

CHAPTER - II

MEANING, NEED, TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS  
OF COMPOSITION.

## CHAPTER - II

### MEANING, NEED, TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF COMPOSITION WRITING.

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## II.1 INTRODUCTION -

Language exists in two forms. One is oral and the other is written form. The importance of oral work in learning a language is now increasingly recognised. Language is primarily speech. Written symbols are secondary. Learning to speak a language is always by far the shortest road to learning, to read and to write it.

Language is connected with ear and tongue first, and with eye and tongue afterwards, Auditory memory is stronger than visual memory. Children learn easily and retain for long what they listen from teachers in their class. Vedas, Koran, Bible and indeed the whole ancient educational set-up was carried on orally. Conversation and oral work is an essential and integral part of written work.

Though the language is used primarily in its oral form the written form can not be neglected. Writing work should follow oral work. Written form is static form of language. Thoughts and feeling to be communicated can be presented and handed over to next generation in written form.

In the process of composition both the forms

oral and written are essential. Dr. Miss Bose aptly says,

"The word composition, presupposes, 'wedding together of thought and language.' Usually these two aspects, namely thought/ideas and language are treated separately while giving lessons in composition writing. In fact, one should never be divorced from the other. When someone is faced with the task of composing his thoughts, he is in need of a medium. The strength of written thought will be seen in how ably he can use the language of his command. So both are inseparable." 1

Composition is one of the major types of written English. It is the most important form of language which enables one to express his or her thoughts and feelings. Of course, it is necessary to study what is meant by the word 'Composition'.

## II.2 MEANING OF COMPOSITION -

In the countries of Southeast Asia, all school and post school courses in English are studied as a second or foreign language, require that students should be able to write English fluently and correctly. Training in this aspect of the course normally goes by the name of composition.

The term composition implies two meanings.

The first is to put a thought or feeling rhetorically and the other is to present it lucidly and systematically. The first concept is rather broad and related to the literature. So it is not considered for the present study. But the other concept is taken into consideration for the study because a composition of children is not an essay of adults.

According to the second concept the term 'composition' implies,

"It is a matter of putting together words, phrases and sentences so that they communicate facts or ideas. The writing of isolated sentences is not composition. Composition consists in expressing thoughts in a coherent sequence," 2

said P. S. Deshpande.

Saying things for ourselves is composition. Whenever we have to say something about a person, place or thing, whenever we have to make a statement or to ask a question or to issue a command or to make a request etc., we do so by means of sentences. The sentence is therefore, the unit of composition. When we speak or write some such sentences in a proper sequence it is called composition.

The word 'composition' has been derived from the

word, 'compose'. To compose means to put together.

R.J.Owens defined the term composition as -

"By composition writing I understand the putting together of words into grammatically correct sentences into a logically appropriate order." 3

Composition is defined as the act or art of putting together items of language, both lexical and structural, to express one's thoughts and feelings orally or in written language. David Green said,

"Composition means to put sentences together in a coherent and logical manner in order to express our ideas effectively." 4

Some definitions of compositions are given below to illustrate the term 'composition' thoroughly.

- i) Composition is an exercise in self-expression.
- ii) Power of using some form of language is called composition.
- iii) The composition is the verbal as well as written counterpart of thought.
- iv) Composition means linguistic expression.
- v) Composition means saying what composer has in mind.
- vi) Composition is one of the various means by which pupils give back what they have learnt.

- vii) Composition is the translation of real experiences into a vehicle created by the composer as fit for his expression.
- viii) Composition is the expression in words of what we have in mind.
- ix) Composition is primary a form of written expression developing the personality of the child.

### II.3 NEED FOR TEACHING COMPOSITION

The teaching of composition, is closely related with the teaching of prose and poetry. By teaching composition the teacher trains the pupils in written expression which is also useful in teaching prose and poetry.

Writing is one of the aims of teaching language. Many a time, everyone needs to express our ideas in writing. This is the basic urge of every human being. Teaching of composition fulfils this urge.

The skill of writing, particularly, has a professional utility. In trade, industry now and then one has to write advertisements, application etc. The ability to express in written form enables the pupils to learn to think with accuracy and express himself efficiently. Composition is a part of writing as an

intellectual activity. Without giving training in this activity, the teaching-learning process of language is not complete.

#### II.4 TYPES OF COMPOSITION -

There are two types of classifying the composition work. According to the first type of classification, composition is divided into two categories.

- A) Oral composition
- B) Written composition

##### A) Oral Composition -

##### i) Importance of Oral Composition -

Oral or verbal composition is quite important in the process of composition. It is convenient and easy. There is direct link between eyes and the mouth. Oral work develops the capacity of speaking or expressing the ideas orally. Interest, zeal, enthusiasm and such other psychological qualities grow due to the oral work. In the oral work, the students are able to make a good and full use of their vocabulary. In oral work it is possible to correct the mistakes then and there. For the practice of correct pronunciation also the oral practice is necessary. Language items should be practised in order of the skills, i.e., LSRW. So written composition work should be preceded by oral composition and practice. In fact, guided composition is an exercise in putting down



on the paper what has been practised orally. Structures and vocabulary which is learnt in speaking and reading lessons should be used in guided composition. To fix the structures and vocabulary already learnt is one of the purposes of writing.

Pupils commit mistakes if they are asked to write without adequate preparation. The right solution to the problem, therefore is to base the composition on thorough oral preparation. Then there would be very little chance of pupils' making mistakes which will be good for them as well as for the teacher. In composition writing pupils' task should be to arrange the words and sentences they have been practising.

ii) Objectives of oral work -

- a) To encourage the pupils to develop the habit of listening attentively to the ideas of others and expressing their own ideas in clear and organized way.
- b) To develop the habit of correct pronunciation and use of correct language.
- c) To acquaint them with the new ideas and experiences.
- d) To make them to express their ideas with courage and without fear and to make them courageous and fearless.

iii)

- e) To enable the pupils to speak some continuous sentences on the given topic.

### iii) Types of Oral Composition -

Oral composition should generally include Reproduction of the story, Reproduction of the text, Conversation, Dialogues, Discussions and Picture Reading.

The teacher goes on giving some points, showing some pictures or asking some questions and pupils fill the gaps, observe the pictures, answer the questions and compose some sentences orally.

### B) Written Composition -

#### i) Importance of written composition

In the written composition the students do not express their ideas in the oral manner. They have to express their thoughts feelings and ideas in written form. A well-planned writing can present complicated facts in a logical comprehensible order, Writing is an art. Writing was invented by way of necessity. It must have been the necessity of recording experiences for future use and preserving and spreading culture. So it is quite necessary to express our thoughts, ideas, feelings, emotions in simple correct English. It is through written composition that the children are trained in the ability of expression. One has to put

his composition matter in a proper sequence. Due to the practice of written composition, pupils get mastery over language. They can use vocabulary items and structures in their writing. They achieve the mastery of spelling writing. Written compositions acquaint our pupils, the marks of punctuation. Pupils train in the paragraph construction. Pupils gather ideas from the various sources i.e. by meeting people, visiting places etc. Practice of written composition trains the pupils in organising the ideas in a logical sequence. Composition can play a very valuable role in assisting a student's intellectual and moral development. We should choose the themes of composition more wisely and should take points to make them more interesting. Composition and essay should stimulate and widen a student's reading and develop in him the habit of forming critical views and moral reflections. To develop the habit of thinking, composition writing is very useful.

ii) Objectives of written composition -

- a) To enable the pupils to express themselves correctly.
- b) To enable them to write on matters of everyday life.
- c) To encourage them to describe events, to narrate incidents and to write reports etc.
- d) To acquire the ability to write correct English.

- e) To develop their ability of expressing their thoughts, ideas and feelings.
- f) Let them to know how to organise the ideas, thoughts and feelings in their proper sequence.

iii) Types of Written Composition -

There are various kinds of composition.

- a) Essay writing - Like composition essays are also of different types

- 1) Descriptive Essays
- 2) Narrative Essays
- 3) Reflective Essays
- 4) Literary Essays
- 5) Imaginative Essays
- 6) Expository Essays
- 7) Argumentative Essays etc.

- b) Epitome, Precis or Summary writing
- c) Paraphrase
- d) Dictation
- e) Comprehension writing
- f) Letter writing
- g) Picture composition
- h) Translation writing
- i) Story writing
- j) Autobiography
- k) Dialogue
- l) Report writing etc.

In the lower classes the following types of composition are utilized

- a) Composition from structure tables
- b) Copying from the blackboard
- c) Jumbled sentences
- d) Conversion exercises
- e) Parallel sentences
- f) Question-answer
- g) Filling blanks
- h) Expansion etc.

The second type of classification of composition is also divided into two parts

- A) Guided or Controlled Composition
- B) Free Composition
- A) Guided Composition -
- i) Meaning of guided composition -

Literally guided composition means a guided exercise in writing by one who is learning a language.

In guided composition the pupils are given a good deal of help regarding the structures and vocabulary items, together with the thoughts and ideas to be expressed. Guided composition is not the something as 'guidance composition.' General advice on how to arrange one's ideas express them in apt words, write out paragraphs and link them up in allogical manner constitutes 'guidance'. A composition written in

response to such device may be called 'guidance composition'. Such guidance is purely of a formal nature. 'Guided' composition, on the contrary, is based on the principle of gradual withdrawal of control so that the final stage the student is able to write free composition of his own. Harold B. Allen expressed,

"Controlled writing may be defined as writing in which a student cannot make a serious error if he follows directions."5

M.Habibulla Hasin in his article 'Guided Composition - A Critique' defined guided composition as,

"The controlled essay is a prose composition of moderate length, discussing the various parts of a subject in a series of paragraphs so arranged as to give a lucid exposition of the subject in harmonious way."6

O.P.Bhatnagar properly defined the term guided composition as such,

"Guided composition means writing to a given vocabulary structure and information."7

A controlled composition is one which the teacher has carefully prepared and structured in such a way that students must use particular grammatical and lexical items. The teacher has in mind specific items which he wants the students to have practice in.

In brief the pupils get a lot of help of structures, vocabulary and material by the teacher for

the composition writing in guided composition as the name suggests, in guided composition the teacher guides the pupils what to write and how to write it.

ii) Importance of guided composition -

Guided composition is fairly of recent origin and it should form an integral part of the ELT-Programme, Students studying English as a second language have to work under certain handicaps. The free composition by its very nature presupposes a sound general knowledge and a sensibility to appreciate the language. At the less advanced stages of learning, guided composition must engage our attention a great deal. R.K.Tongue expressed,

"The guided approach to the teaching of written English composition seems to offer a large number of advantages."8

The guided composition enables the pupils to master the skills of writing-spelling, punctuation, grammar and usage. The singular purpose of the time-consuming activity of the guided composition should be to help the pupils to write better. Thus it paves the way for free composition.

Guided composition is self-paced. Each individual pupil can proceed at his own pace, the quick learners are not held back and the slow learners are not over-extended. Where something so complex as the ability to write in a foreign language is being taught, individualization of instruction is an ideal to be aimed at, but

rarely achieved.

It causes the teacher's marking burden. Pupils are able to proceed at their own individual pace because as the incidence of error is so slow, the teacher's marking load is so much lighter. The immense amount of time spent by the teacher in the traditional way of teaching by covering the so-called free compositions with red ink can now be used more constructively in giving individual attention to pupils with particular problems, while the rest of the class are busily engaged at the level of writing programme appropriate to their standard of proficiency.

It is quicker. The learner following a guided writing programme is given a great deal of help. He does not have to decide for himself what to say, and then struggle to find suitable words, structures and idioms with which to say it. Consequently this type of writing exercise is much quicker, so more exercises can be completed in a given amount of time, so the learner has more practice writing sentences which are generally correct. In addition, he is aware that he is producing work containing very few errors.

Guided composition enables learners to write complete passages from the very beginning. So much of language teaching relates to work with isolated sentences.



This is not the way we use language naturally, either in speech or writing. Furthermore the single sentence rarely represents a complete utterance or text, the unit of discourse is normally more than one sentence. Guided composition allows the learners, right from the very beginning, to get away from isolated sentences and produce passages or texts which are complete in themselves.

Exercises in controlled composition give the foreign student an intermediate step between writing lists of sentences and writing composition. The variety of errors made by the students can be so reduced that all errors can be corrected. Practice in the sentence structures used more frequently in writing is given, not in isolated sentences but in the basic sub division of the theme, the paragraph.

Pupils at the early stage of language learning cannot write a free composition. Since they are getting confidence in speaking the new language they cannot construct a few connected sentences independently. Pupils at this stage haven't mastered the structures and vocabulary items needed for this kind of work, Therefore they will make mistakes. In the lower classes pupils cannot think directly in English. First they compose in their mother tongue and then they convert their ideas into English. This hampers the beauty of

language. F.G.French said, "Free composition in which the child has to make up his own thoughts has no place in the first three years of a six year course."

Lastly guided composition also minimizes the mistakes of the pupils. Pupils get discouraged to find their note-books full of marks of red-ink. So to encourage them to write more and more, guided composition is very essential.

#### B) Free Composition -

##### i) Meaning of Free Composition -

After three-four years' practice in controlled composition, pupils develop mastery in the use of language. Then only free composition should be attempted. Guidance should be progressively reduced and they are required to write free composition. Adequate practice in the controlled composition exercises enables the pupils to have sufficient command over structures and vocabulary items. At this stage they are free to choose structures and vocabulary and express their own ideas. In this way controlled composition paves the way for free composition. Here the pupils are not given a help of structures, vocabulary and ideas. They have to write the composition in their own language. Pupils are free to use any structure and vocabulary items that they like. Hence this type of composition is called free

composition.

In the words of O.F.Bhatnagar,

"Free composition means writing from intuition, individual observation and experience."9

At advanced stages of learning, free composition may give a fair picture of the learners imaginative grasp of the world around him.

### iii) Importance of Free Composition -

The ultimate aim of composition is to enable the pupils to arrange their own ideas, in their own way freely, to choose their own words, to express their own ideas freely. In free composition the pupils are forced to think of ideas first. There are no restrictions on the pupil's use of vocabulary and structure or on the length of piece. The pupils are free to tackle the topic set for composition as he likes. This trains him to use language in writing for the communication of his thoughts, feelings and experiences. In the senior classes the teachers teach them language. They try to increase their command on it. With the development of this command over language, the development of their mind is fruitfully wedded. Language becomes the instrument of communication.

Adequate practice in free composition enables the pupils to narrate incidents, describe events and write reports on every day life. Pupils acquire the ability

to write correct English. Pupils not only write their ideas but also organize them in proper sequence. It enriches the vocabulary, enables the pupils to have sufficient command over structures, idioms and phrases.

We know that it is said, 'style is the man'. In free composition one is free to use his own language. So we can guess some of his qualities. Free writing explores the nature of the writer. In free composition one is also free to use his imaginative power, his feelings and emotions. We can judge one's knowledge of figures of speech, fluency of language, organisation of ideas, their likings and dislikings.

## II.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD COMPOSITION -

Composition writing is not a mechanical process. It is an art. It is related to the expression of thoughts and so composition is depended upon the language. In English 'composition' is a word for the writing of school children. The composition is an attempt of a child in writing. It is a practice for the child for his self-expression in words whatever he has in his mind. Composition writing is to<sup>be</sup> regarded as a mental discipline, a training in the art of arranging and expressing one's thoughts. It is a regular and well ordered kind of composition.

N.K.Aggravala and F.T.Wood rightly remarked,

"Like a picture composition writing must have unity of design, proportion of parts and consistency of colouring."<sup>10</sup>

A good composition consists the following characteristics.

A) Unity

A sentence is a complete thought expressed in words. A paragraph is a collection of sentences and a composition is a collection of paragraphs. These ought to have one factor in common i.e. unity. In any case the composition should have an organic unity. There should be certain unity of thought or ideas. The main theme should be kept in view throughout and nothing that is not relevant to it should be allowed to creep in. Composition must be a unity, developing one theme with a definite purpose. At the same time, the subject may be treated in a variety of ways and from different points of view.

B) Relevancy

Relevancy consists the scope of the composition. The students must word their theme carefully. Composition should not be either too narrow or too broad, or allowing their thoughts to wander away from the point. The things, matter which is not relevant to set subjects should be avoided.

### C) Proportion

It consists in giving to each part of the essay as much prominence as is due to its comparative importance. Each and every point in the composition should get proper importance. Minor points should not be discussed broadly.

### D) Paragraph Building

Composition should always be subdivided into paragraphs. The paragraphs of school composition should be correspondingly short. A paragraph should deal with one main subject at a time and not with more than one. The unity of composition depends upon the main purport of the paragraph, is called the theme. Wren and Martin defined the term paragraph,

"A paragraph is a number of sentences grouped together and relating to one topic; or a group of related sentences that develop a single point."<sup>11</sup>

The definition shows that the paragraphs of a composition are not mere arbitrary divisions. The division of a chapter into paragraphs must be made according to the changes of ideas introduced.

Unity is necessary in paragraph. It means that the paragraphs must deal with on one subject at a time. It implies a sustained purpose and forbidden<sup>d</sup> digression<sup>^</sup> and irrelevant matter.

The second principle of a paragraph construction

is ordered - i.e. logical sequence of thought or development of the subject. Events must be related in the order of their occurrence, and all ideas should be connected with the leading idea and arranged according to their importance or order.

A third principle of paragraph building is variety; by which is meant that, to avoid monotony the paragraph of a composition should be of different lengths and not always of the same sentence construction.

The paragraphs should not wander away from the point. The sentence or phrase so framed should stand at the beginning of the paragraph to which it relates.

Aggrawala and F.T.Wood says,

"The art of composition is somewhat similar to that of the construction of a building. A builder must have some plan in front of him before he begins to lay the foundations and erect the superstructure. Similarly the writer of the composition should have some plan in his mind. ~~Before~~ he begins to arrange his details."12

#### E) Clearness

By clarity we mean the use of words in a manner which can be clearly understood by a person hearing them or reading them. In order to help children to express clearly, the teacher should force children always to say exactly what they mean. He must compel them to answer questions. The motto of the teacher always must be "Let us be clear". It is true that it is

difficult to write clear. But if the teacher makes up his mind, he can help his pupils to write clearly. He should never accept a reply written or oral from the pupils which is not to the point and he should never ask them to speak or write on a topic which is not clear to them.

F) Order

A piece of writing which contains all the points of a topic in proper sequence is a good composition. It is not difficult for children to bring tidiness in their writing. The teacher should convince the children that orderliness is an important virtue of composition. He must tell the students to make an outline of the subject on which they want to compose. According to the outline, the sequence of the points should be followed in writing of the composition.

There should be an orderly development of thought from paragraph to paragraph, a logical sequence of idea one point leading naturally to another

"There should be unbroken continuity of thought, clarity of thought and vividness of presentation cannot be achieved without the proper arrangement and order of ideas."<sup>13</sup>

said David Green.

The composition work should follow a certain ordered line of thought and come to a definite conclusion.



It should not consist of haphazard reflections put down anyhow. There should be not only unity of subjects but also unity of treatment. Hence it is necessary for thinking out a line of thought before beginning to write.

G) Brevity

School essays should not be long. The limit should be about three hundred words; though of course there can be no strict rule as to length, which will depend a good deal on the nature of the subject. But composition should be brief, exercise, concisely expressed.

H) Interest

The writer should try to keep up the reader's interest and should therefore avoid placing the vague things in his composition. The reader should get pleasure by reading our composition work.

I) Originality

The children are generally imaginative. They suppose whatever is expressed by the elder and grown-up is good and correct. So their natural tendency is to accept the experiences of the elders as they are. They dare not to expose their own feelings and thoughts in expression. This attitude is not suitable for the writing composition which is related to originality.

They should drive away this notion from the children, on the other hand the children should be encouraged to put their own ideas and feelings in expression.

J) Simplicity of style

The style and treatment should be adapted to the subject. A serious or philosophical theme should be treated in a dignified manner. But the school subjects of composition may be dealt with in a familiar, light-hearted manner. Simple, direct expression should be preferred to pompous or verbose writing. The language and sentence construction should be simple, direct and natural. The secret of clear writing is clear thinking. Cobbett is one of the great writers whose style is a model of clearness, simplicity and directness. He aptly remarks, "

"If you clearly understand all about your matter, you will never want thoughts, and thoughts instantly become words."

Proper anecdotes and illustrations may be used to make the essay interesting.

K) The personal touch

"The personal approach is what makes an essay distinctive. The essay should reflect not only the opinions and thoughts of the writer but his very personality,"<sup>14</sup>

said David Green.

Composition writing should reveal the personal

feelings and opinions of the writer. It should have his individuality and opinions of the writer. It should have his individuality in it. Strictly speaking, a written composition giving expression to one's personal idea or opinions on a subject; and this personal touch should not be lost, or the writing will be colourless and devoid of individuality. So one has not be afraid to express his own views and does not be content with repeating the opinions of others.

To sum up composition writing must have a unity, treating in an orderly manner of one subject; it should be concisely written and not too long, and the style should be simple, direct and clear and it should have individuality, or show the personal touch. Three features are necessary in a good composition.

- 1) Suitable subject matter
- 2) Proper arrangement of matter and
- 3) Adequate power of expression.

Where all these three are present, there will be a success.

#### L) Coherence

To achieve the effect of unbroken continuity of thought, certain conjunctions and coherence words are found useful. Hence, so, therefore, but, or, and, then are some of the words which, if rightly used will connect sentences up and make the paragraph a well-knit organic whole.

If ideas have to be contrasted or alternatives presented, expressions like on the other hand, on the contrary, nevertheless, but, yet, still will be found useful.

## II.6 CONCLUDING REMARK -

In this chapter the investigator discussed the meaning, need, types and characteristics of composition. For the study of common errors in composition writing it is necessary to create some background of the meaning and types of composition. Without knowing the meaning and types of composition one cannot know which type is useful for the particular class. On the basis of this knowledge one can study the common errors in composition writing. Pupils commit particular mistakes in particular composition i.e. in comprehension writing they cannot answer the questions in their own sentences. In translation writing they cannot translate the tenses correctly. They do not translate the passage as a whole but they translate it literally.

Mere composition of sentences can not be called composition. Ideas, feelings, and thoughts should be put in an organic manner. Writer has to put his ideas in a proper, logical sequence. So it also necessary to know the characteristics of good composition. So the research worker stated the characteristics of good composition in this chapter.

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