CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

6.1 Conclusion

With an increasing number of non native learners in English and the spread of English as a global language, the quality of writing skills and their characteristics needs attention. The teaching of L2 at the school level needs to be studied intensely with a view to looking at the problems of writing. The specific syntactic, lexical and rhetorical features of writing need to be carefully studied by the teacher to determine the persistent errors. The aim of this work had been to look into this problem and to view the evaluation pattern so as to provide an insight into L2 pedagogical applications.

Assessment of evaluation in the classroom differs from a large scale educational assessment. Classroom assessment of evaluation requires looking into the actual teaching practices in the learning process. Teachers need to attend to the abilities and skills of learners through the classroom practices and not just formal tests. The context is the learning environment and the progress of the learners can be assessed in relation to their involvement with the context.

The study of the assessment patterns of class VIII and class IX in the different schools in Aligarh showed certain interesting results. The description of errors had been adapted from Jill Kerper Mora’s checklist titled “Grammatical and Syntactic Competencies in L2 Writing. A Checklist for Designing Instruction.” A number of categories had been added to analyze the assessment pattern. This was done through the teachers’ questionnaire in-class assessment, and studying the assessment patterns of the essay task given to the learners in the class.
The ANOVA test showed a list of significant and not significant items in both the results. In Assignment 1, the total not significant marked category was 30 and unmarked was 19 while in Assignment 2, the total not significant marked was 37 and unmarked was 31. Among the common significant differences with p-value less than .05 in Assignment I, the unmarked category in schools and classes were: unnecessarily used articles (.044), omitted articles (.004), incorrect verb choice (0.02), omitted coordination (0.001), sentences not capitalized (0.003), omitted period (0.004), omitted comma (0.02), omitted quotation marks (0.005) and subject-verb agreement (0.002). The schools which were highest were AMU, followed by IPS and APS. In Assignment 2, the unmarked category were words in a sentence and title not capitalized (.009 and .047), overuse of capitalization (0.002 and 0.021), apostrophe not used (0.038 and 0.004), and wrong spelling (0.027 and 0.001), no subject verb agreement (0.003 and 0.012). The commonality in both Assignment 1 and 2 was seen in subject-verb agreement and overuse of capitalization in the unmarked category. Among the marked category, in Assignment I was: incorrect choice of auxiliary (0.036), omitted period at the end of abbreviation (0.003), and omitted quotation marks (.048). In Assignment 2, the marked items were: incorrect verb form (0.024), and omitted quotation marks (0.001). The above results in both schools and classes showed the unmarked category as being higher than the marked category. In assignment I the highest unmarked was in AMU, followed by IPS and APS. In assignment 2 it was IPS, followed by APS and AMU. In the marked category, in assignment I it was APS followed by AMU and IPS whereas, in assignment 2 it was AMU followed by APS.

The above result showed a variance in both assignment 1 and assignment 2 in the category of schools and classes taken together. In the unmarked, the highest was AMU in assignment I and IPS in assignment 2. In the marked category the highest was APS in assignment I and AMU in assignment 2. The unmarked category as being higher in
AMU could be attributed to a number of problems in the teacher student ratio and the inability of the teacher to give individual attention to the learner. The grammatical items which had been left unmarked showed negligence, which can be attributed to a number of factors. The learners need to be aware of these persistent problems in their writing and a checklist could be provided at the beginning of the session with the list of these grammatical items. While assessing the teachers could provide abbreviations of the items so that the learner would know the mistakes. Simply underlining or marking does not acquaint the learner with the mistakes he commits while writing. Further, it is evident from result that the unmarked is higher in assignment I than in assignment 2. One reason attributed to this could be that assignment I was the observation of the tasks given to the learners as class work, whereas assignment 2 was carried out under controlled conditions. In assignment 2 the students were given topics on the spot to write an essay on any one of them. So, there was no prior training or help that students received while writing essays. Assignment 2 showed closer and more careful assessment of the problems of the learners. The reduction in the marked category also showed the effort at avoidance of careless mistakes under controlled conditions.

In the next category, separately shown in classes, the differences in the unmarked was once again more in assignment I as compared to marked assignment 2. In assignment I among the classes it was class IX which had more unmarked categories than class VIII. In assignment 2 however, the result was the same for both the classes. In the marked category, in assignment I, class IX showed predominance in all four categories stated as marked, whereas in assignment 2 both the classes showed an equal result.

Among the classes, the result showed a large number of unmarked in both the classes. Some differences were seen in assignment 2 where both the categories showed an almost equal result in class VIII and IX. However, when the class assignment was administered under controlled conditions, as in assignment 2 the unmarked showed a reduction, which
suggests a consciousness among teachers to mark the incorrect items. In assignment 2 class-wise there was no significant difference among marked and unmarked. The result does not display any significant change from class VIII to IX.

In the category of school among the unmarked in assignment I, IPS had the highest followed by AMU and APS. In assignment 2, IPS had the highest followed by APS and AMU. In the marked category, in assignment I, APS had the highest and in assignment 2 again it was APS which showed the highest. The following table shows the result:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools and Classes</th>
<th>Assignment 1</th>
<th>Assignment 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IPS</td>
<td>(UM) IPS</td>
<td>(UM) IPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS</td>
<td>(M) APS</td>
<td>(M) APS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMU</td>
<td>(UM) AMU</td>
<td>(UM) APS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPS</td>
<td>(UM) IX</td>
<td>(UM) IX + VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS</td>
<td>(M) IX</td>
<td>(M) IX + VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPS</td>
<td>(UM) IPS</td>
<td>(UM) IPS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Highest among marked and unmarked in Assignment I and Assignment 2.

A number of points need to be noted and considered. In an ESL writing, the criteria for assessment need not be concerned only with the product of writing but with the entire process of the act of writing. Writing need not be focused only as an end product but the composing aspect needs to be accounted for, as has been made explicit in Flower and Hayes model (1981), and later Hayes (1996). Assessment would then mean looking at the plan, prompts, long-term memory, and revision of the learner. It would further mean accounting for differences between unskilled and skilled learners and focusing on addressing the problems of both the groups of learners. Students should be taught to become the readers of their own work. Peer review, self-assessment, and teacher-student conference promote and inculcate such a trait among writers.
Further, the Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) model is an indicator in this direction. It accounts for differences among less skilled and skilled writers and was developed primarily for school children. By making a distinction between unskilled and skilled writers they looked at the different abilities of the learners in terms of writing. This could be useful while viewing the different tasks and genre conventions. An ongoing analytical assessment of the learner could have a beneficial effect on the learner. Learners could be provided with a checklist of the likely errors and these symbols could be used while assessing. A number of assessments could then provide a pattern of errors in an individual learner, which could then be focused on further. This could be continued in later classes to view their progress, e.g. class VIII to IX as in the present work. Using such measures would lead to identifying students who have a high or low probability of success. Moss (1994)\textsuperscript{229} puts it in the following words, “holistic, integrative interpretations of collected performances that seek to understand the whole in light of its parts, that privilege readers who are most knowledgeable about the context in which the assessment occurs…” Huot (1996)\textsuperscript{230} elaborates this by saying that “writing assessment should be site based, locally controlled, context sensitive, rhetorically based and accessible to those whose writing is being evaluated.”

There seems to be a lot of difference between large scale assessment and classroom assessment. In the classroom assessment it is the classroom context which is important. The teacher and learner relationship is directly related to the learning process. The classroom assessment, which assesses the abilities of the learner to decide on a future course of action, would make it formative assessment rather than summative.


Assessment and learning are integral activities. Vygotsky’s (1978)\textsuperscript{231} notion of the zone of proximal development or “that space between what the individual can accomplish independently and what he or she can do with assistance,” would lead to a better and more effective learning environment.

The concept of validity has grown from large scale testing and assessment. The tester has to ensure that the use of the test is appropriate and is correlated with its objectives. Moss (2003)\textsuperscript{232}, while talking about that the centrality of classroom assessment, states that “… validity in classroom assessment—where the focus is on enhancing students’ learning—is primarily about consequences. Assuming interpretations are intended to inform instructional decisions and that instructional decisions entail interpretations about students’ learning, it is on evidence of their (immediate, long range and cumulative) effects on which their validity primarily rests.”

6.2 Suggestions

The following are some tentative suggestions for the language classrooms:

1. In India, where English is taught as a Second Language, teaching of ESL writing should be given attention. Composition courses should be part of the mainstream courses.

2. Learners need to be differentiated in terms of skilled and unskilled in order to study the differences among them.

3. Instructional practices need to understand the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse learners.


4. Socio-cultural aspects of learners along with cognitive should be emphasized in a writing classroom and research. The socio-cultural aspect would give an insight into the differences in the writing patterns among the learners.

5. Assessment practices need to meet the needs and abilities of the learners.

6. Writing need not be focused on the end product but the composing process should be studied.

7. Classroom assessment should be an ongoing process and the potential skills and abilities of learners should be taken into account.

8. Both direct and indirect assessments should be integrated to get a clearer picture of students’ knowledge and skills in writing.

9. Process writing techniques such as brainstorming, group discussion, peer review, and self-assessment should be emphasized.

10. Portfolio assessments should be implemented in classrooms and large scale assessment of writing and as part of alternative assessment.

11. Errors should be focused and the pattern of errors should be studied.

12. Grades should be accompanied with end comments while responding to students’ writing.

13. Checklist should be provided to the students at the beginning of the session to ensure the effectiveness of assessment and evaluation.

14. The assessment pattern should note the individual development of the learner in the different grades.