

WRITING TO TRANSCEND BOUNDARIES OF TIME AND DISTANCE

SUMANTA BASU

Assistant Teacher, Barajaguli Gopal Academy, Barajaguli, Nadia, West Bengal, India

ABSTRACT

To transcend some boundaries of time and distance, writing and perhaps writing through English language is the best proposition in present-day world to make an effective communication, as we may easily agree. Unless and until this skill of writing is developed, we cannot excel here as in any other skill. 'We learn to write only through writing'-such is the view of Mr. L. A. Hill in his famous essay Principles of Good writing in the last century and it is equally true of all ages. Even in this age of internet where texting in some popular social networking sight or conveying a message through some short messaging service (SMS) is an order of the day in common man's lifestyle; Mr. Hill is very much relevant. This essay turns to be an attempt to focus on a widely-acknowledged yet widely flouted concept of the importance of writing skill for human communication. The essay itself is a model of the skill talked about.

KEYWORDS: Transcend Boundaries, Time and Distance, Skill of Writing, Effective Communication, Model

INTRODUCTION

Communication through writing turned to be the only realistic proposition in the past and it has its relevance in the modern world of present days. Writing in the caves, in the hieroglyphics of ancient Missore, in the papyrus, in the palm leaves of India – were a matter of pride of the then population. Their sole intention was to retain their ideas and theories even when they are not present. They are successful when we, at the present days, get their ideas through decoding and we get it only in their writings. Different people of different time and country come to meet us only through their writings.

Communication through Time

With the introduction of paper and printing press the act of writing got a tremendous positive air and the human civilization became advanced in a quick fire pace. We get a renaissance in Europe in Europe first and gradually in Asia and elsewhere as well. A tremendous spurt of glorifying the old Greek dramas was there and they were read and dramatised widely in the Elizabethan age of England. It had been possible only through the use of writing skill and the creative art through writing skill. From then onwards we saw the development of novels and many other written forms, e.g. the essay writing – personal as well as formal. Essays on art and culture and the propagation of political ideas were very much there through writing pamphlets and books could not cater to the full. So we see the rise and gradual development of some newspapers and periodicals. For this we get the evolution of writing style in any and every language and our English language is not far behind from that run. In creative art and in scientific essays the boon of writing skill is simply immense.

Communication through Entertainment in Recent Past

With the passage of time we have noticed a boom in technological fields. Instead of only theatre, we get cinema now to entertain us. Plenty of lyrics are written and they are carried to the next generation. But writing serves as the mother house of these art forms. A drama crosses the boundaries of time and distance only through its written format. The

posterity gets it only to revitalize it once again by dramatizing it on the stage with the protagonists and other dramatic personalities. We get the taste of a classical drama, an Elizabethan drama or a Victorian counterpart through its written format first if we do not encounter the dramatization of those. Here listening and speaking skills help us to vitalize them with life, but those later skills are too instantaneous to cross the boundaries of the point of occurrence. Cinema the other form of entertainment however, tries to cross these boundaries a bit with its reel life, with CD, DVD, Hard Disk existence but it is more a recent attempt than a conventional one like drama, poetry etc. Those genres of creative art are present even to this modern generation mainly because of their written existence. Cinema gives a reel life to some written dramas and novels and in that way it reinforces the written form of human communication once again.

Now the natural question is how we can master this art of writing. It is an art like any other art form – singing, dancing, drawing and quite naturally we cannot excel it unless we indulge in a regular practice in it. In singing, as we know, we are to undergo some rigorous training of tune and beat. Likewise, we are to undergo some training to gain the other skills like listening, speaking and reading first, the grammar behind a sentence or in a paragraph. Writing skill serves to be the culmination of these primary skills. Among them, listening and reading are receptive skills whereas ‘speaking’ and ‘writing’ and their productive counterparts. As in any human communication, oral exposure comes prior and the written communication – ‘reading’ or ‘writing’ comes as a natural process with the development of civilization.

Merits of Writing Skill

June B. Hughey in his essay why write? takes bat for writing. He defends writing by putting forward its merits. **Communication, writing for self-discovery, critical thinking and problem solving, self-actualization, controlling of personal environment** are some of its merits.

Communication

The first and foremost duty writing skill serves is that of communication. Our hopes, joys, dreams are expressed through the pages of our diary. We can read it after a long gap, we can express them in a book form or even in some social network to get comments. We can write a blog and so we get different blogs like artist’s blog, political blog, doctor’s blog, player’s blog, teacher’s blog. Communicating one’s ideas to embrace a wide readership is an order of the day and writing gives a tremendous tool for that purpose with almost next nothing we can have an outlet of self-expression. We see the unlimited benefits of this skill of writing in any essay, story, poetry or fiction writing. Still now it is the most handy, effective, means of communication in some informal fields like personal letters and, in formal communications, like business correspondences.

Communication in Creative Art

Same is the case of creative art. We write poems, short stories or any other writings and publish them in social networks if we do not have space enough in a renowned periodical or a renowned daily. Writing only makes the bridge with the writer and his readers. Here we feel the necessity of a world language once again and English comes forward to serve that need perhaps. Being almost a world language, it communicates one country with another with a reader from one part of the globe with the writer from another.

Communication in Business Correspondence

In present day world we are to correspondent with email with many professional fields. Writing and specially

writing in digital media plays a great role to cater with the need of the hour. Sometimes even SMS plays a tremendous role in communicating the product with the would be customers. Hoarding, banners, brochure, booklets are just some of the forms to promote a product and in addition to speaking skill we are to be proficient enough in this field. A catchy sentence in a hoarding may be the catch line of the product. Mastering the art in writing gives us room to hold the position in a competitive world where everybody thrives to product promote his or her product.

Communication in Social Correspondence

Communication, in present day world, has become almost instantaneous. We make a 'tweet' which means responding instantly with a sentence or two whereas 'blogging' involves one or two paragraphs expressing one's view on a given point or on a given situation. And all these are some forms of expression through some black and white medium. We send an email to a friend or a business partner and like to have a mail back almost in no time. Texting in the SMS (Short Message Service), chatting in the social network sights demand instant response. Writing and expressing oneself through writing fluently gives a user more competence to control his or her personal environment. Making a discourse through English as a second language in social and professional fields in speaking and in writing mode gives him enough space in an environment where the members do not share a common first language but do share English as their second language.

Communication in Environment Beyond the Classroom

In ESL class, a learner often see that speaking the language – being able to communicate with others- seems to be as the only worthwhile goal of the language class. But they got to recognize soon that writing in a second language like English serves them havoc beyond the moments when they are with the teachers, students, colleagues, in a classroom related setting. Going back to their country when they are comfortably in their own set up far from the English (as a second language) set up, they get enough help from writing skill to communicate with their earlier set up. Writing seems to be them then a tool for survival in the 'real world', that is, the world beyond their classroom writing is a tool upon which he relies continually. Unlike some oral exposures like listening or talking, writing persists even after the point of **occurrence**. Herein rests the boons of writing.

Writing for Self-Discovery

Edward Albee says "writing has got to be an act of discovery. I write to discover what I am thinking about. Only in writing we get a full-fledged form of what we are thinking about". In creative art, we get an impulse or an idea or an inspiration. We are to perspire to get that idea into a poem or an essay. L. A. Hill in his essay 'Principles of Good Writing' says that 'writing is 99 percent hard work and 1 percent inspiration and he thinks that the sooner we get into the habit of disciplining ourselves to write, the better.

Through primary drafting, redrafting, editing and reediting give us the final product in composing a poem or writing personal or scientific essay. It becomes a process of self-actualization. It is an external activity to communicate with external world and at the same time it is a projection of our inner self. Irmischer says, "in writing, this externalizing and internalizing occur at one and same time. Putting out is putting in". The ability to realign, clarify, reshape information makes possible the never ending discovery of new ideas which may trigger altogether new ideas in searching and discovering.

Writing for Self-Actualisation

When we study English as a second language (ESL), writing becomes a means to improve other language skills. While writing, a learner seeks precise word choices and suitable structures to express his idea. It improves his skill in vocabulary. A fluency in the language is developed. As he searches for evidence to support a point of view or an idea, his reading skill becomes enhanced through reading, his writing skill becomes reinforced; expresses Jane B. Hughey in his essay why write. The writer feels the reader's expectations which influence his composing powers in a positive way. 'Writing makes a man perfect' - is a saying of Bacon's popular essays.

Writing for Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

Written words serve to bridge our thoughts and the barometer of our thoughts. Writing helps us to think critically and this is a crucial ability in our complex, media-oriented society which bombards us with information constantly. The nature of these information are diverse. Writing serves as a grouping stick to measure all these. It finds gaps in our understanding and flaws in our thinking. Writing becomes a way of classifying our knowledge and ideas. Our perceptions find expression in writing. We gain new insight in our critical thinking and it helps us to undergo the process of problem solving.

Writing Helpful to Attain Soft-Skills

Proficiency of hard skills, that is, technological knowledge of an Engineering or medical student can be effectively utilised by him only if he or she could master the proficiency in soft skills, that is the powers to express and communicate oneself even in some non-native situation and converse with them in speaking as well as texting or messaging or writing. Then only a student goes forward for his all-round development to be a good and responsible citizen of the global village.

A language student (more so when the case is a second language learning) thinks quite writing is of secondary importance. But it is instrumental in their academic success as well as in their practical life later on. Going through the syllabi of Madhyamik Examination for the year 1914 in West Bengal of India, it is understood that only 10% is meant for the speaking skill and 30% is meant for writing skills only whereas the whole 90% of the English paper is to be answered in written mode.

In the next Higher Secondary and B. A. level the importance of writing is not lessened. In job-oriented courses like engineering, management, medical lines, we find a right focus in speaking and still there the natural dominance is on the writing skill as the mode of examination is on the written format. Their proficiency in handling the second language effectively leads them to attain a respectable post in business, industry, government, social service and consequently in the society.

Writing to Control One's Own Environment

Many non-native speakers become permanent citizens of an English speaking community. In be fit in the adopted society, they are to complete a job application, read a telephone directory, write application of the leave of absence, a note to his child's teacher, fill out a loan application, read a newspaper. Developing writing skill, according to Jane B. Hughey in his essay why write?, can foster those abilities as writing enables a writer to look within oneself to clarify ideas, attitudes and beliefs. It becomes a means of controlling one's own environment.

Writing not Non-Essential

ESL students view often that writing in English as non-essential to meet their urgent and daily need. Yet when they are off from the classroom and campus set- up and very much in the everyday life, they see that competence in writing reflects their overall achievement in language and the learners developing this ability to communicate effectively have made this English as the language of o their own.

How to Write Well

Now the question of writing becoming solved, the question of writing well comes in. L. A. Hill in his essay 'Principles of Good Writing' prescribes, that 'to write well, you have to be able to write clearly and logically and for that one has to think logically too. By sheer practice ability can be achieved, he says, 'you learn to write by writing'. In case of creative writing, inspiration is rare even with the famous writers. One is to perspire a lot to be a good writer.

It is best to choose a topic in which the writer himself is interested. He can instil his interest in his readers. Presentation is of great importance. One can declare his idea in the very opening paragraph style of writing may be another important item. It is best to use a simple conversational tone. A lucid easy-going style can embrace a wider audience than one pedantic style. A concrete instance can be much more effective than putting forward an abstract idea.

CONCLUSIONS

In fact there is no short cut way of creating any art and like is the case of writing skill. Many of us can try a bit in writing skill but we do not try as it may not be of some work of merit. It may but it 50% chance is that it may not be true either. We do not write and on fine morning we will suddenly discover that we are writing very well. The chances are there but the chances are very much. So we are to strive a bit and suddenly we can see it gets going and gradually it goes great. The readers may enjoy and can make a positive criticism and in that the writers get directions or suggestion for improvement of his writing. He can create his own identity for the generations to come and follow.

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