

## A Study of the Writing Behaviors of Low Proficiency English Learners in Bangladesh

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### Abstract

*This paper makes a comparative study of what low proficiency learners do when they write narratives in their native language and in English. It tries to find out whether language proficiency works as an impediment to good writing or whether it is an ability independent of the level of language proficiency. It was found that good writing by itself is an independent ability and bad writers in Bengali were also bad writers in English, while good writers in Bengali tried hard to write well in English. This finding has important implications for language teachers*

**Key words:** writing ability, language proficiency, narrative skills

### 1. Introduction

As a language skill writing is taught as a compulsory skill in all the educational institutions in Bangladesh. However, not surprisingly a large number of learners do not attain a satisfactory level of proficiency in the target language i.e. English. As a teacher of English I therefore decided to find out if (a) the ability to write well was related to expressing in a particular language or (b) if it was a basic deficiency of the writing ability irrespective of the language. To elaborate on this point I would first like to discuss some important aspects of research done on writing.

Research on writing usually focuses two levels (1) surface level errors like sentence structure, grammar etc. (2) the writing process i.e. the cognitive elements involved in writing. Two early studies worth mentioning in this regard are by Hayes and Flower (1980)<sup>1</sup> where the researchers mention the importance of the task environment which included: the nature of the assignment, the writer's knowledge of the topic, long and short-term memory, cognitive processes including planning, translating thought into text and revising. The work by Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987)<sup>2</sup> identifies two types of writing (a) **Knowledge transforming** and (b) **Knowledge telling**.

**Knowledge transforming** refers to the more academic kind of writing that involves creating new knowledge. It involves problem analysis and goal setting and is a two-way interaction between knowledge that is continuously developing and the continuously developing text of the student. **Knowledge telling** on the other hand refers to the more natural type of writing that is very spontaneous with very little planning or revision. It is more like speaking by the fact that it has a natural flow.

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<sup>1</sup>. For details see Berninger, page 24.

<sup>2</sup>. Ibid.

This kind of writing is easier to handle by low proficiency learners or unskilled writers as there is less demand on planning revision and rhetoric. Another important area of research relates to writing in the first and second languages. Zamel (1983)<sup>3</sup> found that the characteristics of unskilled writers in the second language were similar to the characteristics of unskilled writers in the first language. They used similar strategies for writing. Moreover Arndt (1987) found that there was a consistency in the way learners wrote irrespective of which language they were writing in. In this regard mention may be made of the empirical study (Segalowitz & Hulstijn, 2005) regarding receptive abilities in both L1 and L2 and comparison of fluency measures of production in both L1 and L2 that draws our attention to two views of language fluency viz. the **trait** view and the **state** view<sup>4</sup>. The **trait** view sees language production abilities in L1 and L2 as being closely related, implying that a good ability in L1 would automatically imply a similar ability in L2 and vice versa. Whereas a **state** view implies that L1 and L2 abilities are relatively independent and a good ability in L1 would not automatically imply a good ability in L2. However the Segalowitz and Hulstijn studies were carried out to look into fluency skills in speaking and not writing skills. The current study intends to look into the writing skills.

In the case of cognitive processes Scardamalia and Bereiter (1986) find the Hayes model most influential as it identifies three basic cognitive processes in the L2 writing process, which are **planning**, **translating** and **reviewing**. According to them a major contribution of this model was showing that these three processes are not strictly sequential but that these actually interact recursively with one another. Further research into the cognitive processes (Burtis, Bereiter, Scardamalia, & Tetroe, 1983), (MacArthur, Harris, & Graham, 1994), (Berninger & Swanson, 1994) throw light on the planning and revising processes by advanced and less skilled writers. Studies on translation skills by Berninger, Mizokawa, Bragg, Cartwright, & Yates, 1994; Whitaker, Johnston & Swanson, 1994 have shown that:

“an individual student's skill in generating words is not correlated with skill in generating sentences, which is not correlated with skill in generating discourse structures.”<sup>5</sup>

Although studies have been done on translation very few works have been done with the story –telling or narrative genre especially with Bengali learners of English.

In the current study therefore the focus would be on the writing skills of the learners in the two languages viz. Bengali (L1) and English (L2). All kinds of similarities and differences in organization, spelling and syntax of the learners in the process of narrating the same story in the two languages would be looked into.

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3. Krapels p-43.

4. Derwing, T.M. et al. page- 535.

5. Berninger et.al. p-24.

## **The study**

The above mentioned study was carried out on 7 adult L2 learners who were studying English in the evening program in Dhaka University in Bangladesh. Although these learners had studied English for more than 12 years as part of their school and college curriculum, a proficiency test given to them put these learners into the very low proficiency category. However, these learners had also studied their native language for an equal number of years (i.e. 12 years). It would therefore, imply that in their native language they would be at an advanced level. The study therefore intended to investigate the following research question:

1. How do low proficiency L2 learners handle the same narrative writing tasks in L1 and L2?

## **Research design**

This research was carried out in two parts. The students were given a simple story of 200 words to read in English. They could read it more than once to make sure that they understood the story. The researcher gave them sufficient time and enquired if all of them had understood the story. When the learners confirmed that they had, the story sheets were taken back from them so that they would not resort to copying from the text.

In the first part of the study the learners were told to write the story in their own words in English. This was done to ensure that the learners would not be lacking in the material to write. Moreover, all the learners had the same material to write about which would be more satisfactory for research generalization so far task difficulty was concerned. The learners in this case were expected to reproduce the same story in their own words. Although they had all read the stories in English before, they were not expected to have memorized the words and sentences exactly (which was quite evident in the write ups that they produced). An exposure to the text to be reproduced actually ensured that the learners had some clue as to the sequencing of the story. After the learners had finished writing, the write ups were collected from them.

In the second part the learners were told to write the same story in Bengali. This sequence was followed to avoid any direct effect of translation. When the learners wrote the story in English in the first part they had to think in English. If they had written in Bengali in the first part there would have been a natural tendency to recall what they had written in Bengali before and then to translate it. The intention of the research was to find out how the learners express the same material in L1 and L2 and whether there was any qualitative difference in the two write ups. When the learners wrote in English first they were actually still searching for English lexis and syntax and therefore not trying to translate into Bengali. In order to judge the narrative ability of the learners the narrative structure described by Hatch (1992) will be taken into consideration<sup>6</sup>. Hatch talks about every

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6. See Hatch, E. ,page-164-183 chapter on Rhetorical Analysis and discussion on Narrative genre

narrative genre having five basic elements (1) time orientation (2) character orientation (3) a problem (4) the coda or a proper ending which usually has a message or which indicates how the matter has been resolved. For a narrative there must be use of proper cohesive devices without which the story will not hold together or make much sense. Halliday and Hasan (1976) in their seminal work laid down a detailed description of cohesion in English. For this study however, the description of cohesive devices by Nunan (1993) has been taken into consideration to evaluate the ability of the learners to use the cohesive devices appropriately. These devices in question are elements like *references, link words, substitution, conjunction, lexical cohesion, repetition* etc., that give the narrative its proper sequencing and adhesive quality<sup>7</sup>.

### Findings

The findings of the study will now be presented in the following table and then discussed in detail.

Table 1: A comparative description of production of the same story in English and Bengali

<b>Bengali version</b>	<b>English version</b>
<p><b>Student A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrote story in 145 words;</li> <li>• starting sentence has information about rich man going to wise man's house and requesting him to find his stolen bag of pearls;</li> <li>• has divided into 3 paragraphs, properly done according to development of the story;</li> <li>• used full stops only, no other form of punctuation mark used;</li> <li>• information about servants returning home missing (although present in the English version);</li> <li>• inconsistent use of appropriate honorifics;</li> <li>• wrote about man pointing at the servants;</li> <li>• used a combination of both simple and complex sentences;</li> <li>• well organized story line with proper ending.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrote story in 134 words;</li> <li>• starts with a different sequence; breaks up into separate simple sentences;</li> <li>• no paragraphs at all;</li> <li>• used quotation marks, full stop and comma;</li> <li>• Wrote about servants returning to their homes ;</li> <li>• information missing about wise man pointing at the servants;</li> <li>• written in simple sentences only;</li> <li>• story line well organized; ending same as that of the Bengali version.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student B</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrote story in 129 words;</li> <li>• no paragraphs;</li> <li>• abrupt starting, inappropriate narrative form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrote in 159 words;</li> <li>• story divided into 2 paragraphs;</li> <li>• began appropriately with "one day..."</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no use of quotation marks, only full stops;</li> <li>• wrong use of tense;</li> <li>• abrupt ending of a sentence in the middle of the story ;</li> <li>• story line has no flow, makes abrupt statements;</li> <li>• confused sequencing ;</li> <li>• shorter version of the story although there is some extra information that is absent in the English version.</li> <li>• cut story very short, left some information out;</li> <li>• no use of quotation marks although direct speech used;</li> <li>• wrong information -says stick would be longer by one <i>foot</i> instead of one <i>inch</i>;</li> <li>• abrupt ending and changed version said thief was punished instead of sent to jail;</li> <li>• improper tense used towards the end;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistently inappropriate use of capital letters;</li> <li>• wrong use of tense;</li> <li>• inappropriate use of subject verb agreement;</li>   <li>• sequence okay in English;</li>   <li>• story longer in English, has more details than the Bengali version;</li>   <li>• indiscriminate use of full stops that makes sentences difficult to understand unless punctuation marks are ignored;</li> <li>• wrong link word at ending says <i>at last</i> instead of <i>at the end</i> or <i>finally</i>;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student C</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story written in 154 words;</li> <li>• story written in 3 paragraphs ;</li>   <li>• story line properly started with one day, and a complex sentence ;</li> <li>• detailed sequential statement of events ;</li>   <li>• link words and cohesive devices correctly used although some words used repetitively (the word <i>and</i> in Bengali);</li> <li>• story written mostly in structurally accurate complex sentences;</li>   <li>• no use of quotation marks or commas although sentence written in direct speech;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story written in 148 words;</li> <li>• story written in one paragraph only;</li> <li>• started story with one day and in a complex sentence but sentence division different from Bengali version ;</li> <li>• all information given as in the original story ;</li> <li>• has problems with tense, article and prepositions;</li> <li>• appropriate use of cohesive devices</li> <li>• wrong use of words ,wrote <i>tomorrow</i> instead of <i>next day</i> ;</li> <li>• story written in simple and complex sentences;</li>   <li>• wrote whole story in past tense except one sentence which is in direct speech but without quotation marks;</li> <li>• same sentence in English separated into two sentences unlike the Bengali</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in Bengali version wrote the same sentence in a very long single sentence that comprised of one whole paragraph;</li> <li>• substitutes <i>guilty person</i> for <i>thief</i>;</li> <li>• finished story with a complex sentence and then a simple sentence.</li> </ul>	<p>version;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finished the story with three short simple sentences.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student D</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much longer version of the story than the rest (221 words);</li> <li>• very cohesive and detailed sequencing;</li> <li>• no division into paragraphs at all;</li> <li>• used only full stop appropriately but no other punctuation mark has been used;</li> <li>• discourse style quite advanced (example: <i>One day there was theft in a rich man's house. In that rich man's house there were 7 servants. To recover the rich man's precious pearls he turned up in the wise man's house.</i> Translated by the researcher exactly as written in the Bengali version ).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much shorter version of the story than the Bengali version(166 words) ;</li> <li>• story sequence well maintained</li> <li>• no paragraphs at all ;</li> <li>• story starting very different( <i>one day a merchant rich man became to Birbol the wise man's house. The rich man said that I lost a bag of precious pearls.</i>);</li> <li>• has problems with appropriate word choice, sentence structure and tense;</li> <li>• (e.g. yesterday for next day, <i>astoned</i> for <i>astounded</i>, expanded for getting longer)</li> <li>• wrong choice of link word .</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student E</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrote story in 96 words;</li> <li>• good logical starting but logic broken after 4<sup>th</sup> sentence;</li> <li>• sentence from original story missing ;</li> <li>• lack of adequate attention, missed out on Bengali possessive cases twice and necessary dots on alphabets;</li> <li>• rest of the story well-organised</li> <li>• used comma only once, rest of the story has only full stops;</li> <li>• all sentences are simple sentences;</li> <li>• there are only two complex sentences but only one has a comma in the middle; the other one has no commas, although required;</li> <li>• used passive form once;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrote story in 114 words;</li> <li>• good starting broken up into simple sentences ;</li> <li>• Storyline confused from the third sentence says the wise man lost his bag instead of the rich man;</li> <li>• wrong use of capitals ;</li> <li>• storyline confused ;</li> <li>• no use of quotation marks in direct sentences;</li> <li>• inappropriate word choice four times;</li> <li>• tried to write in complex sentences three times with limited accuracy;</li> <li>• very limited ability to use cohesive devices correctly within the sentences; although link words at the beginning of the sentences are correctly used</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• left out last part of the story where the thief is sent to jail; left out other important parts of the story like mention of magic sticks and astonishment of the thief at being outsmarted;</li> <li>• diction mixed up, honorific words used and not used randomly for the wise man;</li> <li>• (should have followed one style according to Bengali writing tradition).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• used comma in the same complex sentence as in the Bengali version ;’</li> <li>• all the information in the English story similar to the Bengali version (which was written later);</li> <li>• tries to write a proper conclusion although used inappropriate words(says <i>denoted the pearls thief</i> instead of <i>caught</i>).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student F</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrote story in 203 words</li> <li>• story started with one day and in a complex sentence...;</li> <li>• used a combination of simple and complex sentences;</li> <li>• Bengali writing style faulty, mixes up formal and colloquial style;</li> <li>• wrong use of cohesive word, wrong tense (confusion probably because of different tense use in English);</li> <li>• written in two paragraphs ;</li> <li>• one extra sentence added that was not there in the English version;</li> <li>• paragraph starts with wrong link word;</li> <li>• does not use any quotation mark although uses direct speech;</li> <li>• storyline has a natural narrative flow and is much more organized;</li> <li>• narrative sequence different in Bengali;</li> <li>• extra information given(says thief was clever);</li> <li>• extra information (<i>Birbol told them to show the sticks</i>) which is present in the original story ;</li> <li>• uses longer complex sentences;</li> <li>• adds his own concluding line which is absent in the original story.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrote story in 167 words</li> <li>• story starts with one day and a simple sentence;</li> <li>• wrong link word used(<i>but</i> instead of <i>and</i>)</li> <li>• consistent use of complex sentences and occasional simple sentences as well;</li> <li>• story written in past tense mostly, no quotes;</li> <li>• wrong use of tense in one sentence;</li> <li>• one sentence missing that was present in the original story;</li> <li>• written in two paragraphs ;</li> <li>• required link word missing , so one sentence looks disconnected;</li> <li>• doesn’t not use any quotation mark although uses direct speech;</li> <li>• used double negatives;</li> <li>• lack of appropriate vocabulary;</li> <li>• overgeneralization of capitals;</li> <li>• not same order of the story line maintained;</li> <li>• some information missing;</li> <li>• tried to use complex sentences multiple times although inaccuracies prevail;</li> <li>• does not give any invented conclusion. sticks to original conclusion</li> </ul>

<p><b>Student G</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrote story in 163 words;</li> <li>• starts story in a narrative style;</li> <li>• wrong use of tense;</li> <li>• wrong sequencing;</li> <li>• wrong link word;</li> <li>• repetition of the same information thrice;</li> <li>• confused use of first person and third person forms;</li> <li>• no use of comma, only full stops;</li> <li>• very incoherent use of diction, should have maintained a consistent style;</li> <li>• extra information given (all servants went home) this is missing in the English version;</li> <li>• adds own narrative style(e.g. <i>the thief cleverly...</i>) which makes the story more interesting;</li> <li>• divided story into four paragraphs;</li> <li>• first paragraph division at the same place as in the English version;</li> <li>• wrote in a combination of simple and complex sentences;</li> <li>• extra information about wise man wanting to see the sticks the next day (present in the original story);</li> <li>• ending good, explains how the wise man applied his intelligence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrote story in 120 words</li> <li>• repeated use of inappropriate words;</li> <li>• many sentences almost meaningless because of very confused sense of correct grammatical structure;</li> <li>• no sense of link word;</li> <li>• consistently wrong spellings;</li> <li>• confused use of possessives;</li> <li>• no use of comma;</li> <li>• story gets moiré organized and meaningful towards the end</li> <li>• tried to start story with a complex sentence but no control over grammatical structure, so story becomes confusing;</li> <li>• left out some information from the original story;</li>   <li>• divided story into two paragraphs only;</li>   <li>• wrote mostly in simple sentences which were also grammatically incorrect;</li>   <li>• ending quite good despite very limited ability;</li> </ul>
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### Discussion on the Findings

A close look at the comparative table reveals some interesting details which will be discussed one by one.

**Student A** has written the story in 11 more words in Bengali. His writing shows that he has a good sense of narrative organization, which is evident by the breaking up of the story into three paragraphs in Bengali. However this is not evident in the English version which is written only in one paragraph. Moreover although he uses a combination of both simple and complex sentences in Bengali, he uses only simple sentences due to limited ability. What is more interesting is that the stories start differently. If the Bengali version had been written first there would probably have been a tendency to translate

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7. See Nunan, D. 1993, chapter 2, *Linguistic Elements in Discourse*.

which has not happened in this case. Although this person is conscious of using proper punctuation marks in English, he does not seem to be bothered about using any such marks in Bengali.

**Student B** seems to have understood the story well but has very limited ability to write in correct English grammar. He seems to be totally lacking in the ability to organize sentences properly in English which is evident in his inability to use punctuation marks appropriately using full stops indiscriminately and not at sentence endings. This is evident in the Bengali version as well which is full of wrong sequencing and abrupt starting and endings. Moreover, the Bengali version is 30 words shorter than the English version, despite the fact that Bengali is his native language and he is expected to be more proficient in the native language. He incorporated more details in the English version than the Bengali version which is all the more interesting as forgetfulness should not be a factor here because the English version was ready at hand when he was writing the Bengali version. Attention to details does not seem to be important here. He has also used wrong tense twice in the Bengali version which indicates that he has basic problems in using tenses properly.

**Student C** has written the story in six words more than the English version. This student seems to have a good sense of the narrative style with proper beginning and ending in both the English and Bengali versions. He appears to be an advanced user of the native language as evident by the high frequency of grammatically correct use of complex sentences in Bengali. He shows a lot of attention to details as all the important aspects of the story have been covered in the English version and has also divided the story into three paragraphs in the Bengali version. However, there is a limited ability to use the English language which is evident in the wrong choice of lexis and problems with tense, articles and prepositions.

**Student D** has written the story in 55 words more in Bengali than the English version. Although he has limited ability in word choice, sentence structure and tense he shows good knowledge of the narrative genre as evident by the appropriate use of words in the starting of the story and proper sequencing. This shows that he has understood the story well. However there is no division into paragraphs at all in the Bengali version although this is the longest among the rest of both the English and Bengali versions.

**Student E** has written the story in 18 words more than the Bengali version. Although he shows evidence of knowledge of proper narrative genre by using appropriate starters, he shows a limited ability in both the English and Bengali versions. Confused story line in English implies that he is weak in reading comprehension. This is also evident by the fact that he has left out important information in the story that should have been mentioned. However he has tried to stick to details by writing everything in Bengali that he has written in the English version. But he shows lack of care in using appropriate rhetoric style in Bengali by not using proper honorifics when required. The fact that the Bengali version is mostly in simple sentences shows that he has limited ability not only in English but in Bengali also.

**Student F** has written the Bengali version in 36 words more than the English version. He seems to have a good sense of the narrative as he tries to narrate the story in his own way and adding adjectives where appropriate to make it more interesting and also ends the story in his own way, unlike the English version where he sticks to the original version. In the English version he frequently tries to write in complex sentences although these become faulty as he has limited ability. However he shows lack of attention to style by mixing up formal and informal style in the Bengali version and has problems with grammar and cohesive devices as well.

**Student G** has written the Bengali version in 43 more words. He shows a good sense of the narrative style by adding his own comments occasionally to make the story more interesting. However he shows a limited ability in the use of tense, link words, appropriate honorifics etc., despite the fact that it is his native language. In the English version also he shows very limited ability to the extent that some of the sentences become meaningless despite being written in simple sentences. The ending however is appropriate in both the English and Bengali versions.

Some interesting relationship between the L1 and L2 writing styles of L2 learners emerge from the above findings. The most important evidences are in the areas of the relationship between grammatical knowledge and discourse. The most salient features of the study are being discussed below.

#### **a. Discourse**

1. As expected 5 of the 7 learners wrote the story in more words in their own language. However, 2 of them (student B and E) actually wrote more in English. These writers reveal a lack of attention to detail in the Bengali version, details that are present in their English version. This is curious and might be caused by two reasons (a) they might have remembered these sentences from the original story and written them down as they remembered them in the English version which was written first without understanding their meaning properly or (b) they were not much bothered about narrative detail and their implication for the story. An interview with these students would have been quite useful here. Their narrative behaviour seems to be working independently in case of the two languages and was obviously not a case of translation or copying.

2. So far the narrative genre is concerned all the subjects have managed to start the story appropriately, which might also be caused by the fact that the original story started in that way and the learners just followed the example. However those learners who lacked ability in Bengali to maintain the proper sequencing and use proper cohesive words show that they do not have the overall ability to notice the lack of cohesion which in their case is not a factor of insufficient knowledge in the L2. Learners like C,D,E,F show a good sense of narrative style by trying to make the story interesting by adding one or two adjectives and comments occasionally irrespective of their syntactic competence.

3. The ability to break up a narrative into paragraphs is evidently quite varied here. Learner A has divided the story into 3 paragraphs in the Bengali version, but has no paragraph in the English version although both versions of the story are well organized; student B has divided the English version into 2 paragraphs but has no paragraphs in the Bengali version. He also shows very limited control over English and not good narrative ability in Bengali either. Student C shows good narrative ability and divides up the Bengali version into 3 paragraphs but does not have any paragraphs in the English version although he maintains proper sequencing of the story. Student D has advanced narrative style in Bengali but does not divide the story into any paragraph at all, either in the English or the Bengali version. Student E stands out to be quite a careless writer both in the English and Bengali versions and does not divide the story into paragraphs at all in both the cases. Student F shows advanced narrative style in Bengali and a somewhat different storyline in English and divides the story into 2 paragraphs in both the versions. Student G also shows a good narrative style and divides the story into 4 paragraphs in Bengali although with less attention to the linguistic and stylistic features, however, in English he has written the story in 2 paragraphs only. Organizing a story in paragraphs therefore does not seem to be directly related to nature of narrative ability but a matter of totally individualistic decision.

4. All the students who were organized and logical in their Bengali versions were also organized in their English versions of the story as well. This implies that learners who are conscious of logic in their narratives will strive to achieve so in L2 as well despite limited ability to do so.

#### **b. Language**

1. So far linguistic expression is concerned, it was found that students who were capable of writing grammatically correct complex sentences in their own language attempted to write complex sentences in English as well, although with less success.

However students who had weaker sense of grammar in their own language mostly used simple sentences in English

2. Students (B,F,G) who made mistakes of tenses in Bengali invariably made mistakes in tenses in their English versions as well. This implies that their basic conceptual knowledge of tenses needs to be looked into.

3. None of the learners used anything other than a full stop in their Bengali versions (except student E), who used a comma in similar sentences in the two versions. Even quotation marks were not used where required. This implies that these learners are unaware of the implications of the use of punctuation marks in the narrative genre which is an academic knowledge that has not been actively incorporated in their writing practice.

4. Students F and G show inadequacy in their use of link words in both the English and Bengali versions.
5. Student E and G appear to be basically careless writers in Bengali. However student G has lot more lapses in the Bengali version and almost meaningless sentences in the English version implying that this is more of a trait factor than a state one that is not limited to a particular language.

### Conclusion

The above discussions throw light on some areas of writing practice. Pedagogically they have important implications for the language teacher. If a learner has conceptual deficiency expressing in his own language s/he will make the job much more difficult for the language teacher. In case of dealing with the narrative genre the teacher probably needs to find out if the deficiencies of the learner are trait or state deficiencies. If it is a matter of L2 only then judicious use of translation could probably have positive effects on the learner. If the deficiency manifests itself across languages i.e., both L1 and L2 then the teacher needs to work at the conceptual level.

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