

Writing in Bangladesh: Theories and Practice Nexus

Dr. Md. Mohoshin Reza ¹

Abstract: Writing needs writers' control over a good number of variables at a time e.g. grammar (s), mechanics and usages. The Honours and Bachelor (Pass Course) students of National University (NU) of Bangladesh are taught Writing with a course called National University Compulsory English Course (NUCEC). Writing of around two million students of Bangladesh under National University depend on the NUCEC. The study has investigated into 21 classrooms of 21 colleges in 3 divisions of Bangladesh (Dhaka, Rajshahi and Rangpur) and has found out the status of overall proficiency level (OPL) of NU students in practices of writing e.g. situational writing, newspaper writing, institutional writing, personal, formal and informal letters, paragraph writing, essay writing and different grammatical items of NUCEC such as correcting, completing and transforming sentences etc. The study has revealed the overall growth rate of the practices (OGRP) of writing with minimum level of standard (MLS) in consideration of students' sense of accuracy in using grammar, mechanics and usages to produce writing. The study has finally demonstrated the overall rate of NU students having the MLS in writing. The research methodology includes survey, interview, observation and proficiency tests as data collection methods. The data collection instruments include 3 sets of questionnaires for teachers, students and administrators, 2 check lists for observing classroom facilities and teaching-learning methods and techniques and 11 different test papers for testing learners' proficiency on 11 writing items in the course. The sample size of the study is 504 which was taken purposely.

Keywords: NUCEC, overall proficiency level (OPL), Overall Growth Rate of Practice (OGRP) of Writing, Minimum Level of Standard (MLS) in Writing, Overall Rate of Proficient Students (ORPS) in Writing

1. Introduction

Writing is the fourth basic language skills- the largest and the most multifaceted language component. Humans usually acquire listening and speaking

¹Associate Professor, Department of English, Bangladesh University of Professionals

competence implicitly from environment in which they grow up. But it is writing which they must have to learn consciously because writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously.

Nearly two million students of Bangladesh study the National University Compulsory English Course (NUCEC) to develop writing skills in more

than two thousand colleges across the country. The study attempts to describe and analyse the 'writing' component, writing types, approaches, methods and techniques of teaching and learning writing from various perspectives and observes overall teaching and learning situations of writing at classroom level through rendering reports of surveys, observations, interviews and exploration over NUCEC syllabus, teaching-learning situation of writing at classroom level in 21 colleges under NU across the country. It depicts the pictures of classroom situations, interaction processes, seating arrangement, teachers' qualifications, experiences, training, teaching techniques, use of teaching materials and overall atmosphere of writing practices in Bangladesh. Finally, the research exposes the reports of the Proficiency Test of Writing (PTW) measuring students' overall proficiency level (OPL), overall growth rate of the practices (OGRP) of writing and overall rate of proficient students (ORPS) in writing. Finally, the study reveals the overall condition of the theories and practices nexus of 'writing' in Bangladesh.

2. Statement of Problem

The content of NUCEC includes writing of Correct Sentences which enables students (SS) to produce successful writing. Practices of Completing Sentences increase students' prediction and anticipation power. SS can concise and improve sentences through the skill of combining different clauses but NUCEC has excluded 'notation' and 'spelling' which are required before starting composition (Rivers, 1968). The sub-section Situational Writing requires a crafty production from writer. NUCEC excludes writing like e-mail, SMS, mementos, greetings, notes frequently necessary at social and professional context. The Newspaper Writing section of the

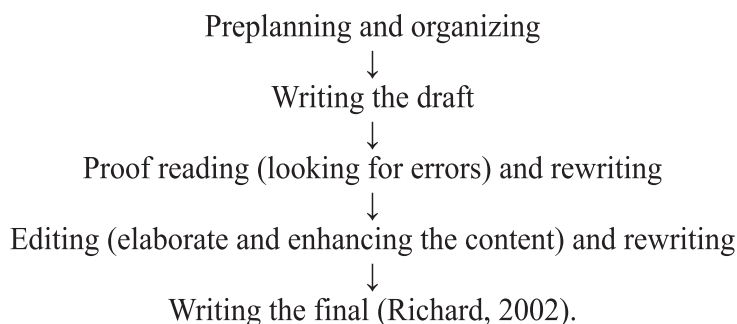
syllabus proposes reports, press releases, and dialogue writing but excludes tips, articles, columns etc. The NUCEC proposes Dialogue Writing which needs practice of speaking because speech language, not written language, is used for dialogues. The NUCEC includes Formal Letters that needs unique mode, layout, word choice, language organization, style etc. The contents are expected to benefit students but some issues have been ignored. For example, writing a memorandum or an offer letter or a refusal letter or a circular in offices and letters to express congratulation, sorrow or thanks or regret or an invitation letter can enable SS to serve social purposes. It is unusual that NUCEC excludes social letters. For writing Formal Letters, NUCEC students (SS) need to be taught of objectives, purposes, functions and layout, methods, content, abbreviations, formats, planning and steps and ways of constructing formal letters. The NUCEC suggests Informal Letters for which SS should follow Heading, Salutation, Body, Subscription, Signature and Superscription. Paragraph Writing requires SS to use Introducers, Developers, Modulators and Terminators (Imhoof and Hudson, 1988) and the three-step process should be exercised:

- (1) Silent Reading of Model Paragraphs
- ↓
- (2) Discussion of Subject Matter
- ↓
- (3) Doing the Exercises (Ibid.)

Writing Essay needs SS to follow processes like:

- Prewriting
- ↓
- Writing Essay
- ↓
- Editing.

The contents that NUCEC offers are useful with some insufficiency but to involve SS in processes appropriately is crucial. To ensure lot of practice to enhance writing capability, teachers (TS) are supposed to teach SS writing sub-skill:



The Writing Section of NUCEC consists of writing based on structure, notions and functions, situations, topics etc. For executing processes of writing effectively by students (SS), teachers' role is not only being an instructor, an organizer, facilitator and informant as well rather than a linguistic judge only (R. White, and D. McGovern, 1994).

Teachers (TS) must be able to analyze errors like: error in production of verb, distribution of verb, use of prepositions, use of articles, use of questions and miscellaneous (Op. cit.). So, while concentrating on observing the situations of writing practices through NUCEC, the researcher was inquisitiveness to know answers to questions like:

What is the status of students' writing proficiency? How appropriate are the methods and the techniques? What is the status of overall proficiency level (OPL) of students (SS)? What is the overall growth rate of practices (OGRP) of writing? How many SS possess the MLS etc.? The study attempts to find answers to these questions and so many queries like them.

3. Literature Review

Writing is unified if it contains nothing redundant and omits anything unnecessary (Haugh and Duhamel, 1962). Writing needs control of vocabulary, sentence structure, content, format, punctuation, spelling and letter formation (Bell and Burnaby, cited in Richards and Theodore, 2001). Successful writing requires mastering the mechanics of letter formation, grammatical system, spelling, punctuation, categorized content, topic structure, polish appropriate style (Nunan, 1998). So, a proficient writer should have a good command on grammar, mechanics and usage along with all writing sub-skills which require multifarious skills of the writer.

Writing is used as a tool for recording language with visible marks (Bloomfield, 1967). Anthony (1971) says “Writing, often more deliberate and thoughtful and always more permanent than speech, is therefore more important. For writing, learners need maintaining orders of grammatical system, organizing contents, mechanics, and expressing target message (Rivers, 1968). Writing, therefore, depends on forming habit of the SS (Silva, 1986). So, teaching of writing follows processes (Arapoff, 1971). Teachers’ role is to get SS through simple to complex processes and control complexity at different phases of learning. In life, men write for personal, social, official, professional and other purposes. So, White (1980) proposes two-way writing distinction: (i) Institutional Writing (textbooks, reports, business correspondence, regulations etc.) and (ii) Personal Writing. T. Hedge (1988) proposes writing types under six headings: Personal, Institutional, Social, Creative, Public and Study Writing. Some studies were conducted on writing in Bangladesh e.g. Hasan (2004) throws light on writing skills but focuses on curriculum at secondary level. Huda (2003) focuses on material design at secondary level. Haque (2006) analyses needs for higher secondary education. Podder (2007) concentrates on secondary level. None of them deals with the practices of writing at tertiary level; specially focusing on NUCEC.

So, the above review shows that there are various criteria, methods and prerequisites concerned with the processes of teaching writing and there are knowledge gaps in the field the present research attempts to fill in with new data and information.

4. Significance of the Study

This is a feeling among many people that NU students do not have enough language proficiency; specially, while producing writing. And the field being hardly explored before, there remain knowledge gaps. Therefore, the study attempts to measure the overall proficiency level (OPL) of NU SS in writing and overall growth rate of the practices (OGRP) of writing.

5. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is:

‘to explore overall situations of writing practices and the status of NU students’ proficiency in writing.

The specific objectives are:

1. to review the theories of teaching writing,
2. to find out the overall growth rate of practice (OGRP) of writing at NU.

6. Research Methodology

Data collection methods used in the study are: i) Questionnaire Survey; ii) Interview; iii) Classroom Observation iv) Focus Group Discussion and v) Proficiency Test of Writing (PTW) of students. Tools/ instruments used in the study are: i) 03 Questionnaires for Teachers, Students and Principals; ii) 03 Check Lists for Classroom Observations and iii) 11 Proficiency Test Papers.

The study areas include: Dhaka, Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions of Bangladesh.

The respondents were taken from 07 colleges i.e. total 21 colleges from 03 divisions. There were: 441 respondents (SS) and, 42 TS and 21 Principals and 1 syllabus Committee Member. The sample size is 505.

7. Result and Discussion

7.1 Reports of Surveys on Teachers (TS), Students (SS) & Administrators

The NUCEC vaguely mentions of personal writing with no specific content but during survey, most TS said that content of personal writing are good in NUCEC which implies TS, themselves, have no clear idea about syllabus content.

The surveys, conducted over TS and SS informed that 50% teachers (TS) lacked in training, they required Teachers' Guide (TG) 93.33% TS did not have idea of writing sub-skills, 6.66% TS teach through sub-skills and 26.66% prepare notes for students (SS). Only 19.04% TS analyze students' errors in proper way but the other TS either do not or cannot apply appropriate techniques and methods for teaching SS the writing processes.

13.33% TS teach completing sentences through correct methods i.e.- predicting contexts. Other TS use poor and traditional techniques like practising grammar and learning vocabulary.

10% TS teach paragraph writing through appropriate building blocks like:

introducers → developers → modulators → terminators.

Others follow methods like themselves writing on board, discussing clues and giving clues only which are not always effective.

69.99% TS do not involve SS in writing essays through Pre-writing- writing-editing. 16.66% TS follow the Process approach and 13.33% TS write the essays themselves without following the Product approach as well.

This is absurd that though personal letters are not specified, 88.09% TS teach different personal letters and none teaches professional letter items. 11.90% TS do not teach writing letter at all. No TS attempts to teach Inter Official/ Executive Writing like Circular, Memorandum, Order etc.

Instead of brainstorming, making notes and developing ideas form context, 40% teachers advise SS to read guide books' instruction to learn situational writing. 20% TS recommend model tests of the guide books for SS to follow and generate ideas.

Instead of involving SS in pair or group work, 60% teachers (TS) teach SS to put sentences together to form a dialogue. 20% TS recommend students grammar and correct structures and 13.33% recommend speaking, pair work and group work for practicing dialogues.

About qualifications of teachers (TS), the surveys inform that in Dhaka division, 85.71% TS have MA in English degree and 7.14% possess higher degrees. Shortage of TS is acute. 42.85% TS possess less than 6 years of experience. Average ratio of TS versus SS in a class is 1:188.

In Rajshahi division, 100%TS have MA in English degree and have no higher degrees like M. Phil or Ph. D. 52% TS have less than 10 years of experience. 7.14% teachers have foreign training. Average ratio of TS versus SS in a class is 1:237.

In Rangpur division TS having MA degree are 100%. None has higher degrees like M. Phil or Ph. D. 42.85% TS possess less than 10 years of experience. 57.14% TS have no training. Average ratio of TS and SS is 1: 278. And overall initiatives, taken by Principals of colleges for enhancing the classrooms' effectiveness are not satisfactory.

Most teachers (TS) of 3 divisions lack in appropriate methods of teaching writing. 82.69% students do not have the minimum idea about writing processes, writing items in the NUCEC and their nature:

Writing Items	Students having Minimum Ideas (%)	Average Rate of students	Students having no Ideas (%)	Average Rate of students
<i>Processes or Stages of Writing</i>	0%	17.30%	100%	82.69%
<i>News Paper Writing</i>	18.34%		81.66%	
<i>Steps of Developing a Report</i>	13.4%		86.6%	
<i>Nature of Memo Writing</i>	19.17%		80.83%	
<i>Function of a Resume</i>	23.34%		76.66%	
<i>Situational Writing</i>	16.25%		83.75%	
<i>Professional Writing</i>	18.8%		81.2%	
<i>Personal Writing</i>	29.16%		70.83%	

Table 1: Students' Ideas about Various Items of 'Writing in NUCEC'

7.2 Classroom Observation Reports

The study observes teaching and learning techniques and methods of writing, interactions of teachers (TS) and students (SS), materials for teaching, physical facilities, instructional level of TS, teacher's understanding of students' level, capability of SS to receive instructions, (b) accessibility to teacher's instructions and (c) simplicity of error analysis and responsiveness of the methods and techniques.

In Dhaka division, instructions of 50% TS do not match well with students' learning due to weaknesses in teaching methods and techniques and using guide books. 50% TS have no good command in lessons; 70% TS cannot ensure congenial atmosphere and 64% TS fail to execute classes on time. Practices of Writing Sub-skills i.e. brain storming, thinking of contexts, making notes, drafting, editing, reading proof by students have been found in no classroom. 71.42% SS of Dhaka division do not get chance to practice situational writing. 85.72% classrooms do not involve in PW and GW. 71.44% classrooms follow guide books for teaching dialogue writing. 85% classrooms do not practise paragraph writing in a proper way. No class involves in 'essay writing' through correct processes. 85.72% classrooms of Dhaka division, real practices of writing do not take place:

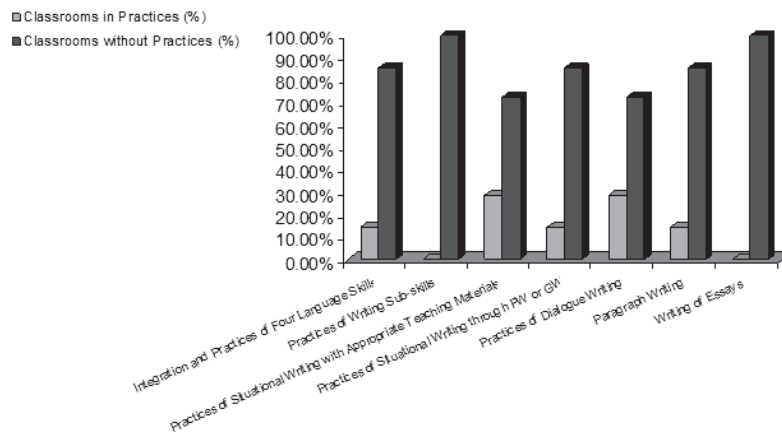


Figure 1: Students' Opportunity to Practise 'Writing' English in an Appropriate Way

Most classrooms in Dhaka division lack in space and teaching materials like posters, maps, paintings, drawings, audio and video facilities. Most classrooms lack in multimedia, enough space, good seating arrangements with chairs and desks. No classroom of Dhaka division has been found with sufficient light, air, seating arrangement feasibility for GW or PW. No classroom has been found with facilities like posters, maps, paintings audio and video system etc. 71.43% classrooms lack in congenial atmosphere.

In Rajshahi division, instructions of 78% teachers (TS) do not match well with learning by the SS. 21% TS deliver over-instruction and 57.14% TS do under instructions. 70% TS cannot ensure congenial atmosphere in classrooms. No classroom practices writing sub-skills. More than 70% SS of Rajshahi division cannot practice situational writing. Most classes do not involve in PW and GW and follow guide books for teaching dialogue writing. 85% classes do not practice paragraph writing in a proper way. No classroom involves in 'essay' writing through correct processes. In more than 80% classrooms of Rajshahi division, real writing practices do not occur. 57.15% classrooms of Rajshahi division lack space. No classroom has proper seating arrangement for presentation, GW, PW and no one uses teaching materials like audio and video, drawings, maps, paintings, posters, multi media or OHP facilities.

In Rangpur division, instructions of more than 57% TS do not match with

students' level. 78% TS cannot execute class timely. Classroom practice of writing sub-skills is 0%. Classroom teaching materials facilities are not up to the mark. 0% classroom facilitates situational writing practice and pair work and group work. 85% classrooms do not practice writing paragraph in a systematic way. Practice of essay writing with proper methods has been found in no classroom.

7.3 Results of NU Examinations (NUE) 2012-2013 in 3 Divisions

45% score in the NU examination (NUE) are conventionally considered the minimum level of standard (MLS).

In Dhaka division, as per the result of NUE (2012-2013) the average rate of proficient students (ARPS) obtaining MLS is found 66.02% and SS without MLS is 33.96%.

Slots of Students	Rate of Proficient Students (RPS)	Average Rate of Proficient Students (ARPS)	Rate of Non-Proficient Students (RNPS)	Average Rate of Non-Proficient Students (ARNPS)
SS of Hon's (English)	74.41%	66.02%	25.58%	33.96
SS of Hon's (Non-English)	66.50%		33.49%	
students of Bachelor Degree (Pass Course).	57.17%		42.83%	

Table 3: Ratio of ARPS & ARNPS in the NU Examination - 66.02%:33.96%

In Rajshahidivision, as per the result of NUE (2012-2013), the average rate of SS achieving MLS in writing is 67.21% and SS without MLS is 32.76%.

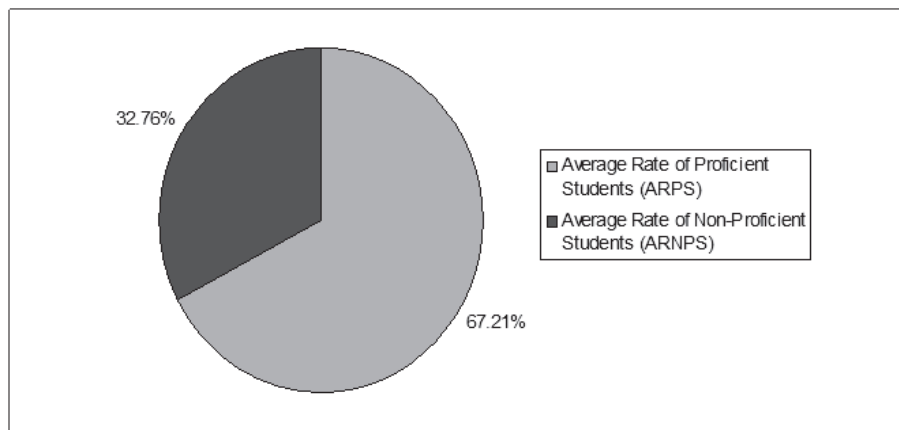


Figure 2: Ratio of ARPS & ARNPS in the NU Examination (Rajshahi Division) - 67.21%: 32.76%

In Rangpur division, as per the result of NUE (2012-2013), the average rate of SS achieving MLS in writing is 64.89% and SS without MLS is 35.05%:

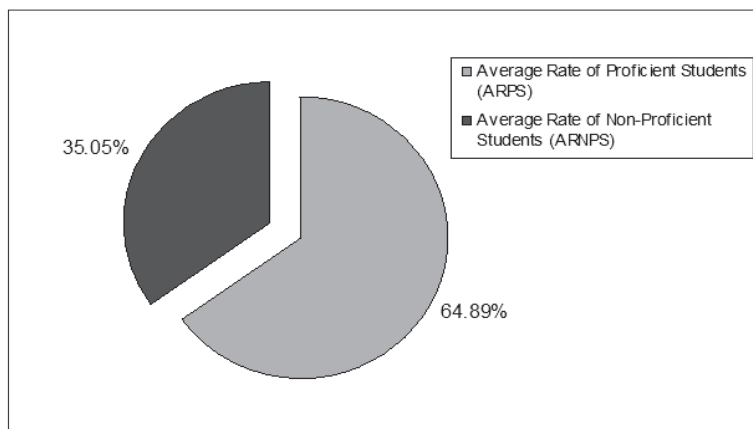


Figure 3: Ratio of ARPS & ARNPS in the NU Examination (Rangpur Division) - 64.89%: 35.05%

7.4 Reports of Proficiency Test of Writing (PTW)

The PTW has been three (03) categories of SS: (i) BA/BSS/ BCom/ BSc from Degree (Pass Course), (ii) Honours (non-English) and (iii) Honours (English) for testing on twelve (12) particular items of the NUCEC. Students appear in PTW of 50 marks. The items of writing are:

1. Writing Correct Sentence, Completing Sentences and Combining Sentences (having 7.5 points in PTW), 2. Personal Writing (having 12.5 points in PTW), 3. Professional Writing (having 30 points in PTW)

12 items of writing with mark distributed in the PTW:

Writing Items of the NUCEC	Marks Distributed in the PTW		Types of Writing Items	Allocated Marks (Type-wise)
Q.1. Correction of sentences	2.5		Sentence Writing	7.5
Q.2. Completing sentences	2.5			
Q.3. Combining sentences	2.5			
Q.4 Skill Focused in Dialogue Writing	5		Personal Writing	12.5
Q. 5. Skill Focused in Situational Writing	2.5			
Q.6. Skill Focused in Writing Informal Letters	5			
Q.7. Skill Focused in Newspaper Writing	5		Professional Writing	30
Q.8. Skill Focused in Writing Job Application	5			
Q.9. Skill Focused in Institutional Writing	5			
Q.10. Q. Skill Focused in Writing Formal Letters	5			
Q.11. Skill Focused in Paragraph Writing	5			
Q.12. Skill Focused in Essay Writing	5			

Table 4: Writing Items and Mark Distribution in the Proficiency Test of Writing (PTW)

45% is the minimum level of standard (MLS) in the PTW. The study attempts to measure the overall growth rate of practices (OGRP) of writing and the overall rate of proficient students (ORPS) in writing.

7.4.1 Dhaka Division in the Proficiency Test of Writing (PTW)

SS of Dhaka division have the proficiency to practise 42.10% writing with minimum level of standard (MLS) reflecting average growth rate of practices (AGRP) of writing. (03) colleges of Dhaka division have achieved MLS in writing.

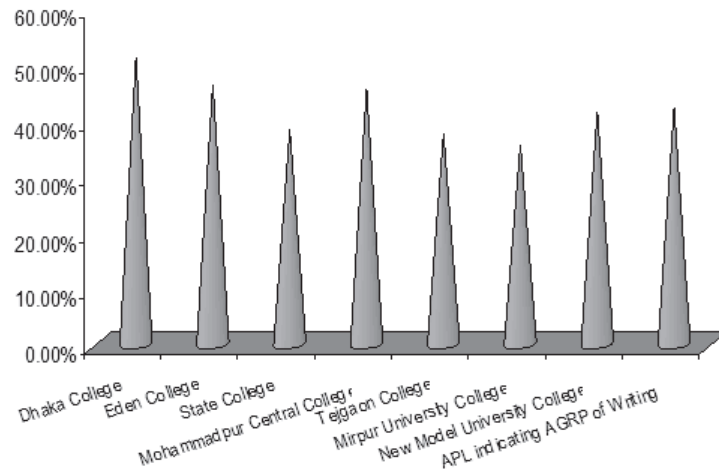


Figure 4: APL Reflecting AGRP of Writing in Dhaka Division: 42.10%

The average qualifying rate of students (AQRS) of Dhaka division is 35.37%. The AQRS reflects the average rate of proficient students (ARPS) reflecting the ARPS in writing in Dhaka division is 35.37%:

Bachelor Degree (Pass)			Honours (Non-English)			Honours (English)			AQRS reflecting ARPS (%)	Total SS
Result of SS in BA/ BSS/ BCom/ B.Sc (Pass Course)	N o. of S S	QRS reflecti ng RPS in PTW (%)	Result of SS in Honours (Non English)	N o. of S S	QRS reflecti ng RPS in PTW (%)	Results of SS in Honours (English)	N o. of S S	QRS reflecti ng RPS in PTW (%)	35.37 %	147
SS Qualified	13	26.53 %	SS Qualified	14	28.57 %	SS Qualified	25	51.02 %		
SS Disqualified	37	73.47 %	SS Disqualified	35	71.43 %	SS Disqualified	24	48.98 %		
Total SS	49	100%	Total SS	49	100%	Total SS	49	100%		

Table 5:ARPS of Writing in PTW

7.4.2 Results of NU Examination (NUE) and Results of PTW Compared

Comparing the results of National University Examination (NUE) and the results of PTW in Dhaka division, it has been found that the Average Rate of Proficient Students (ARPS) in the NUE is 66.02%, while, on the contrary the ARPS in the PTW is 35.37%. The following figures more simply demonstrate that rate of students achieving MLS in NUE are 66.02%, which is 35.37% in PTW. The gap between the results of NUE and PTW is 30.65% i.e. a huge difference between appearance and reality. This indicates that the proficiency level (PL) of students that the NU declares through examination result is 30.65% more than the real proficiency of the students:

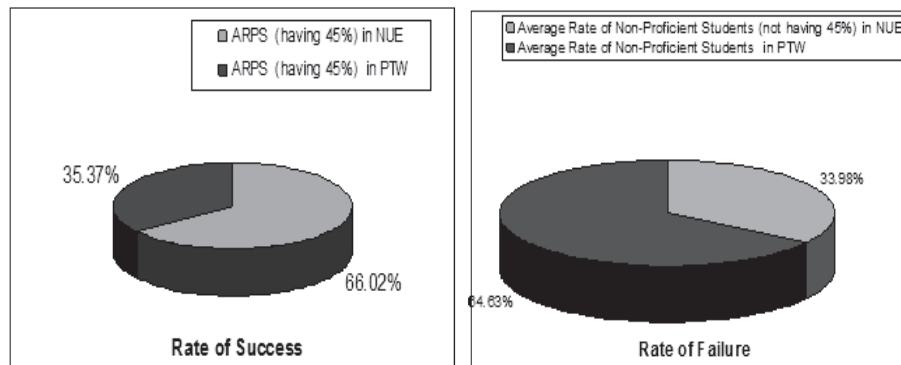


Figure 5: Rates of Success and Failure in the NUE and PTW of Dhaka Division Juxtaposed

The comparison creates the notion that real proficiency of students in writing skills should not be justified only with the grade awarded by NUE.

7.4.3 Result Summary of PTW of Dhaka Division

The quality of writing practices has been found 30.65% lower in the PTW than that of the NUE result. 35.37% students have the minimum proficiency in writing. The average proficiency level (APL) indicating the average growth rate of the practices (AGRP) of writing with MLS in Dhaka division is 42.10%. The AGRP of writing falls 2.90% below the margin of minimum level of standard (MLS). Position of AGRP of Writing in Dhaka Division is "Substandard".

7.4.4 Rajshahi Division in the Proficiency Test of Writing (PTW)

The average proficiency level (APL) of the students of Rajshahi Division is 40.60% reflecting the average growth rate of the practices (AGRP) of writing. SS of Rajshahi division have the ability to practise 40.60% writing with MLS. Performances by three (03) colleges of Rajshahi division reach the MLS. Other four (04) colleges (59.40%) remain below the MLS:

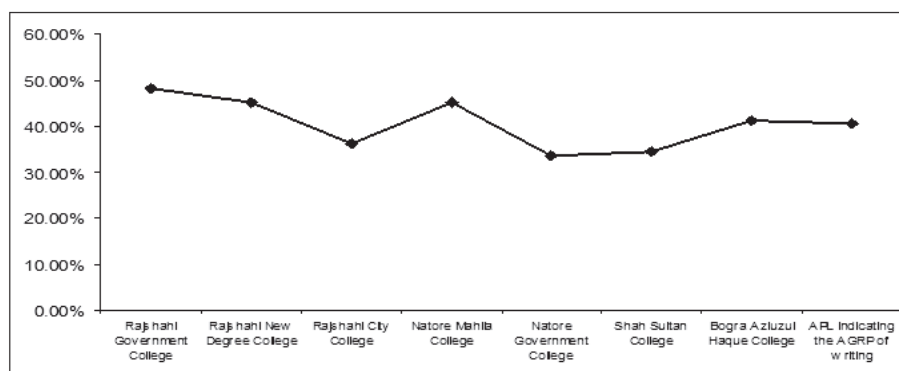


Figure 6: Average Growth Rate of the Practices of Writing in Rajshahi Division: 40.60%

The result of the Proficiency Test of Writing (PTW) in Rajshahi division demonstrates that the ARPS in writing is 34% in the PTW while the other 66% SS do not possess the MLS. Comparing the results of PTW and NUE, it is found that the SS obtaining 45% in the NUE are 67.21% but SS obtaining 45% marks in the PTW in Rajshahi division are 34% which is two times less than the result of NUE. Juxtaposing the Rate of Success and Failure in the NUE and PTW of Rajshahi Division, it is found that the gap between the results of NUE and PTW (67.21%-34%) is 33.21%.

7.4.5 Result Summary of PTW of Rajshahi Division

The quality of writing practices has been found 33.21% lower in the PTW than that of the NU result. 34% students have the minimum proficiency in writing. The APL indicating the average growth rate of the practices (AGRP) of writing with MLS in Rajshahi division is 40.60%. The AGRP of writing falls 4.40% below the margin of minimum level of standard (MLS). Position of AGRP of Writing in Rajshahi Division is “Poor”.

7.4.6 Rangpur Division in the Proficiency Test of Writing (PTW)

The result of the Proficiency Test of Writing (PTW) in Rangpur division demonstrates that 29.24% SS of Rangpur division have had the minimum level of standard (MLS) in writing. On the other hand, 70.76% SS do not possess the MLS.

Three (03) colleges (40.60%) have achieved the MLS in writing proficiency scoring 45% or above points in the PTW:

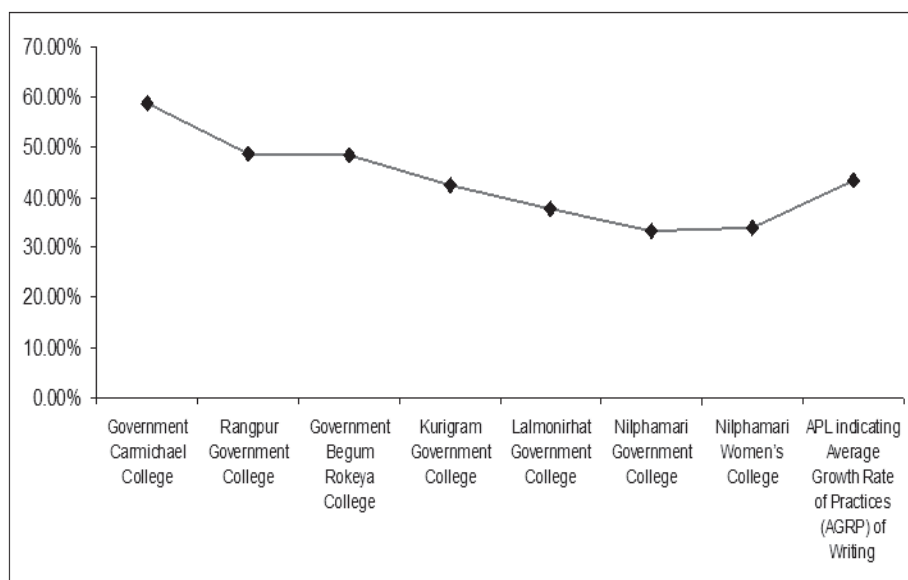


Figure 7: AGRP of Writing in Rangpur Division: 43.29%

Through comparing the results of NUE and PTW, it is found that the difference between the results of NUE and PTW is big like that of Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions.

The average rate of proficient students (ARPS) in NUE is 64.89% while the ARPS in PTW is 29.24%. The gap between the results of NUE and PTW (64.89%-29.24%) is 35.65% as shown in the following figure:

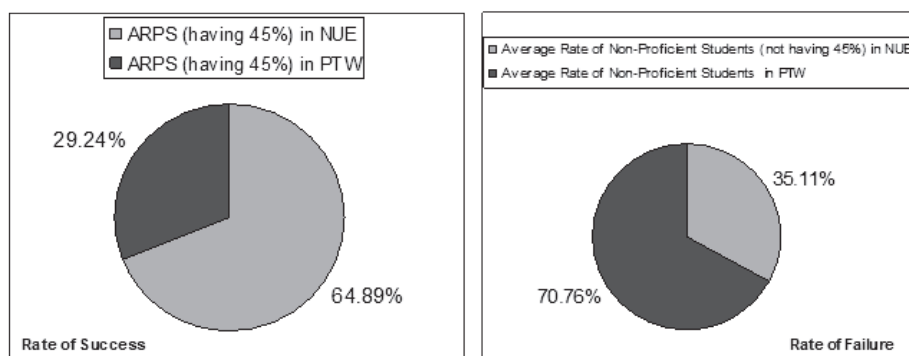


Figure 8: Rate of Success and Failure in the NUE and PTW of Rangpur Division Juxtaposed

7.4.7 Result Summary of PTW of Rangpur Division

The quality of writing practices has been found 35.65%. lower in the PTW than in NUE result. 29.24% students have the minimum proficiency in writing. The APL indicating the average growth rate of the practices (AGRP) of writing with MLS in Rangpur division is 43.29%. The AGRP of writing falls 1.79% below the margin of MLS. Position of AGRP of Writing in Rangpur division has been found “Substandard” in the PTW.

7.4.8 Overall Status of Growth Rate of Writing Practices in NU

The overall growth rate of the practices (OGRP) of writing in NU is 41.99% in the PTW. The OGRP falls 3.01% below the margin of the MLS. So, the status of the overall proficiency level (OPL) indicating the overall growth rate of the practices (OGRP) of writing in Bangladesh has been found ‘Substandard’:

Divisions	Division-wise AGRP of Writing (%)	Position of AGRP	OGRP of Writing in the Country (%)	Position of OGRP of Writing in the Country
Dhaka	42.10%	Substandard	41.99%	Substandard
Rajshahi	40.60%	Poor		
Rangpur	43.29%	Substandard		

Table 23: The Overall Growth Rate of the Practices (OGRP) of Writing in Bangladesh

The above data mean that, SS of NU are able to practise 41.99% of the writing with MLS and 58.01% of their practices of writing is void. The OGRP of writing being 41.99%, this is understood that practice of writing is suffering from 58.1% failure.

7.4.9 The Overall Rate of Proficient Students (ORPS) in Writing in NU

The qualifying rate of students (QRS) in PTW of Dhaka indicating the average rate of proficient students (ARPS) is 35.37%. The QRS indicating the ARPS of Rajshahi division is 34% and the QRS i.e. ARPS of Rangpur division is 29.24%. Thus, the overall qualifying rate of students (OQRS) of the three divisions indicating the overall rate of proficient students (ORPS) in writing in Bangladesh is 32.87%:

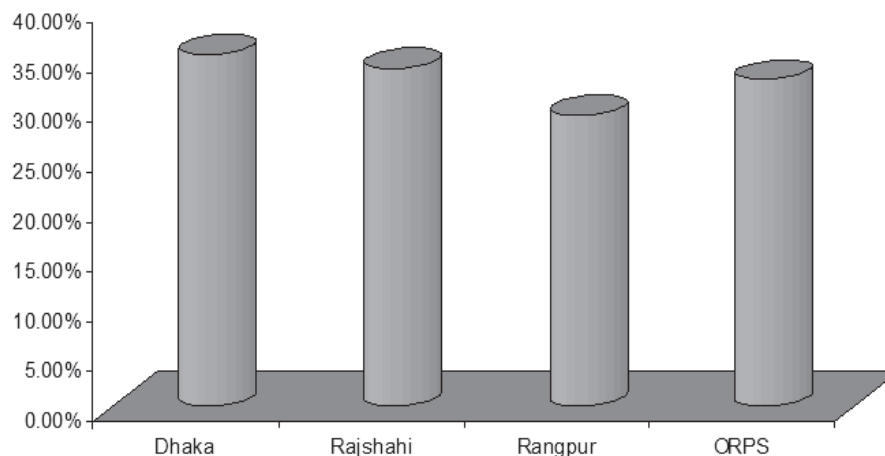


Figure 9: Overall Rate of Proficient Students (ORPS) in Writing in the Country

However, in NUE the ARPS of Dhaka division (having 45 %+) in writing is 66.02% but in PTW the ARPS is 35.37%. The ARPS of Rajshahi division in NUE is 67.21 but in the PTW, it is 34%. The ARPS of Rangpur division in the NUE is 64.89% while in the PTW, it is 29.24%:

Thus, the overall rate of proficient students (ORPS) of 3 divisions in the NUE is 6.04% and is 32.87% in PTW.

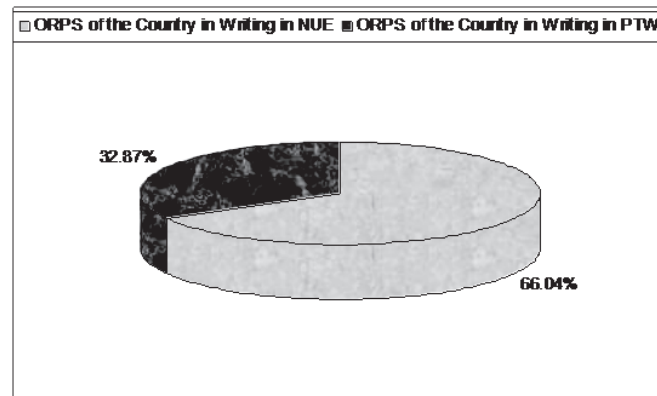


Figure 10: ORPS in the NUE and ORPS in the PTW Juxtaposed

8. Findings

The overall proficiency level (OPL) indicating the overall growth rate of practices (OGRP) of writing in NU is 41.99%. Overall rate of proficient students (ORPS) in writing in NU is 32.87% and SS without MLS in writing are 67.13%. The practice rate of writing is 3.1% below the MLS. The status of writing practices in NU is “Substandard”. Overall rate of quality teachers (ORQTs) for teaching writing has been found 31.34%. 8.92% classrooms provide students with real practices of writing. 34.12% teachers are capable of keeping control over lessons and the classroom atmosphere (CLCA). Teachers capable to provide well matching instructions (WMI) according to students’ levels are 28.56%.

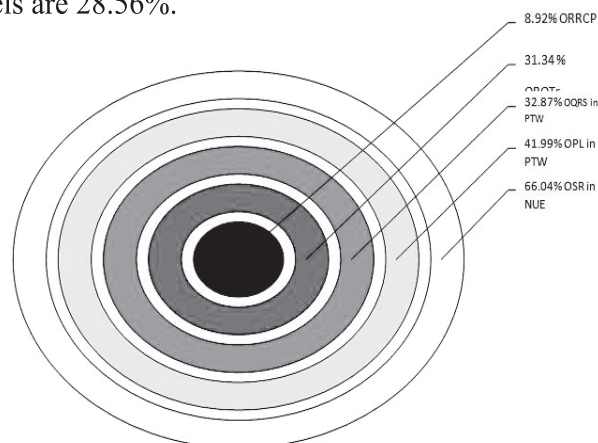


Fig 11: The Matrix of Teaching and Learning of Writing in Bangladesh

(***RRCP**: Rate of Real Classroom Practices ***ORQTs**: Overall Rate of Quality Teachers ***OQRS**: Overall Qualifying Rate of students ***PTW**: Proficiency Test of Writing ***OPL**: Overall Proficiency Level ***OSR**: Overall Success Rate ***NUE**: National University Examination)

9. Recommendations

Every teacher, out of 42, needs training focused on classroom management and teaching techniques. Hectic programmes should be taken to train up teachers and build up their proficiency in ELT. For this, government should expand the ranges or branches of NAEM, ELTIP, TTC, NUTTC and other responsible organizations to enhance teaching capability of teachers. National University (NU) should evaluate teachers' needs in teaching the NUCEC and initiate programmes to train and motivate the teachers and create a potential body of teaching. Teachers should be provided with training to be able to use modern methods and techniques of teaching English. The National University Teachers' Training Centre (NUTTC) can play most effective role and has to be more responsible to familiarize teachers with the NUCEC goals and the ways of achieving those goals. There is already a body of twenty or more Inspectors in the NU. The university should ensure good use of that manpower. NU Curriculum Development Centre (NUCDC) should send those inspectors for abrupt inspections to the colleges to observe classroom practices. Teachers should be provided with training on Product-writing and Process-writing, especially on writing sub-skills. In this concern, teachers of TTCs and teachers having training on ELT at home and abroad can play the role of a useful body of resources.

10. Future Direction

The present research has investigated the realities of writing practices through studying the NUCEC activities. The present study emphasizes knowing:

the state of teachers' knowledge about the theories of teaching writing, appropriateness of their application of the theories for involving students in practices, status of the growth rate of practices of writing skills and status of the rate of students having minimum proficiency in writing skills and their ability to practise writing in personal, social and professional levels.

So, the research excludes concentrating on ‘Listening & Speaking’, ‘Reading’, ‘Grammar’ and ‘Vocabulary’ sections of the NUCEC. Further research may be conducted to study the achievement of students’ development in listening, speaking, reading, grammar and vocabulary through studying the NUCEC. Respondents of the research are taken from Dhaka, Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions of Bangladesh. Further research may be conducted on other divisions. Future researchers can conduct further research on following facets of the field:

- (i) Goals and Achievement of the syllabus of the National University Compulsory English Course,
- (ii) Status, Strategies and Challenges of the National University Compulsory English Course,
- (iii) Classroom and Teaching Material Design of the National University Compulsory English Course.

11. Conclusion

The study describes the existing condition of the writing practices in NU. Defective teaching techniques and methods, lack of sufficient number of experienced, well trained and skilled teachers have been found as major constraints in teaching and learning of writing. Quality teaching is not found in most cases. Teachers do not know or follow any of the “process” or “product” approaches while teaching writing. Teachers’ capability of providing well matching instruction, classroom control, and control over lesson have not been found satisfactory. Their habit of teaching with the help of guide books seems to be nothing but a process of misleading the students. On the other hand, their unawareness about writing sub-skills is unexpected. Things are not hopeful in most cases. The study conducts observations on factors like teaching techniques and methods, teaching materials, physical facilities, classroom seating arrangement and classroom management. Sizes of classes of the honours level colleges are not favourable. However, this is hopeful that 32.87% students of the country have achieved proficiency of writing with minimum supports of 31.34% teachers and 8.92% classrooms. This may be expected that with promoted facilities of teaching and classroom practices, the OGRP of writing as well as the OGRP would increase in Bangladesh.

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