

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION.

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CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM :

Our country had faced many problems since independence. Among them the language problem has been major issue. India is a multi-lingual country. There are at least 845 languages including non-Indian languages spoken in the country. Our constitution picked up fourteen regional languages.

Teaching of English is a controversial problem in India. Some thought that our schools should quit English. Others disagree with them and they pleaded for the teaching of English. They put forth the reasons for supporting their views. English is the international language of politics, commerce, trade and industry. Current knowledge in science and technology is published in English language. English is the richest and varied language. It is a link language. It is a library language. Most of the knowledge of the world is available in this language. So Indians can neglect its study at the risk of loss of themselves.

To compromise these two views the Central Advisory Board devised 'Three Language Formula'. It advocate the study of English and Hindi as compulsory

subjects and the third the regional language or the mother-tongue. Educationalists fixed four objectives of teaching English in India, i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Last but not least is the writing skill. It involves three skills penmanship, spelling writing and composition writing. The aim of composition writing is to enable the pupils to write simple topics related to their day to day life in simple and correct English; and to enable them to put the matter in a logical order.

English language is a difficult language for Indian pupils because there are so many difficulties in learning this language, i.e., difficulties in spelling, pronunciation, script, word order etc. So pupils commit many mistakes in their composition writing. It is very necessary to prevent them from such type of mistakes. For prevention diagnosis of common errors is essential. So the investigator has selected this problem.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of research is stated as below.

"A CRITICAL STUDY OF COMMON ERRORS
IN COMPOSITION WRITING IN ENGLISH
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO VII STANDARD."

This study mainly pertains to the following points.

- i) Critical study of common errors.
- ii) Common errors especially which occur in composition writing.
- iii) Common errors in the composition writing of the VII standered pupils.

Various terms are used in the statement of problem. It is necessary to define them both for the clarity and limiting the scope of the study.

Critical Study -

'Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary' defines the term 'critical' as -

"Careful and impartial in forming judgement. Exercising or involving careful judgement or judicious evaluating. Including variant reading and scholarly emendations."¹

The term 'study' is defined as -

"Application of the mind to do something for the purpose of learning. A State of contemplation. Application of the mental faculties to the acquisition of knowledge. Such application in a particular field or to a specific subject, a careful examination or analysis of a phenomenon."²

So far as this study is concerned 'Critical Study' means a minute, careful and detailed contemplation of common errors in composition writing of VII standard pupils.

Common Errors -

'Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary' defined the term 'common' as -

"Belonging equally to more than one public, general, usual, frequent and ordinary."³

'Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary' defined the term 'common' as -

"The ordinary of the mass : wide spread"⁴

The same dictionary defined the term 'error' as -

"An act involving an unintentional deviation from truth on accident departs from or fails to achieve what should be done as."⁵

According to 'Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary' 'Error' means,

"Deviation from the right way."⁶

The meaning of these two terms related to this study is as given below.

'Common errors' means the mistakes which occur frequently in composition writing. Gramatical errors, errors of punctuation, errors of capitalization, errors of spelling, errors of organization of ideas and errors of putting the ideas in a logical sequence.

Composition -

According to 'Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary' composition means,

"The act or art or process of composing, arrangement into proper proportion or relation and esp (extra sensory perception) into artistic form."⁷

"Composition - The selection, arrangement and development of ideas and their expression in appropriate written or spoken form."⁸

Regarding this study composition means the skill of composing some correct sentences on a given topic which is related to the lives of the VII standard pupils and to organize these sentences in a proper sequence.

Special Reference -

'Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary' defined these two terms as given below.

"Special means (distinguished by some usual quality) 'held in particular esteem'. "⁹

"Reference means the act of referring or consulting."¹⁰

In this dissertation 'special reference' means critical study of common errors committed particularly by the VII standard pupils.

I.3 SIGNIFICANCE AND NEED OF THE PROBLEM -

A) Significance of the problem:

School pupils in India have to study three language. They have to study their mother-tongue as the medium of

instruction. They have to study Hindi as a national language and English as an international language. English is the richest, the most varied and the most powerful language in the world. It is a library language. It is the medium of scientific and technological knowledge of the world. So it is harmful to quit English from Indian schools.

There are four objectives of teaching English in India, i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing. Last but not least is the skill of writing. Writing involves three things. One is penmanship, the second is spelling writing and the third is composition writing. In composition writing pupils commit many mistakes. It is necessary to diagnose these errors, to classify them and to remove them. So the investigator had undertaken this problem.

The selected topic tries to solve so many problems regarding the teaching of composition and regarding the common errors in composition writing. Here an attempt is made to analyse the common errors and to suggest the remedies to remove them. In this study the investigator tried to throw light on all the things which may be useful to minimize the mistakes, i.e., the methods of teaching composition, periods needed for teaching composition, the ways of encouraging the pupils to write

better composition, the checking of the note-books, useful teaching aids in composition writing etc. So it is hoped that the information stated in this research project will be useful for English teachers, students and parents. This information will also be useful to find out the effective remedies to avoid the errors in composition writing.

This study is also helpful in improving the hand-writing of the pupils. Good hand-writing is one of the most important characteristics of composition writing. Measures are suggested to improve the hand-writing. They will be useful to the teachers as well as to the pupils to improve the hand-writing.

B) Need of the problem -

Pupils in Indian schools are studying English as a third compulsory language. English is a foreign language. Pupils face many difficulties in learning English language. English language has its own peculiarities. The Roman script of English language is different from the Devanagari script. Pupils face the difficulties regarding spelling and pronunciation. Therefore, they commit many mistakes in their writing.

While evaluating the composition writing the teachers correct mistakes, guide the pupils and ask them to practice. But it is found that in large, the teachers'

efforts go futile. Teachers are so burdened with other jobs that they find very little time to attend to the correction work. So to save the labour of the teachers it is needful to study the common errors in composition writing. Prevention is better than cure. To cure any disease correct diagnosis is essential. So it is worthwhile to make an attempt to diagnose the disease and to contemplate over some effective remedies.

There are so many major hurdles in composition writing, i.e., spelling mistakes, mistakes regarding tense sequence, improper uses of punctuation marks and capitalization. Pupils cannot express their thoughts and ideas in correct English. To set free the composition writing from these hurdles, it is necessary to study the common errors in composition writing.

VII standard is the end of primary education. The investigator thought that at this stage it is very necessary to investigate their mistakes. After doing so the teacher can use some measures to avoid such mistakes at the beginning of secondary stage.

The research worker had been the primary teacher of English for last nine years. She taught English to VII standard from 1977-1986. In the span of those nine years she came across so many mistakes of the pupils in written English. So she thought that it is very necessary to improve the composition writing.

I.4 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.

Since the study of common errors is undertaken, it is necessary to decide the objectives of the study.

The present study is undertaken with the following objectives.

- A) To diagnose the common errors in composition writing.
- B) To investigate the errors of grammatical items, such as punctuation, capitalization and spelling mistakes found in students' composition writing.
- C) To make a record of common errors according to the type of composition.
- D) To verify the errors of the students from various types of compositions.
- E) To guide the pupils as well as the teachers, to classify their mistakes and then to avoid them.

1.5 A BRIEF REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH WORK -

As the researcher undertook the problem of common errors in composition writing in English with special reference to VII standard, an attempt was made to study critically the literature regarding the research done so far in the areas of ^{errors in} composition writing. This review helped the researcher to formulate the proper

concept of writing to understand the various aspects of composition writing, to locate the common errors committed by the pupils and to realize efforts made to minimize the mistakes.

Much has been written in regard to the prevalence of composition writing and common errors in English. But only a brief summary of the work done on the problems very closely related to the researcher's problem is given here.

This review is classified into two broad headings

- A) Work done in English
- B) Work done in other languages.

To review the related research literature the research worker has gone through the following volumes of educational research.

i) A Survey of Research in Education edited by Dr.M.B.Buch, Centre of Advanced Study in Education, M.S.University, Baroda.

ii) Second Survey of Research in Education edited by Dr.M.B.Buch, Society for Educational Research and Development, Baroda.

iii) Third Survey of Research in Education edited by Dr.M.B.Buch, Publication Department N.C.E.R.T., New Delhi.

iv) Summaries of M.Ed.Reports 1959-60 C.I.E. Publications, Delhi.

A) Work done in English :-

Dave R.H. and Saha S.N. in attempting to study the common errors in English at the higher secondary level analysed the errors both quantitatively and qualitatively, of the English language found in ninety two answer scripts of English paper which were taken at random from the Higher Secondary Examination Board of Education, Delhi.¹¹

The specific purposes of the study were (i) to locate the common errors in English and (ii) to suggest remedial treatment. For the sake of convenience, the areas of investigation were restricted to errors of grammatical structures, errors of words, phrases and idioms, errors of punctuations and errors of spelling.

The important findings were as follows :-

(1) Errors of grammatical structures were predominantly pronounced in these pupils' writing.

(2) Errors of punctuation being five per cent of the total errors were not significant.

The above cited work related to the common errors in English at the higher secondary level only. Errors are located in general writing in English.

Indapurkar C.D. investigated a linguistic study of errors in English of middle School pupils of Chandrapur district.¹¹

The objectives of the study were (i) to describe the various types of errors found in the spoken and written English of the middle school pupils. (ii) to classify the above errors suitably. (iii) To find out whether there are many common trends in these errors. (iv) To have a comparative study of some frequent errors in written English and assessment of annual examination answer papers.

The tests used were developed for the present study and they assessed the errors committed in grammatical structures in English. The errors located through the study were classified as lexical errors, morphological errors, errors regarding function words, and the writing system. The frequencies and percentages of errors committed by pupils were computed.

The following were the findings of the study.

(i) The lexical errors were not frequent but the errors of replacing proper word to phonetically resembling word was very frequent both in standard VII and VIII.

(ii) Regarding morphological errors, the analysis of annual examination answer scripts revealed that in standard VI, VII and VIII, the error of verbal inflection type was very frequent. The oral test revealed that in standard VIII, the error of verbal inflection was very

frequent in standards V, VI, VII. The written test revealed that in standard VIII, the errors of pronouns were very frequent as revealed in oral test. Very frequent errors regarding articles were revealed in oral test and analysis of annual examination answer scripts, but were missing in the written test.

The third study in this area is undertaken by Singh H.N. and Shrivastava I.S.¹² The problem of their investigation is "Common errors in written English. Their prevention and cure".

The purpose of this study was to develop effective remedial preventive techniques for spelling mistakes committed by pupils and which could easily be applied by average teachers in Indian condition.

The study was confined to 322 pupils of class VIII. The half yearly and annual examination answer books, class exercise books and the word dictation lists were used as the sources for collecting spelling mistakes.

The study revealed the following specific reasons responsible for a large number of errors in the fundamentals of written English.

(1) Pupils were drilled too soon into the use of the pattern, the significance of which they did not understand.

(ii) The teacher was not aware of the point of difference between the foreign language and native language.

(iii) Pupils were constantly influenced by the familiar patterns of their native language which caused mistakes in the use of the foreign language.

This particular study is a valuable study of spelling mistakes. It is related to the common errors in spelling writing only. Both the investigators analysed the errors and suggested the ways of their prevention and cure.

The next research work in this field is done by Joshi V.G.¹⁴ He studied the common errors in written English among pupils of standard V to VII.

The main objectives of the study were (i) to find out the typical errors committed by the pupils in written English. (ii) To diagnose the causes of these typical errors and (iii) to formulate remedial measures for preventing the typical errors.

The study was confined to pupils studying in Marathi medium schools in Ahmednagar district. The written work scrutinized was limited to answer scripts of the annual examination. The sample of schools selected, included both girls' and boys' schools. Answer scripts of pupils of Standards V, VI and VII in these schools were selected through the random sampling procedure. The answer scripts were closely scrutinized and the errors were listed under twelve different categories.

The frequency of errors were arrived at through discussions with the concerned teachers in respective schools.

The major findings of the study were

(i) Errors concerning speech, number and spelling were committed by ninety percent, eighty four percent and forty five percent pupils respectively.

(ii) Errors of conjunction and case were committed by two percent and six percent pupils respectively.

(iii) Among errors obtain, almost all were caused by irregular verbs,

(iv) Errors regarding number gradually decreased as the pupils progressed from standard V to standard VII

(v) Eighty six percent were caused by the use of wrong preposition.

The above is the minute study of the errors of all the phases of language. The particular study is related to the errors in general in written English. This study is only confined to the errors committed by the middle school level pupils.

Patrikar M.S. investigated the problem, "A linguistic Analysis of the Errors in Written English of Students of B.A. Classes of the Colleges in Urban Centres of Vidarbha."¹⁵

The study was concerned with the causes of the deterioration in the usage of English language to be

analysed by critical examination of errors in language performance of students and suggestions for improvement in the teaching-learning processes in schools and colleges.

The investigation was limited to written expression in English. In all 1,500 written scripts (valued answer books) of candidates from urban centres of Nagpur, Akola and Amaravati appearing at B.A. - I B.A.-II, B.A.-III examinations of the university were collected for analysis. In addition, 400 scripts from colleges in these cities were also obtained. These scripts contained free composition. Out of 1,900 scripts, 300 were sorted out after careful scrutiny. In order to judge the errors in their proper context, one hundred sentences from these were examined for description and explanation of the errors committed in each category. These were classified into four categories in linguistic terms. (i) Lexical errors, (ii) Orthographical errors, (iii) Morphological errors.

The study revealed that students knowledge of English vocabulary, morphology and syntax was very confused. Use of wrong items, omission and wrong substitutions, lack of knowledge and control over the structure of the language interference of the mother-tongue and lack of fundamental grounding for the receptivity

of students from psychology and environmental points of view were the major causes in different achievement. Even after the completion of secondary education, the objectives of teaching English were hardly achieved.

R.K.Gupta studied the problem, "A Study of the Error Patterns in written Composition of Class Tenth Boys and Girls of Two Schools in Delhi."¹⁶

The purpose of the research was to analyse the errors of students for a general survey, for a diagnosis of weaknesses, for throwing some light on the much misunderstood concept of 'Common errors' and to find the truth in the allegation that students write "horrible" English. In particular the investigator wanted to know whether boys and girls are alike in their performances in written English.

The present study attempts to go into errors of English language as evidenced in the written composition of 74 students of class of two Delhi higher Secondary Schools.

The following are the findings of the study.

- (i) The average boy makes seventeen errors per hundred written words.
- (ii) Science boys and girls tend to be homogeneous in their performance. Art boys and girls, on the other hand, tend to be heterogeneous.
- (iii) Girls seem to do better in the error areas of

spellings. In word structure and prepositions the boys are a little superior.

(iv) Letter omission was found due to the spelling errors. Here the researcher alluded the causes of spelling errors.

B) Work done in other languages
Sawant T.T. has done valuable work regarding the composition writing in Marathi in Primary Schools of Greater Bombay.^{18 17}

The purpose of the investigation was to study composition teaching and its different aspects, examine children's writing and explore ways to improve the teaching of the subject.

An intensive analysis was made of 3,874 compositions written by 2,948 children of 27 Municipal Marathi Schools. Information regarding the assessment of composition was collected from 47 other schools. The necessary details were collected through questionnaire, compositions written by the pupils, experiments, observation and interviews. A composition scale as a tool for assessment was prepared in consultation with 700 teachers of 47 schools.

The following were the observations made.

(1) Purpose, subject and style of composition change with time and teachers are highly influenced in teaching composition by the essayists in respect of

subject matter and style of writing.

(ii) The subject of composition related to science is responded to scantily due to the dearth of first-hand knowledge,

(iii) The pupils' choice of topics vary with age.

(iv) Regarding the feelings expressed in the composition, children of Std.I to III do not express, while those of standard IV to VII express in a very scattered and unsystematic manner.

(v) If asked to express their feelings in their composition, children of five to seven years express them through their liking and disliking, but the expressions of children of 8 to 12 years have some depth.

Saksena M.A. studied critically Hindi Compositions of the students of VIII, IX and X of Hindi Medium Secondary Schools of Greater Bombay with a view to improve their linguistic expression.¹⁸

The sample consisted of 100 teachers, 1,050 students 100 composition periods and 344 composition note-books of Hindi Medium Secondary Schools of Greater Bombay. The data were collected with the help of questionnaires, interview schedule and observations.

It was found that the problems of linguistic expression originated from four corners - teachers, schools, students and the curriculum along with the text-book.

From the above study it is clear that most of the studies are related to the errors in oral and written English language. They are related to the errors of spelling mistakes, lexical errors, errors of punctuation, errors of sentence pattern and morphological errors. This classification of errors is not related to the typewise classification of errors. In each standard pupils have to study some kinds of compositions. In the VII standard pupils have to study essay writing, comprehension writing, letter writing, picture composition writing, story writing and translation writing. Pupils commit various mistakes in these types of compositions. Some errors are common in all these types but pupils commit specific errors in a particular type of composition, i.e., in comprehension writing. They can't write the answers in their own sentences, in story writing they cannot fill the gaps.

Secondly these researches do not deal particularly with VII standard. Therefore, it is clear that there is not a single research work which studied the common errors in all types of composition writing regarding VII standard. In this sense, the particular study is unique that it explores the common errors made by the VII standard pupils in all kinds of composition writing in English.

1.6 RESEARCH PROCEDURE - (TOOLS OF INVESTIGATION)

The method of investigation adopted was inductive method, that combines Aristotelian deduction with Baconian induction. The investigator first operated inductively by giving the pupils of VII Standard, the various types of compositions for writing. To verify her inference regarding the common errors she also handed ^{over} questionnaires to English teachers. Interview schedule too was administrated and then deductively, she analysed the errors.

In this way for the sake of effective and satisfactory working of the problem, the research worker has applied the following three tools for gathering the necessary information for the present research.

- A) Field work
- B) Questionnaire
- C) Interview schedule

She did the field work. Eleven compositions of various types were given to the pupils for writing. Pupils wrote those compositions under the supervision of the investigator. The subjects chosen for essay writing was 'My School'. After essay writing they were asked to write comprehensive questions and a letter to their father. The comprehension passage was selected

from the question paper of VIII Standard (1987).

For the story-writing points were provided and for picture composition the chart of depicting the scene of railway station was used. For both the items, the pupils were asked to suggest suitable titles. For translation writing the passages ^{was} were selected from the the pupils' text-book.

From August 1987 to February 1988 approximately the investigator took one composition per month in both the schools. Immediately after taking the compositions, the investigator checked them. While checking the compositions the mistakes were noted down under the composition with red ink. The total number of mistakes made by the pupils in each area, i.e., grammatical mistakes mistakes of punctuation, mistakes of capitalization, spelling mistakes etc. were analysed and interpreted at the end of February.

The results of the above study were already in the hands of the investigator. For extra information she switched over to other techniques of study, i.e. questionnaire. Questionnaire was prepared in the month of January and personally handed over to hundred teachers in Barshi taluka. The questionnaire is given in Appendix 'A' and the names of the teachers are listed in Appendix 'B'. This questionnaire is divided broadly in twelve parts

as shown in the following table.

TABLE I.1
THE PARTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Sr.No.	Parts of the questionnaire	Serial No. of questions in the questionnaire
1.	Teacher's personal information	-
2.	Methods of Teaching Composition	1 - 9
3.	Letter writing	10 - 14
4.	Comprehension writing	15 - 16
5.	Story writing	17 - 18
6.	Writing of picture composition	19 - 20
7.	Translation writing	21 - 22
8.	Writing of composition in general	23 - 38
9.	Checking of Note-books	39 - 43
10.	Correction and remedial work	44 - 50
11.	Audio-visual aids	51 - 61

After about one month, fifty seven teachers returned their questionnaires. The investigator met to the remaining teachers and requested them to respond the questionnaires. After two months seventy teachers responded the questionnaires. Among them 35 teachers were from urban area and thirty five teachers were from rural area.

Those seventy questionnaires were analysed in 55 tables and in 7 graphs, within two months. After analysis, interpretation was done.

The other ^{or employed} tool which the investigator proposed to employ was the interview schedule for the head-masters.

It is given in Appendix 'C'. Twenty schedules were given to twenty head-masters quite in advance, so that they could go through it properly and prepare themselves thoroughly before the interview. After two weeks they were interviewed. Ten head-masters responded. The names of those head-masters are listed in Appendix 'D'. Those schedules were also analysed and interpreted by the investigator. They were helpful in verifying the data collected through the questionnaires. After analysis and interpretation findings were noted down, conclusions were drawn. Suggestions were formulated and remedial measures were recommended. The problems for further research were suggested.

For the sake of the study of related literature the research worker visited the following libraries -

- 1) Library, Bombay University, Bombay.
- 2) Library, S.N.D.T. University, Bombay.
- 3) Library, Marathwada University, Aurangabad.
- 4) Library, College of Education, Barshi.
- 5) Library, College of Education, Osmanabad.

- 6) Library, R.P.College, Osmanabad.
- 7) Library, Bhosle High School, Osmanabad.
- 8) ^{Library,} Maharashtra High School, Barshi.
- 9) Library, Shivaji College, Barshi.

I.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY -

This investigation is limited to the following points -

- A) This attempt was made to analyse the errors both quantitatively and qualitatively as evident in composition writing of fifty pupils of VII standard.
- B) Fifty pupils were restricted for the sample from two schools in Barshi town. They were selected by through the random sampling procedure.
 - i) Jijamata Vidyamandir, Barshi.
 - ii) Mahatma Phule Vidyamandir, Barshi.
- C) Both these schools are in urban area. ^{It} ^M Means the study is limited to urban area.
- D) This study was related to the typewise mistakes in composition writing. ^{Limitations}
- E) Six compositions were taken under the guidance of the investigator for the sake of convenience of common errors.
- F) The study pertained to the academic year 1987-88.

I.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAPTERS -

Need, significance, objectives, limitations of the problem, theoretical study regarding the problem, data collected through various tools alluded in procedure, conclusions, recommendations and problems suggested for further research have been very systematically presented in seven chapters with the help of statistical tables and graphs as shown below.

CHAPTER I : This chapter describes need and significance of the research problem. It deals with the objectives of the study, presents a brief review of related research work, states the procedure of research and limitations of the study. It deals with the reasons of undertaking this study.

CHAPTER II : This chapter presents the meaning, need and types of composition. It also deals with the characteristics of composition.

CHAPTER III : This chapter is devoted to the detailed discussion of the various types of compositions. It discusses the meaning, nature and importance of each type of composition.

Why these
two chapters

- CHAPTER IV : The fourth chapter deals with the techniques of teaching composition. The researcher here ^{describes / discusses} states the techniques of teaching composition.
- CHAPTER V : The fifth chapter states the common errors in composition writing in English. Various errors are illustrated with their kinds and examples.
- CHAPTER VI : This chapter is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of data collected through field work, questionnaires and interviews of the head-masters.
- CHAPTER VII : This chapter deals with the conclusions based on the collected data. Various recommendations regarding the conclusion are given in the same chapter. This chapter also states the problems for further research in the related field.

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