CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF

RELATED LITERATURE
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Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

“They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps.”

William Shakespeare

2.1 Introduction

A survey of related literature is an essential step in the process of undertaking a research study. Thus for any worthwhile study in any field of knowledge the research worker needs an adequate familiarity with the work which has already been done in the area of his choice. Hence, the opinion of experts in the field and other research studies are of paramount importance. Researchers then weigh information from a review of related literature in the light of their own concerns and prevailing situations. Therefore the researcher went through various books published locally and internationally, encyclopaedia on education, educational journals, dissertations, theses, electronic journals, articles and abstracts, published and unpublished works in the specific field of study and Survey on Research in Education edited by M. B. Buch and also by NCERT.

The present research is related to the development of a programme for enhancement of skills in English Composition. The selected literature, taken from different sources is related to writing. This chapter is organized into different sections as outlined below:
• Section I deals with literature review.

• Section II focuses on programmes in written Composition.

• Section III includes a summary of related researches. Studies done in India and abroad have been included.

2.2 **Section I - Literature Review** :-

[a] Issues related to Writing

[b] National Writing Projects in England and Wales

[c] The Process View of Writing

[d] Role of Self Regulation and Transcription Skills in Writing

2.2.1 [a] **Issues Related to Writing**

Grabe [1992, pp.251-253] has rightly stated that writing is a relatively recent invention. It is only in the past two hundred years that it has come to play a major role in many individuals’ lives. Professional literacy is the goal of educational systems throughout the world. Reading and writing are two important essentials in a person’s life. It begins at the school level and is developed as the individual grows. Therefore writing instruction is supposed to be given due weightage in schools and universities.

Generally, writing research has four distinct but potentially interacting
strands, which can be represented by the disciplines of education, psychology, linguistics and rhetoric. These are: Literacy Development; Composing Process; Study of Text Construction and Text Linguistics and Rhetorical Contexts of Writing. Of these the researcher has focused upon two relevant aspects of writing - Composing Process and Rhetorical Contexts of Writing.

**The Study of Composing Process:** Research in Educational Psychology and English Composition represents an interest in modelling and explaining the mental processes used in the act of writing. Much of this research is empirical, investigating by means of ‘think-aloud’ protocol analysis, revising tasks, task intervention and treatment studies. Important results include the finding that writers constantly shift their processing among pre-writing, writing, and revising tasks: writing is not a linear process.

**The Study of Rhetorical Contexts of Writing:** Researchers from rhetoric, English Composition, applied linguistics and literary criticism examine variation in writing skills as a function of writing purpose, topic, genre and audience. The study of writing from this perspective traces its history back to the five canons of Aristotle: invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery.

It is quite clear from the above research that writing is a mental process and it is the duty of the teacher to develop the constructive potentialities of every learner. This includes an understanding of the language, effective
use of language skills in reading, handwriting, composition, usage and spelling, punctuation, speaking and listening.

In the present research, the researcher helped the students in putting forth their ideas by pre-writing, writing and revising tasks. The five canons of Aristotle have also enabled the researcher to guide the learners in writing compositions.

2.2.2 National Writing Projects in England and Wales

The following literature has been edited by Asher. [1992, p.2707]

In 1988 the National Curriculum Council launched the National Writing Project in England and Wales, which intended ‘to develop and extend the proficiency and confidence of children and young adults to write for a range of purposes and a variety of audiences, in a manner that enhances their growth as individuals, their skill as communicators and their facility as learners.

While the project was about writing development in schools, it was also about curriculum development, exploring means of effecting change in classrooms. Teacher groups were asked to look at different aspects of the writing curriculum for ages 3-18.

Most teacher groups began by observing writing practices and finding out children’s perception of writing. Teachers found that children perceived
writing as something they did for the teacher, to show what they know. Rarely did pupils perceive writing as something which could achieve different purposes and which varied according to the reader; neither was writing often seen as a tool for learning. Children gave importance to neatness and spelling, and did not care about the content matter. When teachers reflected on their own writing behaviour, they realized how little they talked to children about the processes of writing.

Different approaches were explored to develop a classroom environment that would best support children’s writing. While there was much variation, all shared some important assumptions about writing:

[a] Writing needs to be recognized as a social practice rather than as a bundle of skills. Writing happens for a reason and for somebody. Children should, therefore, be given a range of writing purposes and audience that will allow them to ‘master new meanings in new context better to understand what language is about and what it can do.’ [Bruner 1986]

[b] Children learn to write through experimentation with the adult system and they construct their own knowledge about how writing functions. One needs to look at what children can write and to value their explorations rather than to point out their failures to match the adult model.
[e] Many children bring to school a rich resource in terms of their writing experiences; activities in school need to reflect the wide range of writing used in different homes and communities.

[d] Writing is a complex process hence school writing tasks need to recognize this complexity and help children to reflect on their own behaviour as writers.

[e] Writing is a collaborative activity in which thoughts become written words after much discussion, and texts take shape through others reading and reacting to what is written. Writing activities should include opportunities for collaboration with peers, parents, teachers, authors and other writers.

[f] While writing is an important means of communication, it is also a tool for learning, providing a means of organizing thoughts and perceptions. All subject areas need to recognize the role that writing plays in helping children to gain control over their learning.

Local and national evaluation of the project concluded that children’s commitment to and confidence in their writing improves when they have a choice over what they write; when the audience and purpose are real; and when they have more understanding of the writing process. Too often there may be uncritical acceptance of children’s texts. It has also been argued that more support should be given to children to help them develop
the structural forms of the written genres required for particular audience and purposes.

The above mentioned assumptions about children’s perception on writing were an eye opener to the researcher. The researcher gave the students a few tips on the process of writing. During the treatment the researcher made the students realize the importance of content matter as well as neatness and spelling. This was done by reading aloud Compositions which were poor in content matter but neatness and spelling were given more importance.

Writing done with the help of others shows that much can be achieved by an individual. Therefore the researcher used various activities such as group discussions, co-operative writing techniques of reinforcement and feedback by peers.

Writing helps an individual in all walks of life; therefore, students ought to have command over language, and must be good writers, since, this will help them in other subjects as well.

2.2.3 The Process View of Writing

According to Yule [1992, pp.3774-3776] there is a strong view that, writing in education is a major means of gaining knowledge. It is a problem-solving activity in which students generate and systematize their own arguments and elucidate ideas to themselves, as they try to communicate them clearly
to their readers. Alternatively, writing may involve the assimilation, interpretation and reformulation of other people’s ideas and the formation of individual opinions. Writing can therefore be viewed as a mechanism in the process of learning and effective pedagogy may have the essential function of facilitating learning.

This view of writing as thinking, as discovery, as more than recording, is termed the ‘process’ view. Its focus is on the writer and the type of strategy used during the process of composing. It is possible, then, to build a framework for writing pedagogy by distinguishing two areas of interest: the writer and the writing. Research has provided insights into the composing processes of writers.

The primary aim of the process is to help students to gain control over the cognitive strategies involved in composing. Research yields useful insights into the strategies used by a ‘successful’ writer in producing a text of good quality. There appear to be a number of activities engaged by a good writer:

- The first step is - Planning Activities. Good writers concentrate primarily on overall meaning and organizing a text and engage in planning activities.

- The second step of successful writers is that they are aware of their readers.
The third step of successful writers they move not only from thinking to writing to revision but also backwards and forwards between these processes.

Hence, in the present research, the researcher conducted classroom activities where the students, through effective planning process and strategies of brainstorming sessions learnt to impose a structure, made notes, gathered information etc. It gave initial support to the students in what eventually became an individually undertaken process. The researcher feels that planning activities prove to be an important part of teaching. The students should be aware of their audience and the importance of reviewing and revising. This will enable them to put in their best efforts in writing Compositions.

2.2.4 Role of Self Regulation and Transcription Skills in Writing

The website E – Business Source Corporation [EBSCO] - deals with Literature related to the Role of Self Regulation and Transcription Skills in Writing.

It is proposed that the development of writing competence depends on high levels of self-regulation and the mastery of low-level transcription skills. Predictions consistent with each of these claims are identified and evaluated. Even though there has been considerable progress the current models of writing and descriptions of its development are incomplete. Authors have put forth their views on the role of two processes, self-regulation and transcription skills.
Writing and Self-Regulation

High levels of self-regulation are thought to be important to skilled writing because composing is an intentional activity that is quite often self-planned and self-sustained. Zimmerman and Riesemerg [1997] Flower and Hayes [1980] for example, noted that “a great part of the skill in writing is the ability to monitor and direct one’s own composing process.” They contended that skilled writing is a goal-directed activity and that writing processes such as planning, sentence generating and revising must be orchestrated so that the writer can switch attention between these functions and a host of mechanical, substantive and environmental concerns. According to their model, this is accomplished by a control structure, the monitor, which activates and co-ordinates the interplay among the various elements involved in writing.

Self-regulation is thought to enhance writing performance in two ways. First, self-regulatory mechanisms, such as planning, monitoring, evaluating, and revising provide building blocks or subroutines that can be assembled along with other subroutines, such as procedures for producing text to form a programme for effectively accomplishing the writing task. Second, the use of these mechanisms may act as change-inducing agents, leading to strategic adjustments in writing behaviour. When self-regulatory mechanisms, such as planning and evaluating are incorporated into writing, for example, they generate information that may influence not only their subsequent use, but other cognitive or affective processes as well. Moreover, continued success in using the strategy is thought to enhance
self-efficacy for writing. It is hypothesized, in turn, that a heightened sense of efficacy influences intrinsic motivation, willingness to seek a strategic solution and eventual literary attainment.

Theorists have identified a variety of self regulation strategies that writers use to control environmental, behavioural and personal processes. These include goal-setting and planning, seeking information, record keeping, organizing, transforming, self-monitoring, reviewing records, self-evaluating, revising, self-verbalizing, rehearsing, environmental structuring, time planning, self-consequating, seeking social assistance and self-selecting models. If the use of such self-regulation strategies is an important element in the development of skilled writing, it is reasonable to expect that:

(a) Skilled writers are more self-regulated than less skilled writers.

(b) Developing writers become increasingly self-regulated with age and schooling.

(c) Individual differences in self regulation predict individual differences in writing.

(d) Teaching self-regulatory strategies improves writing.

In summary it can be stated that the development of writing competence depends on high levels of self-regulation.
Transcription Skills

Transcription involves transforming the words that the writer wants to say into written symbols on the printed page. Mastery of transcription skills are thought to be important to writing development because the execution of these skills can consume considerable intentional resources, especially if they cannot be carried out fluently and efficiently. For those who have not yet mastered the mechanics of writing, having to consciously attend to the lower level skills of getting language onto paper may tax the writer’s processing memory, interfering with higher order skills such as planning and content generation. [Graham, 1990] Consistent with this view, McCutchen [1996] proposed that the act of spelling and handwriting are so demanding for young writer’s that they minimize the use of other writing processes, such as planning and revising, because they exert considerable processing demands as well. Berninger, Mizokawa and Bragg [1991] further proposed that difficulties mastering transcription skills can lead children to avoid writing and develop a mind-set that they cannot write, leading to arrested writing development.

If transcription skills are an important element in the development of skilled writing, it is reasonable to expect that:

[a] More skilled writers evidence greater mastery of transcription processes than less skilled writers.
[b] The transcription skills of developing writers improve with age and schooling.

[c] Individual differences in transcription skills predict writing achievement.

[d] Ignoring or eliminating transcription skills enhances writing performance, and

[e] Teaching these skills results in improvement in writing.

In summary, the evidence reviewed not only supports the claim that writing competence depends on high levels of self-regulation, but indicates that writing development is dependent on the mastery of transcription skills as well.

2.3 Section II - Programmes in Written Composition

The subsequent reviews indicate the views of different authors based on dynamic programmes in written Compositions developed by them. This could be broadly classified as follows:

- Development of writing skills and habits.
- Method in writing.
- Significant investigations in Composition.
- Stimuli for writing.
- The evaluation of writing abilities.
2.3.1 Development of Writing Skills and Habits

Heed [1958, p.118] has given us an insight into the development of writing skills and habits. She received the co-operation of the teachers in a small school system in her examination of growth in ability to write Compositions. The author accumulated papers written by pupils for 10 or 11 consecutive years. Growth was clearly indicated both in choice of subject and in their ability to express thought in writing.

Harrel [1958, p.118] described and compared certain aspects of the development of oral and written language expression in children. He selected 320 pupils, all of average ability from four age levels: 9, 11, 13 and 15. The group was shown a short movie and was asked to write the story shown in the movie. Results indicated some interesting and significant writing characteristics of pupils at various age levels.

Binney [1958, p.118] analyzed the first Compositions written by 120 college freshmen typical high-school graduates. He concluded that whatever the current neglect of structural grammar was doing, it was not producing finished writers.

Espy [1958, p.118] consulted more than 40 specialists in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. He found, however, that there were relatively few researchers [as compared with reading] studying the teaching of writing; he concluded that we must stimulate all teachers to use improved practices in teaching and must reduce their work load.
Klauser [1967, pp. 164-165] used one experimental and one control group at each Junior High School level and from the results of a teacher-made grammar test, a comparison of initial and final Compositions, the STEP Writing Test and a questionnaire, he discovered that the seventh and ninth-grade experimental groups gained in their understanding of effective writing, but at the eighth-grade there was no significant difference. The seventh-grade group using traditional grammar gained more in accuracy of writing.

2.3.2 **Method in Writing**

Angene [1958, p.118] analyzed the nature of the language-composition act and derived implications for the teaching and evaluation of written Composition in the secondary school. According to him good writers were usually significantly better readers and had received more insistence on revision and rewriting of their Compositions in high school; teachers in the high schools in this study sought rather unsuccessfully to stimulate wide reading.

Jewett [1958, p. 119] studied published research, visited scores of classrooms and held discussions with English teachers at local, state, and national meetings in an effort to determine the major trends in the teaching of high-school English. He found that teaching guides suggested that pupils do more writing than they had in past years, and that there seemed to be a concerted effort on the part of high-school English teachers and college Composition teachers to effect closer articulation between their language programme.
Robinson [1958, p. 120] who has had several years of experience with the read-write or current-reading method of teaching Composition with thousands of students, states that a group of well-qualified teachers believed the method to have genuine merit. Senatore advocated the “sentence pattern method”, believing that this system was effective in making students use the language while they learnt. Students agreed and reported that this method was the clearest way given to them of showing English sentence syntax and patterns.

An experiment in the teaching of English Composition by television was conducted in St. Louis by Herminghaus. [1958, pp.120] For 30 minutes each school day during one semester, 146 ninth-grade students received instruction by television. This group showed a degree of achievement. However, some two-thirds of the students taught by television believed they had not learnt as much as they would have in a conventional course, found the television lessons less interesting, missed being able to ask questions and participate in class discussions, and felt a need for personal conferences with the teacher.

It is clear that English played a significant role in the core programme studied and that, in general, writing skills were adequately developed.

The author West [1967, p. 161] states that the greatest number of research studies was aimed at the actual teaching process. Burton and Arnold [1963] took a close look at the extent to which frequency of writing and intensity of teacher evaluation affect performance in written Composition. In two Florida High Schools, two teachers in each school taught one control and three experimental tenth-grade
classes. The evaluation system differed for each group. From scores on the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress [STEP] writing and essay tests and the quality of final Composition as rated by three certified, experienced English teachers, the researchers concluded there is no evidence:

[a] that intensive evaluation is more effective than moderate evaluation;

[b] that frequent practice is in itself a means of improving writing;

[c] that one combination of writing frequency and evaluation intensity is more effective than any other.

McColly and Remstad [1963], [1967, p.161] reached a conclusion regarding the efficacy of frequent writing in improving student performance:

[a] that frequency of writing alone does not produce the greatest improvement in writing,

[b] that functional writing activities can best be used to improve Composition skills, and

[c] that teachers can greatly reduce the time they spend in ‘tutoring’ writing and conferring about Composition if they give adequate functional instruction in the classroom.

De Boer [1961, pp. 162] mentions in his research, that the teaching of Composition is particularly difficult because of the highly subjective nature of the product.
Nevertheless, numerous investigators have had the audacity to study ways in which writing skills may best be cultivated.

Halvorsen [1960], [1961, pp.162] studied randomly chosen Compositions and responses to an attitude inventory to determine whether emphasis on stimulation or on mechanical accuracy was more effective in producing Compositions of high quality. She concluded that the “mechanics group” and the “stimulus group” showed improvement. Home background and frequency of experience with written expression are commonly regarded as important factors in the improvement of Composition abilities.

In a series of studies of children’s creative writing, Edmund [1958, 1959, 1960], [1961, pp.163-164] undertook to find the relationship between children’s writing and their prior experiences, their interests and their personal problems and fears. The tendency to employ direct experience in creative writing increased as the children moved up in the grades. Edmund suggested that pupils be taught to make greater use of direct personal experiences. He further surveyed the writing interests of 187 pupils in grade seven. The children’s interests were distributed among different topics such as: trips and travel; adventures; animals; ghost stories; fiction and other miscellaneous topics. Edmund concluded that most children are capable of choosing subjects independently.
2.3.3 Significant Investigations in Composition

The author Strom [1964, pp. 110-135] has given the following investigations relating to the English language especially in Composition.

Godwin [1964, pp. 110 - 111] has briefly reviewed the results of related, historically significant studies in the teaching of Composition, and has also discussed at length a few of the recommendations for improving classroom practices in teaching boys and girls to structure their ideas in a more organized manner.

“To review what is known and what is not known about the teaching and learning of Composition and the conditions under which it is taught” was the purpose of an extensive study conducted by Braddock and his associates. With five teachers in the fourth year of three Junior Schools in England co-operating, Taylor attempted to find an answer to the question, “Should Composition in English be prepared for by the teacher or not?” The five fourth-year classes, three A and two B streams, of 141 children in all, wrote Compositions on two topics judged to be equivalent. The first theme was unprepared; the second prepared. The final evaluation of the themes indicated that the overall mark was higher and the spread of marks smaller on the Compositions which had been motivated by or prepared by the teachers.

Getzels and Jackson [1964, pp. 112] conducted one phase of studies in which they analyzed the fantasy material of stories written by adolescents. Stories written
by highly creative adolescents were significantly better than those written by highly intelligent adolescents in Composition assignments involving stimulus free themes, unexpected endings, humour, incongruities and playfulness. The highly creative students had the ability to re-structure. Students who were highly creative were not “stimulus bound;” they wrote stories with wit and balance; they risked creating new art forms. The investigators indicated that conventional intelligence tests failed to select highly creative pupils.

In an investigation made by Parkins [1964, pp. 112-113] of whether or not motion pictures produced in Hollywood can motivate better student writing, he used five full-length motion pictures based on novels, employed the team-teaching approach and worked lay readers into the programme. Student reaction to a questionnaire indicated that a large majority of the “college prep” and “regular” high school students felt that Compositions written about the movies improved their writing.

The author Marksheffel [1964, pp. 177-186] has given his views on Composition wherein, Heys (1962), [1964, pp. 179] reported an experiment which tested the assumption that a “theme-a-week” improved high school students’ writing. Results were inconclusive, but do merit consideration. There was no significant difference in the improvement of the middle groups of the reading and writing classes on the STEP test. The evaluation of Compositions, however, indicated a “superior gain” for students in the reading classes. Teachers of English Composition who contend that children can write creatively through planned original thinking experiences have now some objective data to buttress their claims in this highly subjective area.
Wyatt’s [1962] [1964, pp. 178-179] keen interest in finding out whether extensive reading contributes to children’s writing achievement is worth mentioning. Limited and inconsistent research in this area did not answer the question for Wyatt. In an attempt to find a better answer, she studied three groups of selected sixth graders. Although isolated significant correlations between wide reading and writing achievement appeared, no consistent significant relationships were found among all groups. Wyatt’s findings did not clarify the previous research and it also left the question unanswered.

2.3.4 **Stimuli for Writing**

Educators have long insisted that a receptive and encouraging attitude, on the part of the teacher will produce better creative work of all kinds, from students. Therefore the author West [1967, pp. 159-167] has looked at several studies in different ways in which the stimulus for writing influenced student production. A few examples are stated here:

Carlson [1963], [1967, pp. 162-163] examined the influence of different kinds of stimuli for writing. The experimental group was stimulated to write lessons by exposing them to books, records, pictures, and toys, whereas the control group stimuli were limited primarily to story titles. Each student’s weekly paper was judged by the investigator. After the fourth lesson, the experimental group scored higher on originality, versatility of vocabulary, and the total number of words used. The groups seemed to converge again towards the end of the experiment.
Jenks [1967, p.163] used her Demopraxis Journal method for four months with three experimental groups at the tenth-grade level, while her three control groups were stimulated to write by the usual methods. This method consisted of a list of composition ideas, a daily journal with essays focused on a single subject, a personal manual; a spelling list and extra credit manuscripts. Brainstorming for ideas was an intrinsic part of the experimental method. Jenks judged that the systematic attempt to stimulate creativity by the Demopraxis Journal Method was more effective than the usual system and that parental background did not influence its effectiveness.

The question of whether students benefit more by conscious attention to the composing process and to systematic planning than by affective commitment to communication has not yet been settled.

2.3.5 Evaluation of Writing Abilities

Although the evaluation of Composition would seem to come last in the Composition process, it is first in importance for greater progress in Composition research. Diederich [1966], [1967, pp.159-167] proposed that pre-and post-measures be abandoned and that monthly Composition grades be totaled throughout the year. He offered a simple efficient plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the Composition programme in an entire school by mixing papers from all grade levels together, identifying them by number only and rating them according to the “Diederich” scale.
Fostvedt [1965], [1967, p. 160] attempted to validate a Composition scale made up of principal elements from the nine most popular recently published scales: those of William Dusel; the California Association of Teachers of English; the College Entrance Examination Board; Educational Testing Service; the Illinois Association of Teachers of English; the Indiana Association of Teachers of English; the National Council of Teachers of English; and Grose, Miller, and Steinberg. From these scales he drew several common, though not discretely listed items. These he validated by referring them for ranking to nine college teachers of English and then to a group of high school teachers. Both groups ranked the items in a specific order. Despite the teachers commitment to the idea of an objective measure and despite the effort to provide such an objective scale, reliability was not found.

Little substantial evidence has appeared to indicate progress in the objective evaluation of students’ writing abilities. At least one study is of interest. French [1957] [1961, p. 164] reported that although essay tests of English Composition have found to be somewhat less reliable and valid than objective tests, many teachers believe that essay tests are justified on grounds other than prediction of success in college English.

To conclude this, Kitzhaber [1963], [1967, pp.159] commented that we need to know a great deal more about the writing process and the teaching of writing.” We need,” he said, “fifteen or twenty years of the same kind of intense activity by bright minds that has recently benefitted the study of language and the study
of literature.” Braddock, Lloyd-Jones and Schoer [1963] reminded their readers of the need for research in Composition by itemizing under the heading “Unexplored Territory” fully 24 issues within the teaching of writing for which there is little or no research. And hence they promised to usher in a new era of Composition research; nonetheless, the total number of studies in Composition is significantly less than for reading.

An interesting revelation from Applebee [966], [1967, p. 159] was that, contrary to the recommendations of many experienced educators, English teachers spend much less than one-third, let alone one-half, of their class time on the study of Composition.

Unfortunately, as one surveys the results of research in Composition one becomes convinced that Kitzhaber [1967, p.159] underestimated the time needed to bring research in written Composition to a respectable level; Unlike many other researches, written Composition does not offer the security of sure knowledge upon which to build additional studies. The basic problem of judging the worth of a composition, for example, has not yet been solved; therefore any study depending on accurate, objective and impartial weighing of compositions is automatically suspect. This observation is not intended to denigrate the fine work which has been done by a limited number of Composition investigators, but it does emphasize the fact that research in written Composition remains in a kind of pre-scientific era. The virtual impossibility of scientific measurement of composition today deters many “bright minds” who might otherwise be willing to contribute research.
Although this survey of the research in writing indicates that a fairly substantial amount of work has been done in these fields, considerably more needs to be done. In writing, for example, research should be undertaken to determine suitable standards in the teaching of Composition as well as standards for measuring pupil attainment. [Schmieder, p. 124]

The above surveys show that teachers and school administrators could develop interesting programmes in written communication where the above suggestions might be considered according to the need and requirement of each educational institution. These will help to make students richer personalities and better citizens. [Schmieder, p. 117]

2.4 **Section III - Researches Related to The Present Research**

Researches linked to the present study can be classified in the following categories. This includes researches done in the English language and other regional languages. Researchers have done a variety of researches in English language which can be classified under the following heads. The relevant ones have been mentioned below:

- Framing a Graded Syllabus in English Composition.
- Assessment of Entry Behaviour in English.
- Preparation of a Training Programme to Improve Writing Skill in English Language.
- Factors Influencing English Language Abilities.
- Survey of Methods and Techniques of Teaching English.
- Designing a Course in Written English.
- Factors Affecting English Composition Work.
- Analysis of Errors in English Composition.
- The Language Load.
- Developing and Trying out the Scheme of Improving the Expression of Thought in Mother Tongue.
- The Roles of Personal Narrative Writing in the College Composition Classroom.
- The Politics of Travel in a Composition Class.
- The use of Creative-Writing Pedagogy to Improve the Teaching of First Year English Composition.

Researches relevant to the present study have been done in different languages, and the areas are given below:

- Study of the Factors that Affect the Orthography in Hindi and Diagnosis of Spelling Mistakes.
- Diagnosis of Language Error and a Programme of Remedial Teaching in Hindi.
- Comparative Study of Two Methods of Correction of Written Work in Hindi.
- Critical Study of Errors in Marathi, English, Hindi Writing Committed by Students Speaking Different Languages.
• The Relationship of Literary Creativity and Linguistic Ability with Proficiency in the Marathi Language.

• Composition Writing in Marathi in Primary Schools.

• Study on the Prognosis of Writing Abilities in Bengali with the help of Creativity and Intelligence.

As one looks at the brief review it enables one to see that quite a number of researches have been done in English as well as other regional languages.

2.4.1 Related Researches at a Glance

The researches given below have been listed according to the years beginning with the year 1970 till 2007. A glance at the researches will enable one to see the different areas in which researches have been done. These have been shown in table 2.1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name of the Researchers</th>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sawant.T.</td>
<td>Composition Writing in Marathi in Primary Schools of Greater Bombay.</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Sapre, R.P.</td>
<td>Framing a Graded Syllabus in English Composition for the Students V To X in the English Medium Schools of Goa.</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Patel, M.M.</td>
<td>Developing and Trying out the Scheme of Improving the Expression of Thought in Mother Tongue for Std.VIII.</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ram, S.K</td>
<td>Survey of Methods and Techniques of Teaching English in Class VI.</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Sassoon, I and Patnaik, K.</td>
<td>Analysing Errors in English Composition of Classes V to VIII in a Selected School.</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr. No.</td>
<td>Name of the Researchers</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Harakara, K.</td>
<td>Preparation of a Training Programme for VIII Std in English Language and Study its Effectiveness.</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Taylor, E. M</td>
<td>More Than Words: The Roles of Personal Narrative Writing in the College Composition Classroom.</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Vierk, J.M</td>
<td>The Use of Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed and Interactive Theatre Exercises in the Community College Composition Classroom.</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Waghmare, T.</td>
<td>Preparation and Testing the Effectiveness of a Training Programme to Enhance Essay Writing Skills of Students of Std VIII.</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4.2 Abstracts of Related Researches

A review of previous researches conducted in the field of English Language, reveals that a number of researches have been carried out at the M.Ed and Ph.D levels. A systematic effort has been made in the Educational Research Surveys edited by M.B.Buch [volumes I to IV] and the N.C.E.R.T [volumes V & VI], which have compiled information on Doctoral Studies conducted at various Indian Universities as well as research projects sponsored or undertaken by different agencies.
A list of doctoral thesis (only the titles) related to the present study have been accepted by the Association of Indian Universities [AIU] for the year 2008. These have been given in the Bibliography.

The studies have been classified under different headings and they cover a number of studies in the English Language. These studies along with the dissertations and theses are presented in various educational journals as well. These are given below:

1. Sawant [1970] focused on Composition writing as a part of teaching language. This study was done in Marathi in the primary schools. The researcher made an investigation into the different aspects of Composition writing in Marathi language. Children’s writing was examined and ways to improve the teaching of the subject were explored. The researcher concluded that Composition is not a mechanical process. It is related to the student’s ability to comprehend things. Hence, language and its relationship with thought, perception, emotion and general intelligence were taken into consideration.

2. Sapre [1975] has looked at the core of the problem by, ‘Framing a Graded Syllabus in English Composition for the Students V to X in the English Medium Schools of Goa.’ According to the researcher there was no syllabus. It was a vague programme with heavy correction load. Keeping in mind the specific situation in Goa and the challenges arising out of it, the investigator has noted the absence of instructional material in English
Composition containing the directions and guidelines for teachers. He intended to help teachers frame and grade Composition syllabus, keeping in mind the specific needs of their students. The major objective of the study was to enable the teachers of English, especially in lower classes, to conduct Composition more effectively and to exploit its potential for facilitating pupil’s self-expression.

3. Srivastava, Shekhar and Jayaram [1978] have compiled their findings on, “The Language Load.”

Their objective was to find out whether language learning was considered a load by students, by parents for their children and by the teachers for their students. They identified the difficulties in language learning in order to spot the factors that contributed to make languages a load. An assessment was done on the extent to which students were motivated to learn languages, parents were motivated to promote language learning among their children, and teachers were motivated to teach languages and to encourage their students to learn languages. They examined how students evaluated language learning in comparison to other subjects in terms of learning difficulty.

The findings of the above research indicate that, parents considered the learning of languages to be advantageous from all the suggested angles. They were in favour of their children learning three or even more than three languages. A very large percentage of students had the same view as their parents. But a majority of the students found the third language
to be the most difficult as regards acquiring the four skills, namely, understanding, speaking, reading and writing. According to the teachers, environmental and curricular areas were the chief sources of difficulty. They considered the teaching of languages difficult from all angles.

4. Patel [1981] Developed a Scheme of Improving the Expression of Thought in Mother Tongue for Std. VIII.

The researcher studied the position of teaching techniques of written expression and the technique of evaluating them, with a view to bring about improvement of written expression. The techniques used were not commendable and also the existing scheme of improvement of written expression was meant only for correction of errors and not for improvement. The teachers were eager to have some new techniques.

The implications of the above research: The teacher should create an atmosphere for developing creative writing in the mother – tongue instead of asking the students to copy from books. For this, group discussion and group activities would be beneficial. The written work should be correlated with some practical experience. This should involve imagination and may be given to pupils gradually, as they move from one standard to the next.

Instead of mechanically looking at the errors in written expression, the teacher should also look at the expression of thought and its improvement.
5. Ram [1989] conducted a “Survey of Methods and Techniques of Teaching English in Class VI” he observed that the standard of attainment in English language has been alarmingly deteriorating in non-English medium schools.

The reasons for unsatisfactory results were as follows:

Teachers usually had no clear objectives in mind and they were unaware of the structural / situational approach. They used the traditional technique of teaching though they had been trained to use new techniques and methods. The main obstacle was that the mother tongue was used too often. The teachers never consulted the teacher’s guide. The textbook in use was uninteresting and contained grammatical mistakes and had difficult structures, yet, too much emphasis was given to it. Teachers also stressed more on vocabulary items and on getting students to memorize passages.


The researcher’s major findings: A large number of students were poor in written English in comparison to their proficiency in the other language skills. They needed written English for both academic and certain specified social activities. [e.g: letters to friends]

Frequency of writing Compositions was very low and a large number of students were in need of practice.
The teachers used ‘impressionistic method’ in their evaluation of assignments and were unaware of the reference material that could improve their own knowledge of teaching writing skills.

The researcher believes that the use of communicative language teaching strategies can bring about an improvement in the use of skills.

A well designed communicative syllabus incorporating the needs of the students can, in a tension free interactive classroom, create a satisfying and positive attitude towards learning, writing and enhancing the skills of writing and revising.

7. Sassoon and Patnaik [1993] have “Analyzed Errors in Writing English Composition in Std. V to VII and VI to VIII” respectively. It was observed that students speak well but fail to write as well as they speak. Compositions in particular are not taught properly. According to Patnaik, good skill in writing can be developed from school level itself. Sassoon conducted a survey and found that except for one or two students, all were interested in reading, writing and speaking good English since this would help them to be successful in life, get good jobs and win respect and status in society. With this aim in mind, the researcher conducted the study.

Class wise errors:

- In class VI it was seen that mistakes loomed large in grammar, while in the area of sentence construction there were fewer mistakes.
In class VII the total number of mistakes was the highest, as the students appeared to be over confident and very careless.

Class VIII emerged as a class with the least number of mistakes in comparison to classes VI and VII.

Exercises in English Composition:

It was found that for the students writing essays proved more difficult than writing letters, story writing or comprehension.

The mistakes were maximum in essay writing in all the three classes. This was because the essay had to be original and it had to be written in English.

A study was done on the errors in Essay Writing, Letter Writing, Story Writing and Comprehension.


It was observed that ‘a poor foundation’ in language, at the beginning stages forms the main reason for the poor level of English whose mother-tongue is not English. Absence of proper motivation, lack of extensive reading and an unnatural medium of expression, insufficient practice in Composition, seem to affect the pupils’ performance the most. There are other factors
also like the socio economic background of the pupils, paucity of direct experience that obstructs the smooth flow of pupils’ expression.

In conclusion it is evident, that these factors need to be recognized and remedied. Their content and methods both need revision, diversification, modification and most of all gradation. In short, the whole scheme of work has to be rationalized.


Considering the objectives of the study, the researcher prepared a programme based on the synectics model. At the very outset both the groups were considered to be equal as far the abilities involved in the stylistic component of the writing skill were concerned. Because of the implementation of the training programme on the experimental group, there was a difference between the two mean scores of the experimental and control group. Hence it can be concluded that the treatment given to the experimental group prepared by the teacher is highly effective in developing stylistic component of the writing skill of VIII Std students.


This study is a theoretical examination of the connection between students’ lives and their work in a Composition class. It has dealt with the emotional
distances that some students have to travel in classrooms. It is supported by case studies of four women students. Composition researchers can learn much about developing classroom practices by observing first-year students in specific circumstances. It explains and explores how people are changed by their encounter with others.

11. Taylor [1997] in her study has stated that most students prefer narrative writing over other genres. Instructors as well as students included cognitive and emotional dimensions while discussing about narrative writing and attention was given to thought as well as feeling. They often referred to High school writing experiences, where inclusion of the personal was unacceptable and the focus was on gathering and presenting information without reference to one’s self. The students also required a clear feedback and guidelines for all writing assignments. These dimensions were not dealt with at the high school level.

12. Vierk [1997] had a purpose of this teacher research project it was to determine the effectiveness of, the use of Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed and Interactive Theatre Exercises in the Community College Composition Classroom.

The aim was to create more real, meaningful and productive writing situations. The exercises were meant to help the students access and expand their creativity. The students also read, discussed and wrote stories and articles based on various oppression-related subjects. These were utilized
to enlighten the students about their own and others oppression through critical thinking. Students were interviewed about the effectiveness of the class activities. They were also asked about how they thought their writing had evolved and progressed.

13. Pardlow [2003] examined the effective use of creative-writing pedagogical techniques to teach first-year college Composition. Creative-writing pedagogy is the teaching of writing as a process of self-discovery and self-expression.

The researcher showed evidence that creative writing exercises do serve to foster their creative growth. Thus his study argues that creative writing needs to be given a more central role in the curriculum of traditional Composition courses. Creative-writing pedagogy can empower a writing class of culturally-diverse students.

In conclusion creative writing techniques actually improved his abilities to motivate his students to write and to teach his students how to write effectively. The use of creative writing techniques will encourage more creative risk-taking by students in their writing and teachers in their teaching.

Composition theory has recently begun to examine and validate Pardlow’s goal of fostering each student’s self-expression, but the current and
traditional approaches to teaching Composition still mount considerable opposition.

14. Caso and Garcia [Jun 2006] have shown the need for a motivational component in writing training programmes.

This is summarized below:

The study describes how explicit training in written Composition processes can improve both the quality [e.g. textual coherence] and productivity [or quantity] of texts written by students with learning disabilities [LD] and/or low achievement. [LA]

They have emphasized the need to train the mechanical aspects of writing so that the students become automated. Attention can then be focused on writing planning processes as well as on higher mental processes used in written Composition [such as cognitive and meta-cognitive processes]. The ideal situation would be to integrate both aspects of writing in a single training programme.

It has been shown that most of the training carried out in the field of written Composition lacks a motivational component, although in general, researchers recognize its importance to the act of writing.

Finally, Caso and Garcia have discussed the need to deal with and overcome the shortcomings discovered in most studies on written
Composition intervention, such as lack of training in promoting writing motivation.

15. Hemamalini [2007] has studied the effect of, “Reducing Language Anxiety to Improve the Process of Learning English.”

Some of the findings of this study were: Majority of the students took part in the activities and gained confidence in speaking English without any anxiety. Sufficient drill and practice in the English classroom made them learn English words effectively without any difficulty. The free atmosphere in the English classroom made them less anxious about their mistakes. Almost all the students were happy with the teacher’s help and encouragement, which made them approach English language without any fear or hesitation. The joyful atmosphere without any compulsions made them learn grammar aspects more effectively than ever before. The healthy group activities created interest in them to do more work in English classrooms. Apparently, a slow but progressive change was acknowledged in the process of learning English language.

The implications of the above study bring to light the serious misconceptions among students towards learning English language. The teaching learning process of English language should be made interesting and joyful. This study implies cutting the monotony of the English language classrooms. Various techniques like language games, self-activities, co-operative learning etc, give ample scope for learning without any anxiety.
The researcher states that these activities are not new; neither is there any assurance of complete and sudden improvement in the process of learning English. But somewhere, someone who is really interested in the student’s welfare should take up this kind of research in English language classroom to bring about some change in the teaching learning process. This kind of qualitative study may also help to improve the quality of education.

This particular research gave an impetus to the researcher in preparing the present study. The researcher was keenly interested in the welfare of the students and wanted to reduce the monotony of the teaching sessions. As mentioned in the above review a free and joyful atmosphere along with group activities would improve the quality of education. Hence the researcher has put forth some interesting activities.

2.4.3 Researches on English Essay Writing

The two researches directly related to the present research are as follows:

1. The research done by Waghmare [1999] on, “Preparation and Testing the Effectiveness of a Training Programme to Enhance Essay Writing Skills of Students of Std VIII.”

The researcher prepared a Training Programme on four types of essays: Reflective; Descriptive; Narrative and Imaginative.

The conclusion was as follows:
Teacher’s use of different techniques in teaching essay writing proved very effective.

The students were motivated by the innovative methods in teaching and they performed well in essay writing.

There was comparable improvement in all four types of essays.

Practically every child showed gradual increase in the range of scores.

The training programme evoked interest in writing essays.

2. A study by Gavade [2004] done in Marathi language, is another research that is related to the present study. The researcher selected only two types of essays i.e Descriptive and Imaginative Essays.

The main conclusions were as follows:

- The errors that were found in the pre-test in essay writing had been minimized in the post test and there was an increase in the marks.

- The training programme for essay writing skill proved to be effective at the 0.01 level of significance.

- The techniques used in the training programme i.e discussion method and group discussion proved to be effective.

The researches done by Waghmare and Gavade are related, to the present study. The former study done by the researcher herself dealt with only essay writing, but four types of essays were considered while the latter study was also on essay
writing, but only two types of essays were dealt with. The students appreciated
the innovative methods of teaching; this was proved by the improvement that they
showed in essay writing. Brainstorming sessions, group discussions and other
activities proved to be useful.

The above researches, which have dealt with techniques of teaching, proved to
be helpful in preparing the training programme for the present research.

The findings and educational implications of the above researches that improvement
of written expression was possible through special training scheme was heartening
indeed for the researcher, since she aimed at developing a training programme
for enhancing Composition writing skills of students.

2.5 Conclusions from the Review

From the review of the above mentioned researches, it is clear that on the whole,
few researches have been done in the field of English Composition Writing. Of
these only two have attempted a study, exclusively on essay writing skill.

The present research is on the development of a training programme to enhance
Composition writing skills, wherein the entire English Composition syllabus of
Std. IX has been taken into consideration. This includes Dialogue Writing, Formal
and Informal Letter Writing, Report Writing, Fact File, Interview, Speech,
Expansion of Ideas, Essay Writing and Information Transfer.

Thus, review of researches has enabled the researcher to prepare a training
programme. As already mentioned earlier, researches have been done in various
fields in English. Most researchers have shied away from attempting a training
programme on enhancing Composition writing skills. Therefore the researcher felt that this kind of a research was required. The present study includes analysis of errors, questionnaires for students and teachers which analyze the present situation with respect to Composition writing, and finally the development of and efficacy testing of a training programme for enhancing Composition writing skills of Std. IX students.