requirements, with students stressing the importance of the academic and the vocational, and senior officials, such as Principals highlighting the importance of writing for communication purposes. In pinpointing their needs, students have expressed an awareness of both short term (examination) and long term (jobs) goals for writing.

Secondly, student and staff perceptions reveal a conception of writing as product, in which the emphasis, to a large extent, is on the formal and surface characteristics of the language e.g. grammar, mechanics.

Thirdly, the methodology in the HSC writing classes adopted by teachers also exhibits a product orientation towards writing. There is a gap between the current theory and pedagogy of writing and the classroom practices observed in this study. The tendency in HSC classes is to concentrate on features of linguistic accuracy with the activities in the classroom focusing on the consolidation of the formal properties of the language. Hardly any meaningful activities with audience and purpose in mind were implemented in the lessons observed in this study. Teachers tended to correct syntax and mechanical errors, paying scarce attention to discourse or organisational errors. Some discrepancy between what teachers professed they did and their actual practices was discerned (see 5.4.3 and 5.4.5). In the classes observed, as examples, nothing was assigned for homework, no additional materials were used in class whereas in the interviews and questionnaires, teachers claimed they set homework and used additional materials for writing. In terms of their roles, (as observed by the researcher in the classroom observations), teachers seemed to be confined within the traditional roles e.g. teacher as source, authority and evaluator .

Fourthly, it was revealed that as a result of the prevailing methodology, the students are only acquainted with the product approach to writing e.g. concerned with writing as a preconceived and finished product. They are not aware of, nor familiar with, the different activities which are involved in the process of writing e.g. planning

activities. Students have, generally, not learned to use discourse markers and also lack the ability to generate, organise and develop thoughts in a systematic manner (see 7.4). In essence, students are not exposed to suitable writing activities to develop and practice the writing skill effectively.

Finally, through an analysis of the writing samples e.g. the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions (7.4), it was shown that students' main strength in writing is in the area of 'content'. In other aspects of writing, specifically in the areas of 'grammar', 'vocabulary', 'organisation' and 'cohesion,' they exhibited considerable weaknesses. The brief analysis of students' grammatical mistakes (7.5) in the Writing Tasks reveals that students have particular problems with tenses, subject verb agreements, prepositions and articles. In addition, problems of L1 interference were noticed. Students' are in general, not achieving satisfactorily in writing (7.4). The majority of the students were on the scale of '2', i.e. 'Basics' (as defined by the study's banding scale of 1-5) which is fairly 'restricted' (see Appendix 4.11) and does not reflect a 'competent' use of English .

9.2.3 What are views of teachers, students and other professionals of the HSC syllabus and textbook?

The HSC syllabus is perceived to be characterised by a literary bias which is interpreted here as both its strength and weakness. It is a weakness in the sense that literary texts are not exploited to the advantage of promoting writing skills. On the other hand, it is seen as a strength because literature has so far played a dominant and central role in English language education in Bangladesh. It is associated with a tradition with which teachers are familiar and appreciate, and as such, this literary component should be built up in future syllabus developments.

The rote learning bias of the syllabus is also regarded as a major weaknesses, as it does not contribute to the development of writing skills. Although some of the items on the syllabus are perceived as useful and important e.g. paragraph, composition, the general consensus is that the syllabus on the whole is not helpful particularly for the development of writing skills and for preparing students for entrance into the university. In addition, it is argued that the syllabus does not cover the four language

skills as evidenced by the syllabus itself (see Appendix 1.1) and as reported by the informants in this study.

The current textbook also fails to meet the needs of the students. It is purely literary in character and does not include any purposeful activities for the promotion of writing skills. In addition, no Teachers' Book, Students' Workbook nor supplementary teaching materials exist at the HSC level. A suitable textbook, Teachers' Book, and supplementary materials are deemed essential.

9.2.4 To what extent does the existing HSC English syllabus cater for the needs of the HSC students

The results that have been reported suggest that a gap exists between what students need and what the syllabus provides. The HSC syllabus does not correspond to the needs of the students and does not cater fully for those needs which have been identified (6.7, 7.4 and 7.5). There is no provision for improvement in the areas which have been highlighted as problematic e.g. 'vocabulary', 'expression of ideas', 'organisation' and 'cohesion'. Students need English to function in both academic and occupational contexts, as identified in 6.2.2 above, but the syllabus provides very little opportunity for this. It is limited to the extent that it guides students to pass the HSC examination but does not help to promote the kind of writing skills which are required by students who are bound for higher education (5.4.6 and 6.5.4). There is very little scope to practice writing in a meaningful way. In other words, there are infrequent opportunities for working on extended and contextualised pieces of writing (with purpose and reader awareness) and working on the different activities associated with different stages of writing. In this sense, it does not provide for the structured (systematic and principled) development of good writing strategies. In addition, the syllabus does not cater for the four language skills e.g. lack of listening, reading and speaking component. Furthermore, the HSC is regarded as a preparatory stage for entrance into higher education (see 1.3) but the syllabus does not reflect the kind of reading and writing materials which students belonging to different streams are likely to face at the tertiary level, as well as in their practical lives.

In summary, it can be concluded that the existing syllabus, textbook and methodologies are collectively responsible for the present situation, as these do not cater for student needs, and they lead to lack of L2 writing development.

9.2.5 What recommendations can be made to improve the development of English writing skills at the HSC level ?

The following recommendations have been suggested:

1. Teachers need explicit training in the teaching of writing since in the higher secondary context the practice needed to become a writing teacher is minimal: pre-service or in-service training is not compulsory (see 1.5.2) with no specific teacher training courses on the teaching of writing offered.
2. Alongside teacher preparation, learner training is recommended to nurture and encourage the autonomy of the individual learner. The Learner and Teacher Books by Ellis and Sinclair (1989) are recommended as source materials for learner training courses. Alternately materials could be developed or other commercially available materials could be used.
3. The syllabus needs to include relevant features from the various writing approaches, i.e. product, process and genre in order to create a balanced writing syllabus (see 2.3, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 2.3.3.1 and 8.2) which is appropriate to the needs identified in these student groups. The textbook needs to incorporate suitable writing activities which promote development of writing skills. A Teachers' Guide is recommended.
4. Classroom aims need to focus on areas of writing weaknesses identified in the study, i.e. 'grammar', 'vocabulary', 'organisation' and 'cohesion'. Some examples of tasks relating to these aspects have been provided in 8.7.2. In addition, it has been suggested that classroom instruction needs to gear itself to teaching writing which helps students with the different activities involved in writing e.g. generation of ideas and revision activities and frequent classroom practice (see 2.3.2.1). For correction and feedback 'written comments' and 'conferencing' have been suggested as useful feedback strategies.

5. The marking scheme used in the study is recommended for further piloting and simplification, with a view to its introduction for use by teachers in classroom contexts, and to enable them to provide diagnostic information on their students' strengths and weaknesses in writing.

9.3 Limitations

A number of limitations have surfaced during the planning and implementation stages of this evaluation study which need to be acknowledged. In the course of designing the instruments, data analyses, and elsewhere, many inconsistencies have been spotted, some of which are due to contextual constraints and some have stemmed from the design of the study. These are pointed out to readers here so that future research may take these into consideration.

9.3.1 Contextual Constraints

First of all, it is to be noted that this study was carried out under difficult circumstances. By this I mean the investigation was undertaken in a context which is considerably under-resourced and not well conversant with the research culture. For this reason, the researcher had a number of contextual constraints to address. One of these was access facilities (see 4.5). The research could only be conducted in those institutions where the researcher was confident that support throughout would be available, i.e. the evaluation study took place in two institutions with which the researcher was familiar and where she knew the teachers personally. Had other institutions been chosen, the chances of completing this study might have been jeopardised and remained incomplete, as there would have been no guarantee that teachers would have fully co-operated until the end. Another difficulty related to attitude problems. It was difficult to persuade and convince teachers to take part in the classroom observational dimension of the study. This was because they were mainly unfamiliar with both the nature and practice of classroom research and observations, which are alien partly because of the lack of research culture in the context. As a result, teachers were uncomfortable with classroom observations and perceived the whole procedure to be threatening. The limitations of classroom observation as a research tool in the context of Bangladesh are raised in 4.6.2 and 4.6.2.4. In fact, the teachers were not at all enthusiastic about being interviewed and

the researcher had to be patient, and at the same time, persistent in asking for interview dates. Yet another problem was the lack of technological support. Due to lack of resources and funds the classroom observations were not audio or videotaped. However, even if resources permitted, I do not think it would have been possible because the teachers may not have agreed to the recordings.

9.3.2 Research Instruments

Through the use of the actual research instruments, some limitations were observed.

1. The instruments used in the study e.g. questionnaires were not flawless. Some questions on the questionnaires were not consistently raised with each group of informants e.g. students were not asked all questions relating to the syllabus. Certain questions in the questionnaires e.g. 'role of teachers', were not probed in the interviews. One of the reasons for this was that the questionnaires were returned by respondents much later than the interviews. In addition, as noted in 4.4.2.2, the sample of teacher interviews was particularly small (N=10) as compared to the sample size of the teacher questionnaires (80) which was distributed to a large sample of the teacher population. It was not possible to arrange for a larger number of teacher interviews as teachers were not willing to face interviews and were hard pressed for time.
2. Due to shortage of time constraints, it was not possible to trial test the marking scheme and the banding scale that was to be used in the study with a group of higher secondary level English teachers. In addition, more language teachers could be asked to try out and evaluate this marking scheme since there were only three raters who participated in the study. It would be important to seek suggestions from Bangladeshi teachers teaching at the HSC level for their views on this marking scheme, and to note if there were marked differences or similarities in marking, if a larger sample of raters were involved. It would also be worth going back to the raters (the ones who participated in the study) and questioning them about the difficulties, confusion or ease they faced in applying the scheme. Moreover, I only examined the internal validity of the marking scheme by conducting correlational analysis. This approach has its limitations but

was the only means available to the researcher at the time of conducting this study. However, in the future, it will be important to further establish the external validity of the marking scheme through collaborating with teachers back home and by gathering subjective views through introspection and expert judgements. In short the marking scheme needs to be further piloted and modifications need to be made accordingly .

3. The subjects (students) and topics for the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions were different. Further research should take this point into consideration by analysing writing produced by same subjects and on the same topic. In order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of students' writing in detail, a more extensive analysis of the written scripts could have been conducted, by not only looking more intensely at grammatical mistakes but also by looking at all the areas included in the marking scheme e.g. 'organisation', 'vocabulary' in relation to the scores they were given, and by investigating further why particular scores were given. All the Writing Tasks and the Examination Compositions collected for the purposes of the study were not analysed due to time constraints of the raters. In particular, the sample size of the Public Examination Compositions was very small. It would be interesting to see if there were any differences in results if a larger sample were involved.
4. Another limitation of this study is that it was carried out as part of Ph.D. research. It was not commissioned by the Ministry of Education or NCTB or funded by any other organisation. Criterial features of evaluation are that it i) is audience specific, ii) addresses questions identified by a sponsor, iii) responds to the needs of stakeholder requirements and is iv) utilisation and action oriented. Evaluation reports typically feed into decision making and influence policy shaping. In my case, as none of the above strictly apply, this study may be said to represent a piece of evaluation research undertaken for the degree of Ph.D.

9.4 Implications

This study has investigated the effectiveness of the writing component of the HSC English syllabus with regard to the development of writing skills. The findings of the study have potentially significant impact for a number of areas. These include:

- i) a pedagogical application
- ii) the marking of writing
- iii) curriculum evaluation
- iv) implications for research relating to the Revised Syllabus
- v) implications for curriculum changes and implementation

9.4.1 Pedagogical Application

A better understanding of what skilled writers do and what constitutes skilled writing is necessary for classroom teachers. However, it is not the research evidence *per se* which they need to know but the process linked with classroom activities. This has pointers for classroom teaching and teacher education (see 1.5, 2.3.2.4 and 8.8) As already mentioned, in order to improve the quality of teachers the role of teacher education (pre-service and in-service) is crucial. But the kind of ‘quality teacher education’ is needed which not only prioritises product in the form of accountability and quality assurance but values process with greater stakeholder participation which in turn encourages and generates never ending improvement (White, 1998).

In teacher training courses, along with methodology and materials, special attention should be paid to the testing of writing. Examiners and paper setters should set titles for compositions in such a way so as to discourage memorisation. A teacher training course that is specifically geared towards the development of writing in all its aspects should be developed.

9.4.2 Marking of Writing

Although the comparison between the two marking schemes was exploratory, it shows that a holistic scheme reveals a less detailed picture of students’ abilities in different aspects of writing. On the other hand, an analytic scheme helps to provide a more comprehensive picture of student abilities, i.e. offers a more detailed and

descriptive profile of students' strengths and weaknesses in different areas of writing. This has implications for the design and construction of marking schemes and in this connection there is a need for further research. A comparison of these two schemes, with a more systematic research design, which incorporates uniform subjects, tasks, larger sample as well as extensive trialling with higher secondary level English teachers is suggested.

Although some revision, simplification and further validation (7.3) may be required, the analytic marking scheme constitutes, I believe, a useful guideline for marking written work. This will be a significant step forward in the development of writing skills not only for internal examinations but also for ongoing, formative, assessment of student written work in HSC classes. Rater training and moderation meetings should be made compulsory so that standardisation in marking is achieved and maintained.

9.4.3 Curriculum Evaluation

Evaluation is an alien activity in the Bangladeshi context. No principled and systematic evaluation of the HSC syllabus has taken place to date. Evaluation should be an integral part of the syllabus and practised on a regular and frequent basis. There should be provision for both formative (during the implementation) and summative (at the end) evaluations to monitor whether the syllabus is meeting its objectives and whether it is responsive to changing student and teacher needs.

9.4.4 Revised Syllabus

There are implications for the further evaluation of the Revised Syllabus. The syllabus was revised on the basis of general survey (Task Force Report, 1976) and baseline survey of secondary schools (ODA, 1990) and not on research evidence gathered through systematic and in-depth evaluation activities. Although the Revised Syllabus is an improvement over the current one (see 8.2.6), there are still many areas which need to be developed further. Particularly, the writing examination format, writing exercises for textbooks and omission of specification of marking criteria need to be revisited and improved. In addition, the syllabus needs to take into account an appropriate balance of product, process and genre goals to help

students meet their academic needs, future vocational demands and develop their writing skills accordingly. Another suggestion is to integrate language and literature and teach language through literature. Finally, the syllabus should specify evaluation activities in order to examine its worth and effectiveness and to stimulate growth and development.

9.4.5 Curriculum Changes and Implementation

As stated earlier, curriculum evaluation and curriculum renewal are inseparable and can be seen as important points on the same continuum. The history of the Revised Syllabus, the Revised Syllabus *per se* and the recommendations relating to the writing component in this thesis have implications for careful introduction and implementation of new ideas and Western methodologies for the Bangladeshi context. Care needs to be taken to integrate foreign methodologies, i.e. to bear in mind the socio-cultural and educational background of the users of these technologies as well as the infrastructure problems of the education system and context (see 1.5.5, 2.3.2.4 and Table 8.1). The implications are for considering the feasibility, compatibility, acceptability and relevance of these innovations (to teacher and student needs) and for further negotiation and adaptation of these to the local context (see 8.8).

9.5 Contributions of the Thesis

As mentioned earlier, no systematic evaluation of the HSC syllabus has been carried out to date. This evaluation study, therefore, is a significant step towards such research in the context of Bangladesh. The intention of this thesis has been to provide an overview of the HSC writing syllabus and its implementation and one that is based on empirical data gathered from a range of sources. A number of procedures have been used to arrive at the description of the existing writing curriculum and the writing process prevalent in the classroom. The triangulation strategy, i.e. collection of data through various methods and multiple stakeholders, has been very helpful in achieving the aims of the evaluation, as a single method and source (e.g. only interviews or information from teachers only) would not have covered all the dimensions of the implementation. It has helped to provide a

comprehensive picture of the development of writing skills at the higher secondary level at a particular point in time.

This evaluation has provided a composite and clear view of the current status quo with regard to the teaching of writing. As such, it serves as a baseline data for those seeking to evaluate the syllabus in future. Rather than being anecdotal and making sweeping generalisations about teaching approaches with regard to writing, it has specified actual classroom processes and given an account of teacher attitudes and perceptions, along with descriptions of real classroom practices.

The study investigated in depth and breadth through varied procedures and perspectives what is the case rather than only relying on people's perceptions which can be a very limited procedure. It has enabled me to highlight the internal issues that exist within the context which are already being generated by teachers. It has also allowed a reflection of the existing situation from the point of view of informed contemporary opinion and insights about writing processes, products and pedagogy. In addition, hopefully an awareness has been raised about issues surrounding curriculum renewal and implementation of ELT innovations.

9.6 Concluding Remarks

Evaluations are necessary to facilitate important decisions about educational purposes and practices. It is of utmost importance for those involved in the Bangladeshi educational system, as elsewhere, to accord a greater significance and attention to evaluation activities and to make them an integral part of the curriculum. This is so as to effect improvements, refinements and more substantial developments when necessary within the curricular contexts. It is through evaluation that this study has captured the implementation of the teaching and learning of writing skills at the higher secondary level and has signalled areas for attention. The ethnographic approach has facilitated the collection of 'thick' descriptive data and an in-depth understanding of the context of implementation of the HSC writing syllabus. It is hoped that more evaluations will be conducted in future, and that their findings will illuminate pedagogic practice.

With respect to the writing curriculum itself, a variety of recommendations have been made in this thesis. These in turn, if taken up and implemented, will also need to be monitored and evaluated as part of an ongoing and constant cycle of educational review and development. Implications for curriculum changes and implementation have been signalled with a view to raise awareness of considering the socio-cultural context of the innovation and of addressing the question of borrowing appropriate methodologies which need to be adapted and negotiated to meet demands and needs of the local context.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1.1 Current HSC English Syllabus

পাঠ্যসূচি : উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক পরীক্ষা-১৯৯৮

ENGLISH PAPER-1

1. Prose - Pieces to be read -

1. The Ancient Mariner - S.T.Coleridge
2. The Luncheon - W. Somerset Maugham
3. A Mother In Mannville - M.K. Rawlings
4. Reading for Pleasure - L.A.G. Strong
5. The Gift of The Magi - O. Henry

Distribution of marks - 50

1. (a) Three questions out of
five, each carrying 6 marks $6 \times 3 = 18$ marks
- (b) Five questions out of
eight, each carrying 3 marks $3 \times 5 = 15$ "
- (c) Multiple Choice (Choosing
the right answer and putting it
in a complete sentence) $1 \times 6 = 6$ "
- (d) Matching (based on
the text) $1 \times 6 = 6$ marks

(e) Explanation

(one out of three)

$1 \times 5 = 5$ marks

2. Letter : (one out of two)

types of letter - formal
& informal)

$10 \times 1 = 10$

3. Grammar - 30

(a) Use of the right form

of verbs

$1 \times 5 = 5$

(b) Change of sentences according

to directions (5 are to be

answered out of 7, out of seven

four should be from the text)

Voice, affirmative, negative,

interrogative, assertive,

imperative, optative, exclamatory,

simple, compound and complex.

Degree of comparison.

$1 \times 5 = 5$

(c) Joining pairs of sentences

as directed (5 out of 7 to be

answered) (Out of seven at least

four should be from the text)

$1 \times 5 = 5$

(d) Narration

$1 \times 5 = 5$

(e) Framing sentences with idioms

and phrases from the text (5 to

be answered out of 5)

$1 \times 5 = 5$

(f) Using appropriate preposition

(5 to be answered out of 7).

At least 4 to be set from

the text

$1 \times 5 = 5$

4. (a) Translation (from Bengali

into English) (1 out of 2

passages not exceeding 7

sentences each prepared by

the paper setter to be

answered)

$1 \times 7 = 7$

(b) Translation of detached sentences

from Bengali into English (3 out

of 5 sentences prepared by

the paper-setter to be answered)

$1 \times 3 = 3$

Total Marks = 100

Prescribed book

HIGHER SECONDARY ENGLISH SELECTIONS

(PROSE & POETRY)

Published by : National Curriculum & Text Book

Board, Dhaka on behalf of B.L.S.I., Dhaka, Rayshad

Comilla, Jessore and Chittagong

পঠানুষ্ঠি : উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক পরীক্ষা-১৯৯৮

PAPER-II

1. Poetry - Pieces to be read-

1. To Daffodils - Robert Herrick
2. Patriotism - Sir Walter Scott
3. The Solitary Reaper - William Wordsworth
4. Justice - H. W. Longfellow
5. The Patriot - Robert Browning
6. Time, You
Old Gipsy Man - Ralph Hodgson
7. Tree At My Window - Robert Frost
8. The Passionate
Shepherd to His Love - Christopher Marlowe
9. Under the
Greenwood Tree - W. Shakespeare
10. For The Fallen - Laurence Binyon

2. Distribution of Marks

1. Poems - 45

- (a) Three questions out of five,
each carrying 6 marks $6 \times 3 = 18$ Marks
 - (b) Seven questions out of ten,
each carrying 3 marks $3 \times 7 = 21$ "
 - (c) Explanation
(one out of three) $1 \times 6 = 6$ "
2. Comprehension of one unseen
passage (5 questions to be
set, each carrying 3 marks) $3 \times 5 = 15$ "
3. Paragraph writing
(one out of two) $10 \times 1 = 10$ "

পঠানুষ্ঠি : উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক পরীক্ষা-১৯৯৮

4. Translation from English into

Bengali

$10 \times 1 = 10$ "

5. Free Composition (one out of five)

Topics of narrative and
descriptive type only

$20 \times 1 = 20$ "

Total Marks=100

Prescribed book :

HIGHER SECONDARY ENGLISH SELECTIONS

(PROSE & POETRY)

Published by: National Curriculum & Text Book Board

Dhaka on behalf of B. I. S. E. Dhaka.

Rajshahi, Comilla, Jessore and

Chittagong.

APPENDIX 1.2 Extracts from the Revised HSC English Syllabus

Revised Syllabus for Higher Secondary Level

Classes XI & XII

1 Objectives

1.1 Aims

The English language syllabus aims to focus on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as learner-centred activities within communicative contexts. Such contexts should not only convincingly reflect actual social situations outside the classroom, but also make the learning of English both more relevant, interesting and enjoyable.

An intermediate command of the four language skills should already have been acquired at the Secondary level. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to revise previous work as well as extend students' command of the four skills. The aim at Higher Secondary level should be to ensure that students enjoy acquiring English and are able to use it effectively in real life situations outside the classroom.

English should be recognised as an essential work-orientated skill that is needed if the employment, development and educational needs of the country are to be met successfully at a higher level. Increased communicative competence in English, therefore, constitutes a vital skill for students at this Higher Secondary stage, whether they leave college to take up an appropriate vocation or continue their studies up to degree level. English should, therefore, be taught as something to be used, rather than as something to be talked about.

3.1 Structures

Notes :

- (a) The structures have been sequenced so as to facilitate learning.
- (b) Suggested functions and situations are intended to place structures within communicative contexts. They are intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive.
- (c) Structures should be taught implicitly through regular use within realistic contexts.
- (d) Explicit grammatical analysis is discouraged as it can easily demotivate students, causing loss of both interest and confidence.
- (e) Practice in using the language is more important than receiving information about it.

3.1.1 The structures previously introduced in the Secondary syllabus should be revised. These should include the following :

- | | |
|--|--|
| (a) Use of <i>it</i>
With the function of 'empty' subject. | <i>Example :</i> It is true that Shakespeare wrote Hamlet. |
| (b) The passive mode
Function : to describe actions done to something (particularly when not wishing to specify the agent). | <i>Examples :</i> 1. The students are required to obey the college rules 2. They were broken by one of the students. |
| (c) Ist conditional : <i>If</i> + present tense + <i>will</i> .
With the function of specifying future conditions and consequences. | <i>Example :</i> If you learn to type, you will have a useful skill. |

3.3 Vocabulary :

Notes :

- (a) Words meaning should be defined in relation to use within specific contexts. Students' attention should, therefore, be focused more on actual meaning within particular contexts, rather than on potential meaning(s) as provided in dictionaries.
- (b) Word meanings should be given in English. Translation should be the exception, rather than the rule, and only resorted to as a checking device, ensuring that meaning has been correctly understood.
- (c) Lists of new vocabulary should be provided at the back of the teacher's guide in alphabetical order (like a dictionary) together with lesson/page references. It should not be included in any student's textbook as this encourages learners to look up words before having tried to infer meaning from context.
- (d) Selection of new words should be governed by frequency of use. In general, words that are not used frequently, particularly those that are obsolete, should be avoided.

A further six/eight hundred new words should be introduced at this level. New vocabulary should include the use of :

- (a) Relative pronouns : *whom, whose, which + to*.
- (b) *Unless, even if, since* as time indicators.
- (c) Modal verbs : *dare, could, would*, etc.

2.4 Writing

The following objectives should be realised in clear, legible handwriting.

Students should be able to :

- (i) write (i) instructions, (ii) summaries, (iii) clear, logical arguments, (iv) narratives, (v) descriptions, (vi) dialogues, (vi) formal and informal letters, including letters of application, and (vii) reports.
- (b) demonstrate imagination and creativity in appropriate written forms.
- (c) fill in forms (i.e. job applications, etc) and write a curriculum vitae.
- (d) plan and organize the above tasks efficiently so as to communicate ideas and facts clearly, accurately and with relevance to the topic.
- (e) take notes and dictations.
- (f) use such cohesive devices as linking words and reference words appropriately.
- (g) use different punctuation and graphological devices appropriately.

8.6.4 Writing

- Gap filling tasks : both for one word and for more than one word; both with and without clues.
- Answering questions : both with and without clues to form a paragraph.
- Writing from a model/with an information table
- Writing from a model using information provided by the students themselves
- Reordering tasks (see above under reading).

Organizing a non-chronological description

This type of description is not normally a complete text type. It usually forms a part of another text type. For example, it is often found in personal writing such as letters and journals when the writer wants to capture what is happening around him or her. The task below takes the context of writing a letter home and wanting to capture present experiences for the reader by describing the environment in a dynamic way (and thereby using progressive forms).

LEVEL	Intermediate
TOPIC	A scene as a moment in time
FUNCTION	Dynamic description.
FORM	Personal letter.
FOCUS	Discourse organization in non-chronological description.
CONTEXT	The students are staying with families in England. At the moment they are writing letters to friends at home, and they want to give a taste of their present life, surroundings, and experiences by describing the scene around them and what is happening in it. Overleaf is a picture of the kind of setting they might describe.
PREPARATION	<p>There are several ways of preparing for this task:</p> <p>1 You can make a collection of cut-out magazine pictures of appropriate scenes, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the family in the garden on a summer afternoon – the scene around you in a park or playground – a picnic in the countryside – on the beach – an event, e.g. a fête, a rally.

2 Alternatively, you can introduce the task in a previous lesson and ask the students to find their own picture.

3 You also need to have a larger picture which the whole class can see.

IN CLASS

1 Explain first the context of the writing, using the large picture, eliciting ideas from the class about what to comment on. As they make suggestions, show them by grouping suggestions on the blackboard, what in general might go into the description:

- where things are in relation to each other
- what can be seen, heard, felt, smelt, etc.
- details about key people and things
- what is happening at the moment

2 Ask the students to work in pairs and ask each pair to work on one picture. To begin with, each partner in the pair should work individually on a first draft, describing the scene as if they were sitting somewhere in the picture.

3 While the students are working, monitor them and give help where necessary. Then, while they are finishing, write a set of questions on the blackboard:

- *What does the writer describe first? And last?*
- *Why do you think he/she has followed that order?*
- *Do you think the writer has begun with the most important thing?*
- *Which adjectives has the writer used?*
- *Has the writer focused on one or more of the senses of sight, sound, taste, smell, etc?*
- *What do you think is the best part of the description?*
- *Has the writer left out anything you wrote about in your own description?*
- *Has the writer included anything which you missed out?*

4 Ask students to exchange their writing. They should examine each other's work in the light of the questions on the blackboard.

5 Students can then discuss the similarities and differences in their approach and suggest improvements to each other before redrafting their own composition.



Comparing and Contrasting Cities

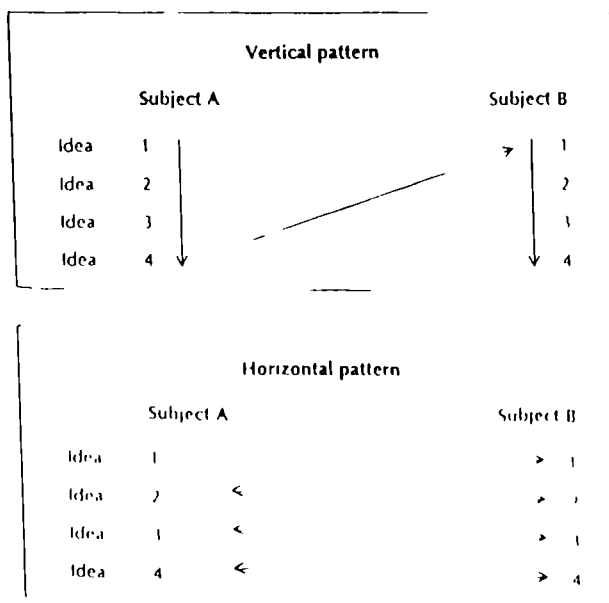
This unit will give you practice in:

1. Understanding how descriptions based on comparison and contrast can be organised.
2. Recognising words, phrases and structures commonly used in comparison and contrast.
3. Categorising similarities and differences between two towns or cities.
4. Writing a description based on comparison and contrast of two towns or cities.
5. Choosing an audience for your writing and considering their needs.
6. Asking pre-writing questions about your own knowledge of the subject and your reader's knowledge and attitude.
7. Asking post-writing questions about the organisation, information and interest of your first draft.
8. Evaluating your own and another person's draft with the aid of a checklist.

TASK 1

A description based on comparison and contrast can be developed in two ways:

1. You can group the main ideas about Subject A in one paragraph or section and the main ideas about Subject B in the next paragraph or section, in a 'vertical' movement, as in the first of the following diagrams.
2. Alternatively, you can treat the corresponding ideas on Subject A and Subject B as a pair and compare or contrast them one after the other, in a 'horizontal' movement, as in the second diagram.



Whether you choose the 'vertical' or the 'horizontal' pattern depends on the kind of text you are writing, its purpose and your own preference. Some writers and readers find the 'horizontal' pattern clearer because it repeatedly reminds them of the comparison or contrast relationship. Others prefer the 'vertical' pattern because of its relative simplicity. The 'horizontal' pattern is often more suitable for a longer piece of writing. Both patterns are commonly used in descriptions involving comparison and contrast.



Step 1

1.1 Read Text 3.1.

1.2 Consider the following questions:

- Is the writer's description based on comparison or contrast – or both?
- Has the writer used a 'vertical' or 'horizontal' pattern of organisation?
- Which words are used to indicate a relationship of comparison or contrast?

Text 3.1

<p>(1) Concepts for the disposal of highly radioactive wastes have been around for more than 40 years (2) The most authoritative early work was a 1957 report by the US National Academy of Sciences. (3) This recommended that rock-salt would be the most suitable medium in which to emplace wastes because it represented a dry geological environment. (4) In countries with large salt deposits, such as West Germany and</p>	<p>the US, the concept of a 'dry' repository took hold. (5) Furthermore, this was the basis of research into disposal until the late 1970s.</p> <p>(6) In other European countries, however, large salt domes do not exist (7) From the mid-seventies, having ignored the disposal problem for about two decades, these countries chose instead to look at crystalline rock types (8) Invariably these were water-bearing</p>
---	---

Adapted from 'The folly of perfection' by Dr Frans Berkhout, *The Independent*, 1 May 1989



Step 2

1.3 Rewrite Text 3.1 so that it follows the *opposite* pattern of organisation. In other words, arrange the eight sentences in a new order so that they compare and contrast the subject in a different way. Make any changes that are necessary to:

- alter the pattern of organisation (this may mean that you will need to make changes to the wording of sentences)
- mark or signal comparison and contrast relationships with the appropriate words
- clarify or replace reference items (*it, they, this, these, those, etc.*)

Note: Except for these changes, there is no need to alter the wording of the sentences.

1.4 Compare your draft with a partner's draft. Do you agree? Suggest corrections and improvements. (See Appendix 2 for words, phrases and structures commonly used in descriptions involving comparison and contrast.)

APPENDIX 4. 1 Participating Institutions

Institutions in Dhaka

1. Adamjee Cantonment College, Dhaka
2. B.A.F Shaheen College, Tejgaon, Dhaka
3. Begum Badrunessa Govt Girls College, Dhaka
4. Tejgaon College, Dhaka
5. Siddheswari Girls' College, Dhaka
6. Kabi Nazrul Govt. College, Tejgaon, Dhaka
7. Teachers' Training College, Dhaka
8. City College, Dhaka
9. Notre Dame college, Dhaka
10. Titu Mir Govt. College, Dhaka
11. University Women's Federation College, Dhaka
12. Habib Ullah Bahar University College, Dhaka
13. Mir Pur College, Dhaka
14. Viqarunessa Noon College, Dhaka
15. Holy Cross College, Dhaka
16. Eden Girls College, Dhaka
17. Commerce College, Dhaka
18. Shaheed Suhrawardy Govt. College, Dhaka
19. Jagannath Govt. College, Dhaka
20. Dhaka Mohila College
21. Ideal School and College
22. Siddheswari Boys (Degree) College, Dhaka
23. T & T College, Motijheel, Dhaka
24. T & T Mohila College, Dhaka
25. B.A.F Shaheen College, Kurmitola, Dhaka
26. Dhaka College
27. English Department, Dhaka University
28. Institute of Modern Languages, Dhaka University
29. North South University, Dhaka
30. Bangladesh Open University, Ghazipur
31. National Academy for Education and Management

Institutions outside Dhaka

32. Rangpur Carmichael College
33. Jessore Govt. Girls' College, Dhaka
34. Jhenidah Govt. Mohila College
35. Comilla Chaudagram Govt. College
36. Thakur Gaon Govt. Women's College
37. Narsingdhi Govt. College
38. Govt. Syed Hatem Ali College Barisal
39. Govt. B.M College Barisal
40. Bakshiganj G. Kiamat Ullah College, Jamalpur
41. Govt. Majeed Memorial City College, Khulna

APPENDIX 4.2 Copy of Letter to Principals

To
The Principal
B.A.F S haheen College
Kurmitola
Dhaka

66C Nazir Road
Dhaka Cantonment
Dhaka

17th April 1996

Dear Sir,

My name is Rubina Khan and I am a lecturer of English Department in Dhaka University. Currently I am working on my Ph.D. thesis at the University of Warwick, England. I am conducting research to evaluate the effectiveness of the writing component of the HSC English syllabus. The main aims of the research are to (a) to find out what teachers of English at the HSC level feel about their students' writing needs, (b) to discover their opinions and attitudes about the methods and materials they use in the development of English writing skills, and (c) to identify particular problems students that students have in developing writing skills.

In order to carry out my investigation I shall have to visit a number of colleges. I seek your permission to visit your college for the purposes of the study and to talk to teachers, students and observe a few classes. I assure you that I shall do so without hampering the regular activities of the teachers, students and the classroom.

I solicit your valuable co-operation in completing my research. The information collected will be useful and of immense help in providing suggestions for the improvement of the writing component of the English HSC syllabus.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Rubina Khan
Lecturer
Dept. of English
University of Dhaka

APPENDIX 4.3 Teacher Questionnaire

Dear Colleague,

My name is Rubina Khan and I am currently working on my Ph.D. thesis at the University of Warwick, England. I am conducting research to evaluate the effectiveness of the writing component of the HSC English syllabus. The main aims are (a) to find out what teachers of English (teaching at the HSC level) feel about their students' writing needs, (b) to discover their opinions and attitudes about the approaches and materials they use in the development of English writing skills, and (c) to identify particular problems that students have in developing writing skills. Your responses will be of immense help in providing suggestions for improvement of the writing component of the HSC syllabus.

I solicit your valuable co-operation in completing my research. I can assure you that your answers will be treated in complete confidence.

In order to carry out my investigation I have prepared a questionnaire. I would be grateful if you could find time out of your busy schedule to complete the questionnaire. I would appreciate if you complete the questionnaire by _____. I will come and collect it personally on this day.

Thank you in advance for your time and co-operation.

Sincerely yours,

Rubina Khan.

HSC (English) Syllabus Evaluation

QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to help analyse the effectiveness of the writing component of the HSC English syllabus. The information collected from this questionnaire will be very useful in making suggestions for the improvement of the English syllabus.

Background Information:

Name of College:

Designation:

Qualification(s):

Experience in English Language teaching: (Please circle appropriate letter)

- (a) 1 -6 years
- (b) 6 -10 years
- (c) 11 -15 years
- (d) 16- 20 years
- (e) Over 20 years

Students' Writing Needs and Problems:

1. In your opinion what are the three main writing needs of your students? Circle 3 letters only. (Rank these needs in order of importance in the boxes provided: 1 = The most important need; 2 = second most important need; 3 = third important need).

- ☐ (a) Develop the ability to write correct sentences and focus on grammatical accuracy.
☐ (b) Develop vocabulary building skills.
☐ (c) Improve spelling.
☐ (d) Develop organisational skills.
☐ (e) Develop the ability to gather ideas/information on the topic.
☐ (f) Develop the ability to express ideas clearly and appropriately.
☐ (g) Starting to write
☐ (h) Other. (Please specify).

.....

2. What sorts of specific writing problems do you think your students face?

.....

Syllabus:

3. What do you perceive to be the main strengths and weaknesses of the existing syllabus?

(a) *Strengths:*

.....

(b) *Weaknesses:*

.....

4. Do you think the writing component of the syllabus helps in preparing students for entrance into the University? (Please circle)

(a) Yes (b) No

5. Give the reason why?

.....

6. Do you think the syllabus is helpful in the development of writing skills? (Please circle).

(a) Yes (b) No

7. Explain why/ why not?

.....

8. What would you specify as the two most useful activities in the writing component of the syllabus? Be specific in your answer.

(a).....

(b).....

Textbook:

9. What text book(s) do you use for the development of writing skills?

10. Do you think the textbook(s) fulfil the writing needs of the Higher Secondary school students?
(Please circle).

(a) Yes (b) No

11. Give your reasons.

.....

12. Would you like any aspect of the text book to be changed?

(a) Yes (b) No

13. If 'Yes' could you please specify?

.....

14. In addition to the text book do you use any other materials for the development of the writing skill? (Please circle)

(a) Yes (b) No

15. If 'Yes' could you specify what kind?

.....

16. Do you have a Teachers' Book (Guide lines for teachers)? (Please circle)

(a) Yes (b) No

17. If 'No' would you like one? (Please circle)

(a) Yes (b) No

18. If 'yes' in what ways do you think the 'Teachers' Book' is going to help you?

.....

Methodology:

19. Which of the following do you use to teach writing in class? (Please circle).

- (a) Write important points/hints on the board.
- (b) Make a plan on the board.
- (c) Give students an outline and make them develop it.
- (d) Ask questions related to the topic.
- (e) Students read model texts and produce a piece of writing according to the model.
- (f) Students memorise model texts.
- (g) Students write paragraph and compositions in groups.
- (h) Give students feedback with spoken or written comments on their written work about specific problems (e.g. grammatical mistakes, organisation etc.).
- (i) None of the above.
- (j) Other. Please be specific.

.....

20. In preparing your lessons what do you do? (Please circle as appropriate)

- (a) Prepare an outline.
 - (b) Write out a plan.
 - (c) Jot down key points.
 - (d) Prepare some questions.
 - (e) Do not need any preparation
 - (f) Other. please specify.
-

21. In teaching writing what is your main focus?

- (a) Grammatical accuracy.
 - (b) Vocabulary building.
 - (c) Spelling.
 - (d) Organisation.
 - (e) Paragraphing.
 - (f) Helping students to get ideas/information on the topic.
 - (g) Helping students to express ideas clearly and appropriately.
 - (h) Helping students to start writing.
 - (i) Other. Please specify.
-

22. In your writing lessons do you follow:

- (a) The sequence of the syllabus and/or text book?
 - (b) The syllabus/ text book but supplement it with your own activities?
 - (c) Make up your own writing activities.
 - (d) Other. Please specify.
-

23. How much class time do you give students to finish a piece of writing?
(Please circle)

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| (a) One whole class period | (c) Last ten minutes |
| (b) Half a period. | (d) No class time |

Teacher's Role:

24. Which of the following roles best describe your approach to teaching writing? (Please circle the most appropriate one)

- (a) Teacher as controller of a range of activities.
 - (b) Teacher as organiser of a range of activities.
 - (c) Teacher as participant in an organised activity.
 - (d) Teacher as facilitator and guide.
 - (e) Teacher as a resource, as a language informant.
 - (f) Teacher as assessor.
 - (g) Other. Please specify.
-

25. What aids do you use in your writing class? (Please circle)

- (a) Handouts.

- (b) Blackboard and chalk.
 - (c) Audio cassettes.
 - (d) Sample extract from other texts.
 - (e) Posters/pictures.
 - (f) Other. please specify.
-

26. What two things do you find most difficult to cope with? (Please circle)

- (a) Large classes.
 - (b) Mixed ability students.
 - (c) Weak students.
 - (d) Lack of resources.
 - (e) Heavy work load.
 - (f) Limited time to cover syllabus.
 - (g) Lack of good writing textbook or materials.
 - (h) Other. Please specify.
-

Assessment:

27. What do you focus on when correcting a piece of work? (Please circle)

- (a) Grammatical accuracy
 - (b) Vocabulary
 - (c) Spelling
 - (d) Organisation
 - (e) Overall effect
 - (f) Other. Please specify.
-

28. Do you correct students written work in class?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

29. If 'yes' how do you correct it? (Please circle the most appropriate one).

- (a) Individually correct each students work.
 - (b) Make students correct each other's work.
 - (c) Indicate where mistake is made.
 - (d) Indicate mistakes so that students can correct them(e.g. use symbols like 's' for incorrect spelling, 'T' for wrong tense etc.)
 - (e) Choose the best written work and read it aloud or write it on the board.
 - (f) Elicit responses from students (e.g. what they have written).
and discuss commonly made errors.
 - (g) Other. Please specify.
-

30. Do you give any written homework? (Please circle).

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

31. If 'yes' what kinds of written homework do you give?

.....

32. Do you correct it and give feedback? (Please circle)

- (a) Yes (b) No.

33. If 'yes' what kinds of feedback do you give? (Please circle)

- (a) Grades
(b) Marks
(c) Verbal comments
(d) Written comments
(e) Praise, affection, anger.
(f) Other. Please specify

.....

Teacher Training:

34. Have you taken part in any kind of teacher training in your country?

- (a) Yes (b) No

35. If 'Yes' please specify:

Type of training:

Duration:

36. Would you like to take part in a course on language teaching in your country?

- (a) Yes (b) No

37. What kind of training in teaching writing would you find useful?

.....

38. How do you think students' writing can be improved. Please give suggestions.

.....

.....

39. What do you think are the most significant problems that English teachers in Bangladesh face in their every day teaching?

.....

.....

Thank you very much for your time and help. I shall remain ever grateful to you for your effort and co-operation.

Rubina Khan.

APPENDIX 4.4A Student Questionnaire

Dear Student,

This is a questionnaire to find out about your needs, views and problems with reference to the writing component of the HSC English syllabus.

Your answers will be kept in confidence and used anonymously in the research. Your contribution in filling the questionnaire will be of immense importance not only to my research but valuable in suggesting improvements to the HSC English syllabus. Please answer in either English or Bengali.

Thank you for your help and co-operation.

Sincerely yours,

Rubina Khan.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Background information:

1. College:
2. How many years have you been studying English?
3. Did you attend an English medium school/college? (Please circle)
(a) Yes (b) No
4. At school/college in Bangladesh what kinds of English classes have you attended? (Please circle)
(a) Reading.
(b) Writing.
(c) Speaking and listening.
(d) Grammar lessons.
(e) A combination of reading, writing and grammar.
(f) Other. Please specify.
.....
5. Why do you need to write in English? Circle the two most appropriate ones from the following:
(a) For examination purposes.
(b) For writing letters/applications to parents, friends, institutions etc.
(c) For writing English poems, short stories etc. in magazines/newspapers.
(d) For writing diaries.
(e) For higher studies (home and abroad).
(f) To get a better job.
(g) Other. Please specify.
.....

Writing in Class:

6. Do you enjoy writing in English? (Please circle)
(a) Yes (b) No
7. If you answered 'yes' to Question 6 circle the most appropriate reason from the list below.
(a) I am good at English grammar .
(b) I can easily find out and use appropriate words in English.
(c) I am good at English spelling.
(d) I can easily get ideas / information on the topic.
(e) I know how to organise my ideas.
(f) I am interested in writing in English.
(g) I am confident about my English writing ability.
(h) Other. Please specify.
.....

8. If you answered 'No' to question 6 can you circle the reason why you dislike writing.

- (a) I am weak in grammar.
- (b) I cannot easily find out and use appropriate words in English
- (c) I am weak in English spelling.
- (d) I cannot easily find ideas/information on the topic.
- (e) I do not know how to organise ideas.
- (f) I am not interested in writing in English.
- (g) I am not confident about my English writing ability.
- (h) Other. Please specify.

.....

9. How would you rate your skills in English .Tick (✓) where appropriate.

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak	Very Weak
Speaking					
Listening					
Reading					
Writing					
Grammar					

Strengths and Weaknesses in Writing:

10. What kind of English writing have you done so far at school /college? Please circle the ones you have.

- (a) Sentence making.
- (b) Paragraph writing.
- (c) Letter writing.
- (d) Story writing.
- (e) Essay writing
- (f) Translation.
- (g) Writing answers to questions based on the text
- (h) Other. Please specify.

.....

11. How easy or how difficult is writing in English for you in terms of each aspect given below? Please circle one letter.

(a)= very easy (b)= easy (c)= difficult (d)= very difficult (e)= Don't know.

Using grammatical structures correctly.	a	b	c	d	e
Using a wide range of vocabulary .	a	b	c	d	e
Spelling.	a	b	c	d	e
Organising your ideas.	a	b	c	d	e
Starting to write.	a	b	c	d	e
Getting ideas/ information.	a	b	c	d	e
Expressing ideas clearly and appropriately	a	b	c	d	e

12. In attempting a piece of writing what do you think are the two most difficult steps?

(a)

(b).....

Classroom Methodology:

13. How does your teacher help you to write in English? (Please circle)
- (a) By writing out important points on the board.
 - (b) By making a plan on the board.
 - (c) By giving you an outline and making you develop it.
 - (d) By asking questions related to the topic.
 - (e) By showing a model text(giving examples from other texts).
 - (f) By asking you to memorise model texts.
 - (g) By giving you opportunities to work with other students.
 - (h) By giving you spoken or written comments on your class/homework on specific problems (e.g. grammatical mistakes, organisation).
 - (i) None of the above.
 - (j) Any other ways which help you in developing your writing skill.
-

14. Do you get any writing homework? (Please circle)

(a) Yes (b) No

15. Do you practise writing in class? (Please circle)

(a) Yes (b) No

16. For how long do you practice writing in class? (Please circle)

(a) One whole class period.
(b) Half a period.
(c) Last ten minutes.
(d) Not at all.

17. Do you need private tuition in English? Explain why/ why not.

.....

Syllabus:

18. Do you think the items in the writing component of the HSC English syllabus (e.g. paragraph, essay, letter, translation) are easy or difficult? (Please circle).

(a) Easy (b) Difficult

19. If they are 'easy' could you write which items you find easy?

.....

20. If they are 'difficult' which items you find difficult?

.....

Textbook:

21. Does your textbook help you in learning to write? (Please circle)

(a) Yes. (b) No.

22. In addition to your main text book do you use any other books to develop your writing skill?
(a) Yes (b) No
23. If 'yes' which ones do you use?
.....
24. Do you do anything outside class to improve your written English?
(Please circle)
(a) Yes (b) No
25. If 'yes' circle the most appropriate ones from the following:
- (a) Watch/listen English language programmes on TV and radio.
 - (b) Read English story books/magazines/newspapers.
 - (c) Use a dictionary.
 - (d) Converse in English with friends.
 - (e) Write letters in English to pen friends /relatives.
 - (f) Other. Please specify.
-

Thank you very much for your help and co-operation.

Rubina Khan

APPENDIX 4. 4B Bengali Version of Student Questionnaire

প্রিয় ছাত্র/ছাত্রী,

এই প্রশ্নমালাটি তৈরী করা হয়েছে উচ্চমাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট পরীক্ষার ইংরেজী পাঠ্যসূচীর লিখিত অংশের সাথে সম্পর্কিত করে - উদ্দেশ্য হচ্ছে তোমাদের প্রয়োজন, ও সমস্যাগুলি খুঁজে বের করা, এবং তোমাদের মতামত নেয়া।

তোমাদের দেয়া উত্তর সম্পর্কে গোপনীয়তা রক্ষা করা হবে এবং গবেষণার কাজে উত্তরদাতার নাম ব্যবহার করা হবে না। প্রশ্নমালা পূরণের মাধ্যমে তোমরা শুধুমাত্র এই গবেষণা কাজে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকাই রাখবে না, বরং উচ্চমাধ্যমিক পাঠ্যসূচীর মান উন্নয়নে তোমাদের পরামর্শ মূল্যবান বলে বিবেচিত হবে। বাংলা বা ইংরেজীতে প্রশ্নের উত্তর দিতে পারবে।

তোমাদের সাহায্য ও সহযোগিতার জন্য ধন্যবাদ।

রুগ্বিনা খান

ছাত্রছাত্রীদের জন্য প্রশ্নমালা

পটভূমি সংক্রান্ত তথ্য :

১. কলেজ :
২. তুমি কত বছর যাবত ইংরেজী শিখছ ?
বছর :
৩. তুমি কি ইংরেজী মাধ্যমে স্কুল/কলেজে পড়েছ ? (সঠিক উত্তরে গোল (O) চিহ্ন দাও):
(ক) হ্যাঁ (খ) না
৪. তোমার স্কুল/কলেজে ইংরেজী ক্লাশে কি ধরনের বিষয় শিখানো হয়েছে ? (সঠিক উত্তরে গোল (O) চিহ্ন দাও):
(ক) পড়া।
(খ) লেখা।
(গ) বলা ও শোনা।
(ঘ) ব্যাকরণ।
(ঙ) পড়া, লেখা ও ব্যাকরণ এক সাথে।
(চ) অন্যান্য (উল্লেখ কর)।
.....
৫. তোমাকে ইংরেজী লিখতে হয় কেন ? (নিচে দেয়া উত্তরগুলো থেকে সবচেয়ে সঠিক দু'টি উত্তরে গোল (O) চিহ্ন দাও):
(ক) পরীক্ষার জন্য।
(খ) বাবা-মা, বন্ধু-বান্ধব, বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের কাছে চিঠি/দরখাস্ত লেখার জন্য।
(গ) ম্যাগাজিন বা সংবাদপত্রে ইংরেজীতে কবিতা, ছোট গল্প ইত্যাদি লেখার জন্য।
(ঘ) ডায়েরী লেখার জন্য।
(ঙ) উচ্চ শিক্ষার জন্য (দেশে বা বিদেশে)।
(চ) ভাল চাকরী পাওয়ার জন্য।
(ছ) অন্যান্য (উল্লেখ কর)।
.....

শ্রেণীকক্ষে লেখা :

৬. তুমি কি ইংরেজীতে লিখতে পছন্দ কর ? (সঠিক উত্তরে গোল (O) চিহ্ন দাও):

(ক) হ্যাঁ (খ) না

৭. যদি ৬ নম্বর প্রশ্নের উত্তর 'হ্যাঁ' হয়, নিচের কারণগুলোর প্রধানটিতে গোল (O) চিহ্ন দাও):

- (ক) আমি ইংরেজী ব্যাকরণে ভাল।
 (খ) আমি সহজেই ইংরেজীতে সঠিক শব্দ খুঁজে পাই এবং ব্যবহার করতে পারি।
 (গ) আমি ইংরেজী বানানে ভাল।
 (ঘ) আমি সহজেই বিষয় সম্পর্কে তথ্য/ভাবনা সংগ্রহ করতে পারি।
 (ঙ) আমি আমার চিন্তা-ভাবনাগুলো ঠিকমত সাজাতে পারি।
 (চ) আমি ইংরেজী লিখতে আগ্রহী।
 (ছ) ইংরেজী লেখার দক্ষতার উপর আমার আস্থা আছে।
 (জ) অন্যান্য (উল্লেখ কর)।

৮. যদি ৬ নম্বর প্রশ্নের উত্তর 'না' হয়, তবে তোমার ইংরেজী লিখতে অনীহা কারণ কি ? (নিচে দেয়া কারণগুলোর সঠিকটিতে গোল (O) চিহ্ন দাও):

- (ক) আমি ইংরেজী ব্যাকরণে দুর্বল।
 (খ) আমি সহজেই ইংরেজীতে সঠিক শব্দ খুঁজে নিতে এবং ব্যবহার করতে পারি না।
 (গ) আমি ইংরেজী বানানে দুর্বল।
 (ঘ) আমি সহজে বিষয় সম্পর্কে তথ্য/ভাবনা সংগ্রহ করতে পারি না।
 (ঙ) আমি আমার চিন্তা-ভাবনাগুলো ঠিকমত সাজাতে পারিনা।
 (চ) আমি ইংরেজীতে লিখতে আগ্রহী নই।
 (ছ) ইংরেজী লেখার দক্ষতার উপর আমার তেমন আস্থা নাই।
 (জ) অন্যান্য (উল্লেখ কর)।

৯. ইংরেজীতে তোমার দক্ষতা নিরূপণ কর এবং যথার্থ স্থানে টিক (✓) চিহ্ন দাও:

	খুব ভাল	ভাল	সন্তোষজনক	দুর্বল	অত্যন্ত দুর্বল
বলা					
শোনা					
পড়া					
লেখা					
ব্যাকরণ					

লেখার ক্ষমতা ও দুর্বলতা :

১০. এ পর্যন্ত কোন্ কোন্ ধরনের ইংরেজী লেখা স্কুল/কলেজে শিখেছ ? (যথাহানে গোল (O) চিহ্ন দাও):

- (ক) বাক্যগঠন।
 - (খ) প্যারাগ্রাফ/অনুচ্ছেদ লেখা।
 - (গ) পত্র লেখা।
 - (ঘ) গল্প লেখা।
 - (ঙ) রচনা লেখা।
 - (চ) অনুবাদ করা।
 - (ছ) পাঠ্যপুস্তক এর উপর ভিত্তি করে প্রশ্নোত্তর লেখা।
 - (জ) অন্যান্য (উল্লেখ কর)।
-

১১. নিচে উল্লেখ করা বিষয় অনুযায়ী ইংরেজী ভাষা ব্যবহারে তোমার দক্ষতা অনুসারে যথাহানে গোল (O) চিহ্ন দাও : (যেমন 'লিখতে শুরু করা' তোমার জন্য খুব সহজ হলে 'ক' তে গোল (O) চিহ্ন দাও, অথবা 'কঠিন' হলে 'গ' তে গোল (O) চিহ্ন দাও।)

- (ক) খুব সহজ।
- (খ) সহজ।
- (গ) কঠিন।
- (ঘ) খুব কঠিন।
- (ঙ) জানিনা।

i.	সঠিকভাবে ব্যাকরণ ব্যবহার করা	: ক খ গ ঘ ঙ
ii.	ব্যাপক শব্দভান্ডার ব্যবহার করা	: ক খ গ ঘ ঙ
iii.	বানান	: ক খ গ ঘ ঙ
iv.	তোমার চিন্তাগুলোকে সাজানো	: ক খ গ ঘ ঙ
v.	লিখতে শুরু করা	: ক খ গ ঘ ঙ
vi.	বিষয় সম্পর্কে ধারণা বা তথ্য পাওয়া	: ক খ গ ঘ ঙ
vii.	ধারণাগুলো সুস্পষ্ট এবং যথাযথভাবে প্রকাশ করা	: ক খ গ ঘ ঙ

১২. ইংরেজীতে কোনো বিষয়ে লিখতে গেলে কোন দু'টি ক্ষেত্রে তুমি সবচেয়ে বেশী অসুবিধার সম্মুখীন হও ?

(ক)

.....

.....

.....

(খ)

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.....

শ্রেণীকক্ষে শিক্ষাদান পদ্ধতি :

১৩. তোমার শিক্ষক কিভাবে তোমাকে ইংরেজী লিখতে সাহায্য করে থাকেন ? (সঠিক উত্তরে গোল (O) চিহ্ন দাও)

(ক) গুরুত্বপূর্ণ পয়েন্টগুলো বোর্ডে লিখে দেন।

(খ) বোর্ডে একটি পরিকল্পনা দিয়ে দেন।

(গ) শিক্ষকের দেয়া রূপরেখা (Outline) অনুযায়ী লিখতে হয়।

(ঘ) বিষয় সম্পর্কে প্রশ্ন জিজ্ঞাসা করা।

(ঙ) একটি Model Text ব্যবহার করেন।

(চ) Model Text মুখস্থ করতে বলেন (প্যারাগ্রাফ, রচনা ও পত্র লেখা)।

(ছ) অন্যান্য ছাত্রছাত্রীর সাথে কাজ করার সুযোগ দেন।

(জ) তোমার শ্রেণীর/বাড়ীর লিখিত কাজের সমস্যা/ত্রুটি সম্পর্কে মৌখিক বা লিখিত মন্তব্য প্রদান করেন (যেমন - বানান, ব্যাকরণ ত্রুটি, ইত্যাদি)।

(ঝ) উপরের কোনোটিই না।

(ঞ) অন্য কোনো ভাবে যা তোমার লেখার দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধিতে সহায়ক (বর্ণনা দাও)।

.....

১৪. তোমাকে কি বাড়ীতে করার জন্য কোন লেখার কাজ দেওয়া হয় ? (সঠিক উত্তরে গোল (O) চিহ্ন দাও):

(ক) হ্যাঁ (খ) না

১৫. তুমি কি ক্লাশে লেখার অনুশীলন কর ?

(ক) হ্যাঁ (খ) না

১৬. ক্লাশে কত সময় তুমি লেখার অনুশীলন কর ? (সঠিক উত্তরে গোল (O) চিহ্ন দাও):

(ক) একটি সম্পূর্ণ পিরিয়ড।
(খ) অর্ধেক পিরিয়ড।
(গ) শেষ দশ মিনিট।
(ঘ) একটুও না।

১৭. তোমার কি ইংরেজী শিক্ষার জন্য Private Tuition প্রয়োজন ? এর পক্ষে অথবা বিপক্ষে তোমার যুক্তি দেখাও:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

পাঠ্যসূচী :

১৮. তোমার ইংরেজী পাঠ্যসূচীতে লেখার যে অংশগুলো আছে (যেমন প্যারাগ্রাফ, রচনা, টিঠি, অনুবাদ), সেগুলো কি তোমার মতে সহজ না কঠিন ?

(ক) সহজ (খ) কঠিন

১৯. তোমার উত্তর যদি হয় 'সহজ', তাহলে কোন বিষয়টি 'সহজ' বলে মনে কর ?

.....
.....
.....

২০. তোমার উত্তর যদি হয় 'কঠিন', তাহলে কোন কোন বিষয়ে তা 'কঠিন' বলে মনে কর ?

.....
.....

পাঠ্যপুস্তক :

২১. তোমার পাঠ্যপুস্তক কি তোমাকে লিখতে সাহায্য করে ?

(ক) হ্যাঁ (খ) না

২২. তোমার লেখার দক্ষতা বাড়ানোর জন্য তুমি কি তোমার মূল পাঠ্যপুস্তক ছাড়া অন্য কোনো বইয়ের সাহায্য নাও ?

(ক) হ্যাঁ (খ) না

২৩. উত্তর 'হ্যাঁ' হলে কোন্ কোন্ বই তুমি ব্যবহার কর ?

.....
.....
.....

২৪. তুমি কি ক্লাশের বাইরে কোনো কিছু কর যা তোমার ইংরেজী লেখার দক্ষতা বাড়াতে পারে ?

(ক) হ্যাঁ (খ) না

২৫. তোমার উত্তর যদি 'হ্যাঁ' হয়, নিচের কোনগুলো অথবা কোনটি তোমার অন্য প্রয়োজ্য?

- (ক) টেলিভিশন অথবা রেডিওতে ইংরেজী ভাষায় অনুষ্ঠান দেখা বা শোনা।
- (খ) ইংরেজী গানের বই/ম্যাগাজিন/খবরের কাগজ পড়া।
- (গ) অভিধান ব্যবহার করা।
- (ঘ) বন্ধুদের সাথে ইংরেজীতে কথা বলা।
- (ঙ) ইংরেজীতে পত্র মিতা/আত্মীয়কে চিঠি লেখা।
- (চ) অন্যান্য (উল্লেখ কর)।

তোমার সাহায্য ও সহযোগিতার জন্য অনেক অনেক ধন্যবাদ।

সাবিনা খান

APPENDIX 4. 5 Classroom Observation Checklist

Institution:

Name of Teacher:

Experience:

Class Level:

Class Size:

Observation No.:

Time Spent Observing Class:

Aids used”

Date:

Circle or check each item.

1. Number of students per bench:

- One
 - Two
 - Three
 - Four or more
 - Other (Please specify).
-

2. The goal was to teach :

- Letter
 - Paragraph
 - Essay
 - Question & Answers
 - Summary/substance
 - Translation
 - Other (Please specify)
-

3. The focus was on:

- Grammar
 - Vocabulary
 - Spelling
 - Organisation
 - Paragraphing
 - Helping students to get ideas/information
 - Helping students to start writing
 - Other (Please specify)
-

4. Students used a writing textbook for:

- Nearly all the class
- 1/2 the class
- Less than 1/4 of class
- None

5. The teacher used a writing textbook for:

- Nearly all the class
- 1/2 the class
- Less than 1/4 of class
- None

6. The teacher had a writing plan:

- Yes
- No

7. Kind of model text displayed by the teacher:

- Sentence (s)
- Paragraph (s)
- Part of letter/application
- Full letter
- Composition
- None

- Other (Please specify)

8. The teacher supplemented the text book:

- Yes
- No

9. Strategies used by the teacher:

- Wrote important points on the board
- Made a plan on the board
- Gave students an outline and made them develop it
- Made students read model texts and asked them to produce a piece of writing according to the model.
- Asked students to memorise model texts.
- Made students write paragraph/composition in groups
- Gave them feedback with spoken or written comments on their written work about specific problems (e.g. grammatical mistakes etc.)
- Other (Please specify)

10. Students were able to carry out instructions:

- All the time
- None of the time
- Nearly always
- Not always

11. The students got help with :

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Spelling
- Organisation
- Paragraphing
- Getting ideas
- Starting to write
- Other (Please specify)

12. The teacher helped with ideas generation by :

- Making students brain storm in groups
- Asking individual students to jot down ideas
- Asking questions to the topic
- Listing points on the board
- Oral discussion of relevant points
- Other (Please specify)

13. The teacher used pair work / group work activities in class:

- Yes
- No

14. Predominant interaction model in classroom :

- Teacher to student
- Student to student

- Student to teacher
- Other (Please specify)

.....

15. The role of teacher in class:

- Teacher as controller of activities
- Teacher as organiser of range of activities
- Teacher as participant in an organised activity
- Teacher as facilitator and guide
- Teacher as resource, as a language informant.
- Teacher as assessor
- Other (Please specify)

.....

16. Peer editing:

- Yes
- No

17. Kinds of writing done by students in class:

- Writing answers to questions
- Completing sentences
- Letter
- Paragraph
- Composition
- Story writing
- Translation
- Other (Please specify)

.....

18. Kind of feedback:

- Grades
- Marks
- Verbal comments
- Written comments
- Praise, affection, anger
- None
- Other (Please specify)

.....

19. Time allocated in the feedback portion of the class:

- 15 min
- 10 min
- 05 min
- None

20. Correction work in class:

- Yes
- No

21. The focus of correction work was on:

- Grammatical errors
- Discourse errors (e.g. style, organisation, appropriacy)
- Lexical errors (vocabulary)
- Mechanics (spelling, punctuation, neatness etc.)

- Overall effect
- Other (Please specify)

.....

22. Manner of correction:

- Individually corrected each student's work
- Made students correct each others work

Chose the best work and read it aloud or wrote it on the board

- Elicited responses from students and discussed commonly and frequently made errors
- No correction at all.
- Other specify

.....

23. Revision work done in class for:

- 0 min
- 2 min
- 5 min
- 10 min
- 20 min
- 30 + minutes

Field Notes

APPENDIX 4.6 Structured Interview Questions for Teachers

1. What training support have you received to help you with the teaching of English writing skills?
2. Can you tell me about the proficiency level of the HSC students' writing?
3. In which areas do you think they are strong? Why do you think they are strong in these areas?
4. In which areas do you think they are weak? Why do you think they are weak in these areas?
5. What do you think are the main strengths of the existing English syllabus?
6. What do you think are the main weaknesses of the existing English syllabus?
7. What do you consider to be the most important items/activities in the syllabus for the development of writing skills?
8. Would you like to suggest any changes/modifications to the existing syllabus? Why/why not?
9. In your opinion what are the main writing needs of H.S.C students?
10. What would you recommend that would promote the development of writing skills?
11. What is your opinion of the textbook? Please comment on its strength and weaknesses?
12. Do you think the textbook helps in the development of writing skills? If yes, how? If not, why not?
13. Do you use/add other books/materials to improve your students' writing? If yes, what additional textbooks/materials do you use for the development of writing skills?
14. What do you see as your main aims in teaching writing?
15. Do you have a Teachers' book? If yes, which one? If not would one be useful?
16. In what ways would it be useful?
17. What particular obstacles/ difficulties do you face when you are teaching writing?
18. What do you do to tackle these problems?
19. Do you correct your students written work in class? If yes, why? If no, why not?
20. Do you give any feedback to your students? If yes what do you do?
21. What kind of training in teaching writing would you find useful? Please be specific.
22. In what way can we as teachers help students to promote their writing abilities?
23. What do you think are some of the most significant problems that English teachers face in their everyday teaching?
24. Are there any other issues/views you would like to express?

Thank you very much.

APPENDIX 4.7 Structured Interview Questions for Students

1. Why do you need/want to learn to write in English?
2. What problems do you face when you are asked to write in English?
3. Do you find the HSC English syllabus easy or difficult?
4. If easy which items/areas you find easy?
5. If difficult which items/areas do you find difficult?
6. Do you like your text book. If yes/no why?
7. What activities/exercises in the textbook help you to write?
8. Do you get any help from your teachers to aid you in writing better?
9. If yes, what sort of help do you get from your teachers?
10. If no, what sort of help do you think would be useful to you?
11. If you were given the opportunity to learn writing in small groups what would you ask your teacher to teach you?
12. Do you have private tuition? If yes, why?
13. Would you like to suggest any changes to the English syllabus?
14. Do you want to express any other issues/views regarding improving your writing ability. Do you have any suggestions to offer?

Thank you.

APPENDIX 4.8 Structured Interview Questions for Principals and Heads of English Department

1. What do you think about the teaching of English in your college?
2. How important do you think it is for your students to learn to write in English? Why do you think it is important?
3. What do you perceive to be the main (English writing) needs of your students?
4. What do you think are some of the main problems your students face when they are asked to write in English?
5. What are your views on the existing HSC English syllabus? Could you please comment on its strengths and weaknesses?
6. Do you think the HSC English syllabus needs modification? Why/why not?
7. What are your views on the existing English textbook?
8. What sort of difficulties do you think your teachers face in teaching English?
9. Do you take any steps to help them? If yes, what are the steps you take?
10. Do you have any staff development activities in your college? Could you please explain what type of activities are carried out?
11. What training support have your English teachers received to help them with the teaching of English writing skills?
12. If they have not received any training why not?
13. Are there any other issues/views you would like to express?

Thank you.

APPENDIX 4.9 Structured Interview Questions for Curriculum Developers

1. What are the main objectives of the existing HSC English syllabus?
2. What are the strengths of the existing syllabus? Please be specific. Why do you consider these to be the strengths?
3. What are the weaknesses of the existing syllabus? why do you consider these to be the drawbacks?
4. What do you consider to be the most important items/ activities in the syllabus for the development of writing skills?
5. Why do you think these are important?
6. Would you like to suggest any changes to the existing syllabus? If yes/no why
7. I hear that the syllabus has been modified. Did any evaluation of the existing syllabus take place prior to modification?
8. Why/why not?
9. Can you please tell me something about the language proficiency level of the HSC students' writing?
10. In which areas do you think they are strong? Why do you think they are strong in these areas?
11. In which areas do you think they are weak? Why do you think they are weak in these areas?
12. In your opinion what are the main writing needs of the HSC students?
13. What is your opinion of the existing textbook? Could you please comment on its strength and weaknesses?
14. Is there any 'Teachers' book ' for the teachers teaching at the HSC level ? If yes, which one? If not, would one be useful?
15. How do you think it would be useful?
16. what kind of training facilities/opportunities are provided to college teachers to help them with the teaching of writing skills?
17. Do you think teachers need special kind of training for improving students' writing skills? If yes, could you specify what kind?
18. What do you think are some of the most significant problems that English teachers face in their everyday teaching?
19. Are there any other issues/views you would like to express?

Thank you

APPENDIX 4.10 The Marking Scheme

Comments

(1) Grammar						
a.	Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5
	- sentence construction - use of tenses - use of subject verb agreement - use of plurals - use of articles and prepositions					
b.	Complexity	1	2	3	4	5
	- complexity of sentence structure					
c.	Range	1	2	3	4	5
	- range in the use of structures					
d.	Appropriacy	1	2	3	4	5
	- level of formality					
(2) Mechanics						
.	Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5
	- accuracy of conventions of punctuation - accuracy of spelling					
(3) Vocabulary						
a	Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5
	- correct/adequate use of words					
b.	Complexity	1	2	3	4	5
	-using lexical cohesion e.g. using synonyms, antonyms					
c.	Range	1	2	3	4	5
	- originality, variety - choice of words					
d.	Appropriacy	/	2	3	4	5
	-appropriateness of vocabulary					
(4) Organisation						
a.	Accuracy	1	2	3	4	5
	- accuracy of paragraphing					
b.	Complexity	/	2	3	4	5
	- clarity of overall organisation - development of ideas					
c.	Range	1	2	3	4	5
	- the number of ideas developed - the number of arguments					

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| d. | Appropriacy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | - overall physical and conceptual structure | | | | | |
| | - introduction | | | | | |
| | - conclusion | | | | | |

(5) Cohesion

- | | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Accuracy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | - using the right connective | | | | | |
| | - use of conjunction, interjections | | | | | |
| | - using pronouns, pronoun referents | | | | | |
| b. | Complexity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | - length of sentences | | | | | |
| | - use of cohesive devices | | | | | |
| | - linking ideas within and between sentences | | | | | |
| c. | Range | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | - range of connectives | | | | | |
| d. | Appropriacy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | - choosing the right connective for the level of formality | | | | | |
| | - appropriate grammatical usage (e.g. and but or so) | | | | | |

(6) Content

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Accuracy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | - relevance to the topic /task | | | | | |
| b. | Complexity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | - development of topic and thematic content | | | | | |
| c. | Range | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | - range of ideas discussed | | | | | |
| d. | Appropriacy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | - fulfilment of task | | | | | |
| | - length of the task | | | | | |
| | - too little or over length | | | | | |

APPENDIX 4.11 The Banding Scale

1. Inadequate

- Inadequate attempt at task.
- Grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation uncertain.
- Range of grammar and vocabulary limited .
- Limited organisation (little development and no paragraphs).
- Limited attempt at cohesion of ideas and information through intrasentential and intersential linking.

2. Basics/Rudimentary

- Some attempt at task.
- Message communicated but grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation errors noticeable.
- Some range of grammar and vocabulary used.
- Some attempt at organisation (evidence of conceptual paragraphs some paragraphs, repetitive).
- Some amount of cohesion through intrasentential and intersential linking.

3. Satisfactory

- Reasonable task achievement.
- Grammar, vocabulary, spelling , punctuation satisfactory (some errors may be there but they do not do not impede communication).
- A fair range of language is used and candidates are able to express themselves without gross distortion.
- Clear organisation (evidence of conceptual and physical paragraphs, some repetition of ideas possible).
- Reasonable use of cohesive devices. within sentences, between sentences and across paragraphs

4. Displays Elements of Good Quality

- Good attempt at task.
- Good control of grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation.
- An extensive range of language used and candidates can express themselves clearly
- Good attention paid to organisation of ideas as reflected in the use of paragraph structure.
- Good use of cohesive devices.

5. Very Good

- Task successfully carried out.
- High level control of grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation..
- Few limitations on the range of language available and extensive range of consistently appropriate language used.
- Task very well organised (with correct formal paragraphing).
- Appropriate use of cohesive devices and clear and consistent evidence of the ability to produce coherent discourse

APPENDIX 7.1 Correlation Coefficients of the different Sub-categories of the Marking Scheme

	Holi	Gram a	Gram b	Gram c	Gram d	Mech
Holistic	1.0000 (10) P= .	.8506 (10) P= .002	.8099 (10) P= .005	.8461 (10) P= .002	.85533 (10) P= .002	.8198 (10) P= .004
Gram a	.8506 (10) P= .002	1.0000 (10) P= .	.9134 (10) P= .000	.9020 (10) P= .000	.8785 (10) P= .001	.7839 (10) P= .007
Gram b	.8099 (10) P= .005	.9134 (10) P= .000	1.0000 (10) P= .	.9569 (10) P= .000	.9629 (10) P= .000	.8894 (10) P= .001
Gram c	.8461 (10) P= .002	.9020 (10) P= .000	.9569 (10) P= .000	1.0000 (10) P= .	.9891 (10) P= .000	.8841 (10) P= .001
Gram d	.8533 (10) P= .002	.8785 (10) P= .001	.9629 (10) P= .000	.9891 (10) P= .000	1.0000 (10) P= .	.8824 (10) P= .001
Mechanics	.8198 (10) P= .004	.7839 (10) P= .007	.8894 (10) P= .001	.8841 (10) P= .001	.8824 (10) P= .001	1.0000 (10) P= .
Vocab a	.8251 (10) P= .003	.9491 (10) P= .000	.9807 (10) P= .000	.9527 (10) P= .000	.9434 (10) P= .000	.8423 (10) P= .002
Vocab b	.8254 (10) P= .003	.9631 (10) P= .000	.9668 (10) P= .000	.9516 (10) P= .000	.9390 (10) P= .000	.8379 (10) P= .002
Vocab c	.8347 (10) P= .003	.9667 (10) P= .000	.9624 (10) P= .000	.9429 (10) P= .000	.9273 (10) P= .000	.8319 (10) P= .003
Vocab d	.7770 (10) P= .008	.9394 (10) P= .000	.9805 (10) P= .000	.9367 (10) P= .000	.9244 (10) P= .000	.8497 (10) P= .002
Org a	.8605 (10) P= .001	.8160 (10) P= .004	.9109 (10) P= .000	.8916 (10) P= .001	.9283 (10) P= .000	.8351 (10) P= .003
Org b	.8682 (10) P= .001	.9501 (10) P= .000	.9493 (10) P= .000	.9737 (10) P= .000	.9708 (10) P= .000	.8280 (10) P= .003
Org c	.8337 (10) P= .003	.9651 (10) P= .000	.9645 (10) P= .000	.9662 (10) P= .000	.9593 (10) P= .000	.8303 (10) P= .003
Org d	.8599 (10) P= .001	.9362 (10) P= .000	.9458 (10) P= .000	.9723 (10) P= .000	.9697 (10) P= .000	.8206 (10) P= .004
Coh a	.7544 (10) P= .012	.9324 (10) P= .000	.9493 (10) P= .000	.9332 (10) P= .000	.9048 (10) P= .000	.8423 (10) P= .002
Coh b	.8011 (10) P= .005	.9557 (10) P= .000	.9374 (10) P= .000	.9482 (10) P= .000	.9195 (10) P= .000	.8317 (10) P= .003
Coh c	.7596 (10) P= .011	.9293 (10) P= .000	.9468 (10) P= .000	.9418 (10) P= .000	.9237 (10) P= .000	.7909 (10) P= .006

Coh d .7638 .9446 .9486 .9422 .9264 .7930
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.010 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.006

Con a .8308 .9635 .9498 .9683 .9371 .8378
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.003 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.002

Con b .8179 .9543 .9628 .9181 .9057 .8271
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.004 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.003

Con c .8347 .9667 .9624 .9429 .9273 .8319
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.003 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.003

Con d .8210 .9575 .9587 .9488 .9398 .8269
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.004 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.003

Vocab a Vocab b Vocab c Vocab d Org a Org b

Holistic .8251 .8254 .8347 .7770 .8605 .8682
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.003 P=.003 P=.003 P=.008 P=.001 P=.001

Gram a .9491 .9631 .9667 .9394 .8160 .9501
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.004 P=.000

Gram b .9807 .9668 .9624 .9805 .9109 .9493
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Gram c .9527 .9516 .9429 .9367 .8916 .9737
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.001 P=.000

Gram d .9434 .9390 .9273 .9244 .9283 .9708
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Mechanics .8423 .8379 .8319 .8497 .8351 .8280
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.002 P=.002 P=.003 P=.002 P=.003 P=.003

Vocab a 1.0000 .9838 .9821 .9830 .8725 .9650
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=. P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.001 P=.000

Vocab b .9838 1.0000 .9980 .9860 .8325 .9582
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=. P=.000 P=.000 P=.003 P=.000

Vocab c .9821 .9980 1.0000 .9863 .8282 .9491
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=. P=.000 P=.003 P=.000

Vocab d .9830 .9860 .9863 1.0000 .8443 .9312
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=. P=.002 P=.000

Org a .8725 .8325 .8282 .8443 1.0000 .9068
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.001 P=.003 P=.003 P=.002 P=. P=.000

Vocab a Vocab b Vocab c Vocab d Org a Org b

Org b .9650 .9582 .9491 .9312 .9068 1.0000
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.

Org c	.9811	.9860	.9775	.9634	.8664	.9888
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.001	P=.000
Org d	.9688	.9643	.9538	.9297	.8761	.9928
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.001	P=.000
Coh a	.9509	.9715	.9735	.9852	.8044	.9104
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.005	P=.000
Coh b	.9528	.9856	.9855	.9729	.7943	.9369
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.006	P=.000
Coh c	.9674	.9896	.9859	.9777	.7837	.9336
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.007	P=.000
Coh d	.9614	.9900	.9857	.9785	.8003	.9415
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.005	P=.000
Con a	.9755	.9830	.9836	.9716	.8329	.9637
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.003	P=.000
Con b	.9768	.9891	.9948	.9899	.8246	.9229
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.003	P=.000
Con c	.9821	.9980	1.0000	.9863	.8282	.9491
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.003	P=.000
Con d	.9755	.9976	.9928	.9752	.8210	.9586
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.004	P=.000
Org c	Org d	Coh a	Coh b	Coh c	Coh d	
Holistic	.8837	.8599	.7544	.8011	.7596	.7638
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.003	P=.001	P=.012	P=.005	P=.011	P=.010
Gram a	.9651	.9362	.9324	.9557	.9293	.9446
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Gram b	.9645	.9458	.9493	.9374	.9468	.9486
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Gram c	.9662	.9723	.9332	.9482	.9418	.9422
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Gram d	.9593	.9697	.9048	.9195	.9237	.9264
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Mechanics	.8303	.8206	.8423	.8317	.7909	.7930
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.003	P=.004	P=.002	P=.003	P=.006	P=.006
Vocab a	.9811	.9688	.9509	.9528	.9674	.9614
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Vocab b	.9860	.9643	.9715	.9856	.9896	.9900
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000

Vocab c .9775 .9538 .9735 .9855 .9859 .9857
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Vocab d .9634 .9297 .9852 .9729 .9777 .9785
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Org a .8664 .8761 .8044 .7943 .7837 .8003
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.001 P=.001 P=.005 P=.006 P=.007 P=.005

Org c Org d Coh a Coh b Coh c Coh d

Org b .9888 .9928 .9104 .9369 .9336 .9415
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Org c 1.0000 .9892 .9427 .9650 .9690 .9744
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=. P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Org d .9892 1.0000 .9014 .9352 .9473 .9455
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=. P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Coh a .9427 .9014 1.0000 .9874 .9706 .9777
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=. P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Coh b .9650 .9352 .9874 1.0000 .9827 .9892
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=. P=.000 P=.000

Coh c .9690 .9473 .9706 .9827 1.0000 .9950
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=. P=.000

Coh d .9744 .9455 .9777 .9892 .9950 1.0000
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.

Con a .9765 .9605 .9757 .9871 .9744 .9752
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Con b .9577 .9260 .9728 .9729 .9755 .9748
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Con c .9775 .9538 .9735 .9855 .9859 .9857
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Con d .9875 .9686 .9586 .9807 .9887 .9895
 (10) (10) (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Con a Con b Con c Con d

Holistic .8308 .8179 .8347 .8210
 (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.003 P=.004 P=.003 P=.004

Gram a .9635 .9543 .9667 .9575
 (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Gram b .9498 .9628 .9624 .9587
 (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Gram c .9683 .9181 .9429 .9488
 (10) (10) (10) (10)
 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000 P=.000

Gram d	.9371	.9057	.9273	.9398
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Mechanics	.8378	.8271	.8319	.8269
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.002	P=.003	P=.003	P=.003
Vocab a	.9755	.9768	.9821	.9755
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Vocab b	.9830	.9891	.9980	.9976
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Vocab c	.9836	.9948	1.0000	.9928
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Vocab d	.9716	.9899	.9863	.9752
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Org a	.8329	.8246	.8282	.8210
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.003	P=.003	P=.003	P=.004
Con a	Con b	Con c	Con d	
Org b	.9637	.9229	.9491	.9586
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Org c	.9765	.9577	.9775	.9875
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Org d	.9605	.9260	.9538	.9686
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Coh a	.9757	.9728	.9735	.9586
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Coh b	.9871	.9729	.9855	.9807
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Coh c	.9744	.9755	.9859	.9887
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Coh d	.9752	.9748	.9857	.9895
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Con a	1.0000	.9680	.9836	.9742
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=. .	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000
Con b	.9680	1.0000	.9948	.9800
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=. .	P=.000	P=.000
Con c	.9836	.9948	1.0000	.9928
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=. .	P=.000
Con d	.9742	.9800	.9928	1.0000
	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
	P=.000	P=.000	P=.000	P=. .

APPENDIX 7.2 Selected Comments on the Writing Tasks

1. Interesting to see the differences between 1 and 2. Even in a generally poor student some aspects are developing. Even though grammar is inaccurate the student is trying a range of structures and using strategic competence to get around problems.
2. An interesting script because of the range of grades. Poor paragraphing gives a 2 on organisation. On the other hand the vocabulary is good and there is a fluency which shows an ability to use cohesive devices. As a result the student can build an argument.
3. The student seems to be badly let down by language knowledge even though exhibits ideas for content and ability to build arguments.
4. Vocabulary is better than grammar is often the case in writing.
5. The student shows development in cohesion even though grammar is poor.
6. An example of how, when something is very simply written does better on accuracy than other criteria.
7. Stronger on ideas and organisation than language.
8. Using a list of points prevents the candidate from using or displaying cohesive items and from developing coherence.

Use all the words in Table A and at least 8 of the words in Table B to make a story. You can add any other words you like. The pictures may help you, but they do not tell the whole story. Write your final version in Table C:



Table A

She
It
Her cat
They
The firemen
Mrs. Brewin

Table B

die	bite	save	run over	arrive
leave	put up	thank	work	lie
telephone	climb	garden	tree	
ladder	grass	fire-engine		

Table C:

Decide in which order your events took place. When two of your events happened at the same time, put one in column A and the other in column B:

	A	B
1	<i>Mrs. Brewin was working in the garden.</i>	<i>Her cat lay on the grass.</i>
2	<i>The cat climbed a tree and...</i>	
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Using connectors of concession

LEVEL	Intermediate
TOPIC	A letter of complaint
FUNCTION	Complaining.
FORM	A letter of a semi-formal kind.
FOCUS	Connectives of contrast.
CONTEXT	The students imagine they are adults who have watched a television drama with their children. The programme was scheduled early in the evening and it contained some violent scenes which upset the children. Knowing that the TV company has a policy of not showing violence until later in the evening, they write a letter of complaint.
PREPARATION	Make copies of the letter and the accompanying task sheet.
IN CLASS	<p>1 Introduce the topic by asking students if they think that TV companies should have a policy on showing scenes of violence. Ask them to suggest guidelines.</p> <p>2 Hand out the letter and the task sheet. Ask students to read through the letter quickly and to explain why the writer is complaining. Do they sympathize with her?</p> <p>3 Draw the students' attention to the sentence beginning: 'In spite of . . .' and explain that there are several ways of writing this. Elicit from the class the correct ways to complete the sentence frames.</p> <p>4 Ask the students to use the structure and to choose a particular way of connecting the ideas from the examples shown. They should write one of the following letters:</p> <p>a. Write to an English school you visited in the summer and which has still not sent you a certificate of attendance. They said they would send it within a week and it is now a month later.</p> <p>b. Write a letter to your local Council. They said that a pile of rubbish outside your house would be taken away. That was two months ago.</p>
REMARKS	Working with sentence frames like this can be a very effective way of showing the use of connectives and the grammatical constraints working on them. But it needs to be done in context, even if the letter is only a short one. This makes the task meaningful and the different structures are much better remembered.

EXAMPLE LETTER

Dear Sir,

I am writing to complain about the programme 'Harry's Place' which was shown on channel 5 last Thursday. In spite of your published promise not to show unsuitable programmes for children early in the evening, this was shown at seven o'clock, a popular time for younger viewers.

The programme showed a man pushing a young child off a bridge into the river below. This kind of violence is unforgivable. My children were frightened and it was difficult to explain it to them.

Yours faithfully
Jane Sinclair

TASK SHEET

- 1 However
- 2 Despite.....
- 3 yet
- 4 Although.....
- 5 Nevertheless

Writing a newspaper article

LEVEL	Lower intermediate upwards (This could also be used with elementary students if the newspaper article were chosen with care.)
TOPIC	Villages threatened by rodents
FUNCTION	Reporting an event.
FORM	A report as found in a newspaper article.
FOCUS	Overall organization and development of ideas.
PREPARATION	<p>You need to find two newspaper articles reporting the same incident but each containing slightly different information. Alternatively, one longer article may be divided so that each part contains different information.</p> <p>You also need to prepare a set of questions about the reported incident.</p>
IN CLASS	<p>1 Ask the students to work in pairs. Give each student in the pair the set of questions and one of the articles. The following are examples of the type of questions to prepare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Where have the hordes of mice appeared?</i> - <i>Which area are they moving towards?</i> - <i>When did they first appear?</i> - <i>What do they look like?</i> - <i>Which species of rodent could they be?</i> - <i>What do they eat?</i> - <i>What actions have farmers taken against them?</i> - <i>Were these actions successful?</i> - <i>Why are the farmers and villagers so worried?</i> <p>2 Allow time for the students to read their articles, find answers to the questions, and make notes.</p> <p>3 Students should then work in pairs, asking each other the questions and pooling information, making notes as they do so. Sometimes only one student will have relevant information and sometimes both of them will have points to contribute.</p> <p>4 When the students have completed exchanging information and making notes, they are ready to draft their own article. You can help them with paragraphing by suggesting sub-headings to be followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Millions of Rodents - Mystery Identity - Terrified Cats Fled - Villages Threatened
REMARKS	Try to encourage students to work from their notes and use their own language resources as much as possible to write the article. However, even if students incorporate a good many expressions from the originals, this can be beneficial to their development of written English.

Poison Fails to Halt Mice Hordes

From our correspondent BELGRADE Tuesday

Millions of mice advancing across Bosnia into Serbia have become immune to poison put down to halt their march, it was reported today. Farmers said they had seen the mice swallow the poison and then continue to attack crops without any apparent ill effects. Crops in ten villages in Bosnia have been destroyed.

The rodents, six inches long with yellow coats, are eating up wheat, rye, barley, rice, potatoes, and white beans. They are even climbing trees. Our nature correspondent tells us that rodents which are six inches long are unlikely to be house mice or common rats. The horde could be made up of hamsters, forest doormice, wood mice or yellownecks, all of which are found in Eastern Europe. As for their so-called immunity to poison, it is not uncommon for rodents to creep away out of sight when they have been poisoned. It may be that they disappear into holes and crevices.

Villages threatened by rodents

Millions of Rodents

Millions of mice are plaguing the villages of Bosnia and are moving across into Serbia.

The hordes, which first appeared a month ago in the region, have multiplied and spread out in ever-increasing numbers across the countryside. They are now threatening several villages near

the Serbian town of Priboi na Limu.

CATS FLED IN TERROR

Experts first believed that the mice would turn on each other once they had eaten all the available food in the fields. But the mice have moved on to new areas. They are reported to be so thick on the ground now that 10-15 of them can be counted to every square yard. They are plaguing the farmyards as well as the fields. Scores of cats set on them fled in terror.

PANIC - STRICKEN VILLAGERS

Panic-stricken villagers have appealed to the authorities for help. One group said: "We will be left not only without food but we will be swallowed up ourselves."