Chapter IV

ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS IN ACTION

To interpret our own reality through schemas which are alien to us only has the effect of making us even more unknown, even less free, even more solitary
— Gracia Marquez

4.0 INTRODUCTION

In the light of the survey report presented in the third chapter, this chapter reviews the criteria for selection of materials for intensive reading. Then it describes the alternative materials to be experimented with through comprehension tests, and reports the major findings of the experiment conducted in the actual classroom condition.

4.1 REVIEW OF THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

In the later part of Chapter II, it has been pointed out that three principles should be considered for selection of General English materials.

1. Materials should be contemporary, written in the modern idiom dealing with the concerns of the present society in which the students live. The questionnaire completed by the students clearly shows that they want materials that readily appeal to their interests and concerns, and are up-to-date.

2. Materials overloaded with alien socio-cultural details and set in unfamiliar settings do not motivate the students to the expectations outlined in the editors' prefatory notes, if any, of the conventional textbooks in use. Through the questionnaire, the majority of the students indicate their displeasure with such materials.
3 Materials may also be gathered from non-conventional sources like good magazines and newspapers since materials concerning students' present day life will be more interesting and relevant to fulfil their social needs when they leave the college, and this interest provides them with more utilitarian forms and varieties of the language.

4.2 INTENSIVE READING AND COMPREHENSION

By way of subjecting the principles to an empirical study, appropriate materials were selected from various sources including non-conventional sources to be tested on the students through comprehension tasks in the actual classroom condition. Since comprehension demands a variety of reading skills, this task has been decided on to test out the materials.

The main objective of intensive reading is to acquaint the students with proper linguistic material. The text should help to revise and reinforce the language material already taught. Champion (1937/1965) states that "the only rule, sound in theory and workable in practice, is that the ability to speak and write English and the ability to read English should be regarded as of paramount and equal importance." He adds that "any real improvement in the teaching of English depends on the first place upon the whole-hearted acceptance of this fundamental truth."

Of all the communication skills, reading has probably the greatest 'serviceability', or general usefulness. Any user of a second language, in a modern society, is likely to find that reading is the skill which is most indispensable, and which he is called upon to use most frequently. Reading involves, first, the recognition of printed or written symbols and then the attachment of meanings to them so as to get the 'message'. Thus, the two aspects of the reading skill are word-recognition skills and skills of comprehension. A surprising amount of language can and does take place
through reading alone. It is, therefore, "quite appropriate for reading to form the core of a language-teaching programme" (Ghosh et al. 1977: 71)

Hence, we should help the General English students a) to acquire all the basic skills of reading and exercise them with intelligence and imagination and b) to achieve moderate speed and the required degree of comprehension. The aim is to prepare the student to do such general reading as is necessary in his day-to-day life, and also such close, attentive reading as may be necessary for professional purposes. In view of the importance of the reading skills, the alternative materials were experimented with, using comprehension tests to assess their suitability in the second language classroom for developing intensive reading skills.

Comprehension is considered to be the ideal testing tool in the classroom for developing reading skills for the following reasons. There are two sides to reading comprehension: the reader and the text. Comprehension depends on the expectations and past experiences of the reader (Otto and White 1982) and also on the features of the text. The meaning the reader constructs depends on what is brought to the text, inside the reader's head.

Samuels (1983: 261-66) describes the factors which influence reading comprehension for the reader and the text. First, there are those which relate to the reader, inside-the-head factors, as Samuels calls them. The reader's mind "is the storehouse of information needed to interpret what is read and contains the means for performing these operations." The reader must be able to recognize words, to find what words like 'it' and 'they' refer to, and to want to comprehend the text. In addition, the reader must have some pertinent knowledge, experience and mental structures so that meaning can be perceived in sentences, paragraphs and larger units of text.
Second, there are the factors which relate to the text, outside-the-head factors, according to Samuels. These include such variables as the style, the syntax, the readability of the text, the density of information, the organization of the text, the subject matter, and how abstract it is. When comprehension breaks down, it may be due to one or more of these factors, both inside and outside, or to some conflict or interaction between them. When the teacher prepares and delivers a lesson, thought is given to many of these factors. Since textual materials have the role of teacher, we expect its authors to have done likewise. Whether a text is prepared by the teacher or professional writer (often also a teacher) it should communicate with, and grip, the students effectively. This requirement is not reduced in its role as a team-teacher; the text should pull its weight. Describing textual material as a surrogate teacher focuses attention on what we expect of it and suggests a framework for preparing and appraising textual material.

Comprehension of the passage can be tested by asking questions. Questions may be of two or three types. The first may require the student to locate the answer in a given paragraph. The second type should test comprehension of a deeper kind. The answer to the question may not be found in the passage itself, but may have to be inferred from a sequence of sentences or ideas. The third type should test some kind of critical evaluation of an idea, situation or episode. The questions should generally be short and pointed. They should be thought-provoking and should lead the student, step by step, from the obvious to the implied. A sprinkling of questions requiring ‘yes’ or ‘no’ for an answer may be included. Besides, comprehension tests can be conducted within a given time-frame.
4.3 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Evaluation is seen simply as a process of measuring the success of teaching in terms of students' learning. As House (1973, cited in Urevbu 1985: 63) puts it, at its simplest, "evaluation is the process of applying a set of standards to a programme, making judgements using the standards, and justifying the standards and their application."

In the present experiment, a procedure was evolved to weigh the relative merits of the alternative materials through the comprehension testing tool and find out their suitability in the contemporary Indian context. As a learner indicates reading comprehension, the teacher makes a judgement about the performance and from that judgement infers certain competence on the part of the learner. So, a comprehension test is a tool of evaluation. "A test, in plain, ordinary words, is a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given area" (Brown 1987: 219)

Brown's definition captures the essential components of a test. A test is first a method. There is a set of techniques, procedures, test items, which constitute an instrument of some sort. And the method generally requires some performance or activity on the part of either the testee or the tester, or both. Next, a test has the purpose of measuring. The difference between formal and informal testing exists to a great degree in the nature of the quantification of data. In formal testing, in which carefully planned techniques of assessment are used, quantification is important, especially for comparison either within an individual (say, his performance in two different comprehension tests within a stipulated time) or across individuals.

A test measures a person's ability or knowledge—that is, competence. A test samples performance but infers certain competence. A test of reading comprehension may consist of some questions following a passage, a tiny sample
of a second language learner's total reading behaviour. From the results of that test, the examiner infers a certain level of general reading ability.

Finally, a test measures a given area. In the case of a proficiency test, even though the actual performance on the test involves only a sampling of skills, that area is overall proficiency in a language—general competence in all skills of a language. A test may be general like a proficiency test or may have a more specific criterion. In the present study, the test has a specific criterion—the students' ability of comprehending a given passage. A reading comprehension test is a test only of the learner's ability to comprehend the passage within an allotted time.

A "good" test should have the three requirements: practicality, reliability, and validity. A test ought to be practical—within the means of financial limitations, time constraints, ease of administration, and scoring and interpretation. The present experiment is practical in the actual classroom. "A test that is too complex or too sophisticated may not be of practical use to the teacher" (Brown 1987, 220).

A reliable test is a test that is consistently dependable. There must be test reliability and scorer reliability. In the present experiment, the same six sets of passages are given to all the experimental students for comprehension tests and the allotted time for each passage is exactly 30 minutes. Scorer reliability is the consistency of scoring by one or more scorers. If scoring directions are clear and specific as to the exact details the judge should attend to, then scoring can become reasonably consistent and dependable. In the present experiment, each passage has ten comprehension questions, and each comprehension question has a definite answer and carries one mark, that is, 10% of the total marks.

Validity of a good test is the degree to which the test actually measures what it is intended to measure. To ensure content validity, we have to ask
questions that give us convincing evidence that a test accurately and sufficiently measures the testee for the particular purpose of the test. A learner needs to be convinced that the test is indeed testing what it claims to test. For construct validity, the test should actually tap into the theoretical construct as it has been defined. 'Developing reading skills' is a construct. In the present experiment, weighing the relative merits of reading skills concerning the alternative materials is the purpose of the test and it assures the construct validity of the test.

4.4 THE EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Based on the three principles formulated earlier and reviewed in this chapter, six extracts of different themes and varieties of prose were selected as alternative materials for intensive reading at the first year undergraduate level.

The alternative materials were to be contrasted with another set of six extracts of similar themes and varieties of prose from the materials of different prose anthologies prescribed in various Indian Universities. It is not ruled out that all the three principles basically overlap one another. The difference lies in the treatment of the aspects involving the principles. Care was taken to maintain linguistic similarity between the two passages of one set subjected to a contrastive study. Vocabulary and structural levels were scrutinized to bring the passages as close as possible in terms of linguistic difficulty. The length of the extracts was 500-550 words each. Care was taken to ensure that the lengths of the passages of the same set were almost equal. In view of time-constraint during the treatment of the experimental test, the original passages were edited without affecting consistency as far as possible or they formed part of the original lifted en bloc. Thus all variables except the variable to be tested on were ensured to be at the same corresponding levels.

Ten comprehension questions were framed on each extract four factual, four inferential and two evaluative questions. The questions, factual and
The evaluative questions formed the concluding part of each comprehension test. No glossary was added to the passage but the title and the author of the passage were given. The comprehension questions were of three types: Yes/No questions, one-word answer questions, and one or two sentence answer questions. But, about 60-70% of questions fell under the last type.

Besides the comprehension questions, at the end of each session, that is, after finishing two passages of a particular set, the students were asked to answer two subjective questions in an extra 5 minute tail-piece: a) Which of the two passages did they like better? and b) why? Though there was not much room for the subjective assessment to influence the research, these two questions were intended to know the students’ opinions regarding their likes and dislikes so that a significant pattern might emerge, however impulsive they might be.

4.5 DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS
All the twelve passages (appendix 4) selected constitute six sets and are briefly described here with justification for their selection. In each set, one is the alternative material and the other is the material from a text generally prescribed at the tertiary level in India.

4.5.1 Set One
The first set comprises a theme on the cinema. One passage deals with the Indian cinema and the other of the paired set deals with the Hollywood cinema of America. The passage titled “The Indian Cinema” (appendix 4 (i)(a)) is an extract from the book India File, a travel account by an English man Trevor Fishlock, a reporter of The Times. As Marckwardt (1981:5) says, a “travel account by an Englishman or an American to the country in which the instruction is taking place is likely not only to arouse interest, but in addition will be culturally relevant in terms of what the voyager notices or does not notice.” Fishlock (1984:116-118) himself says in the Preface that a “foreign correspondent in India experiences an
authentic adventure—stimulating, absorbing, daunting, sometimes moving and shocking.” In this detailed portrayal, as the 1983 British Press Award citation says, Fishlock “explores the contradictions in India.” The first passage of the first set is a reading material on the contradictions of the Indian cinema, an aspect of the indigenous culture that is very familiar to any Indian student. Hurley and Sherman (1990 7-12) illustrate how effectively the cinema can be used in the second language classroom.

In contrast to this, the other titled “The Paradox of Hollywood” (appendix 4 (i)(b)) is an extract from the lesson of the same title by J.B. Priestley included in *New Vistas in English Prose* It was first published in India in 1971 and since then has undergone several reprints. The book was prescribed in the 70s and the 80s for General English intensive reading in Madras University and some other universities in India. Curiously enough, it is a coincidence that the same text has now been prescribed for the college entrants during the year 1995-96 in Pondicherry University.

4.5.2 Set Two

The second set has two short-story extracts. One, titled “Rice Pudding in Ghee” (appendix 4 (ii)(b)), is an extract covering the opening part of a short story of the same title by Kamala Das. The short story was originally written in Malayalam and then translated by Vasanthi Shankara Narayanan. It was published in the Sunday Magazine section of the newspaper, *The Hindu* (Madras) dated 5th January, 1992. It was chosen because the context and the area of experience dealt with in the story should have some measure of reality for the undergraduate students in India and because of the researcher’s intention that quality translations and adaptations of Indian works in English could be used as authentic materials for English language teaching in India. “Learners of English in India have realized that English is necessary to talk about their identity, their
languages, their literatures, their values and culture so that the world outside will know who they are” (Krishnaswamy and Sriraman 1994 27)

The material that conveys something with which the students are emotionally and empathically associated in terms of context, characters and cultural ethos will certainly motivate the students and facilitate their comprehending process easily and quickly. Such 'intrinsic' bond between the textual material and the student could be exploited in the second language classroom. In the short story “Rice Pudding in Ghee”, the situation, characters and cultural ties are not something unfamiliar to the Indian student. The story describes the loss of the mother in an Indian domestic scene and the pathetic condition of her husband and their children in the post-death scene.

The other extract is the opening part of the short story titled “Mrs Adis” by Shelia Kaye Smith, anthologized in The Charm of English Prose edited by Mishra (1968 see appendix 1). This text also has been doing its rounds in the past two and a half decades in various Indian Universities. Like “Rice Pudding in Ghee”, “Mrs Adis” (appendix 4 (ii)(b)) describes an emotion-packed domestic scene where the mother loses her only son and protects the murderer of her son who happens to be a friend of her son. The story narrates the emotional scene where Mrs Adis comes to know about the death of her son. The location is north-east Sussex in England, a land of the old hammer-woods. Mrs Adis, Peter Crouch and Tom are the main characters. Both the extracts are from two different women short story writers, using two different geographical backgrounds bound up with their own distinctive cultural colourings. The themes of the two extracts revolve on a very common human occurrence and this justifies the pairing up of the two extracts for the present experimental study. Despite their commonalities in other aspects, the situations are intrinsically woven with the way of life and other cultural parameters of their respective communities.
4.5.3 Set three

In his article "Reader's Digest as a Textbook of English," Bessmertnyi (1992) favours the idea that a single issue of the magazine can be prescribed as a textbook for ELT. Though the Russian teacher is no doubt overenthusiastic, perhaps because of his lasting frustration with the existing materials, there is nothing wrong in taking interesting and contemporarily appealing articles concerning Indian socio-cultural problems as materials for ELT in India from the magazines like Reader's Digest as materials for ELT in India.

Two articles were chosen from Reader's Digest and adapted into manageable extracts for the experimental purpose. The first article chosen for the present experiment is "Dowry Deaths Our National Shame" by Bordewich (1988 35-40) and the second one is "The Pied Piper of Delhi" by Lal (1987 83-92).

The adapted version of "Dowry Deaths Our National Shame" (appendix 4 (iii)(a)) was contrasted with the adapted version of Woolf's essay "Professions for Women" (appendix 4 (iii)(b)), anthologized in Macmillan College Prose edited by Sriraman (1989 63-69, see appendix 1). The text was prescribed during 1993-95 in Pondicherry University. Both passages deal with women in general but focus on two distinct women communities belonging to two different countries, India and England. The problem of dowry is unique to India and the Indian students are conscious of this social problem, discuss, and live with it in their day-to-day life.

The other passage, despite its interest in women, deals with an outmoded theme of women, particularly the women in the West entering various professions—a theme that could have been relevant in the late Victorian and early twentieth century. The essay is a plea for intellectual freedom and artistic integrity calling upon Women to break the idol of womanly perfection which Coventry Patmore had described as the Angel in the House.
4.5.4 Set Four

The second article from Reader's Digest, "The Pied Piper of Delhi" (appendix 4 (iv)(a) by Lal (1987 82-92) was edited into an experimental passage. This was contrasted with the passage adapted from the lesson "Leonardo Da Vinci" (appendix 4 (iv)(b)) anthologized in Silver Streams edited by Sharma (1978 82-89, see appendix 1). Both passages deal with two great painting artists, one, Leonardo Da Vinci, an Italian painter who lived in the 15th century and the other, Keshava Shankar Pillai better known as Shankar of the Shankar's Weekly, an Indian painter-cartoonist of the present India whose name is synonymous with children's art and literature in India.

Leonardo Da Vinci has become universally popular and the students might have had a chance to hear of him even at school either in the History text or in any other context. Equally popular in the present world is Shankar. His schooling at Kayankulam in Kerala, his close association with Indian leaders like Nehru, his cartoons about Indian political, economic and social idiosyncrasies and other aspects of his personality are likely to draw an instantaneous rapport with the second language learner. The two passages offer two interesting and equally popular personalities and they are to be experimented with for their relative merits in terms of their contemporary appeal to the language learners despite the wide popularity both of them enjoy today.

4.5.5 Set Five

The fifth set comprises an extract titled "Students' shame" (appendix 4 (v)(a)) from Women and Social Justice by Mahatma Gandhi and another titled "Is Progress Real?" (appendix 4 (v)(b) by Will and Ariel Durant from A Garland of Prose edited by Panikkar (1985 65-71, see appendix 1). "Is Progress Real?" is anthologized also in Selections from English Prose for College edited by the Department of English, Osmania University (1984. 68-75, see appendix 1).
"Students' Shame" is an extract from the article of the same title originally published in *The Hanjan* in 1938. Gandhi here discusses the problem of eve-teasing as prevalent then as it is today. The writer discusses certain ideas that embody the good behaviour of boy and girl students in the Indian context.

The other extract from the essay "Is Progress Real?" raises two questions. Where does modern man stand in relation to the past?, Can we say that we have progressed far more than the ancients? It is "a topic of immense contemporary interest" according to the editor.

### 4.5.6 Set Six

The sixth and last set comprises two drama extracts. The conversational prose material is taken to add variety to the experimental material. Both extracts are comic in nature and deal with some everyday scenes in life. The characters meditate on certain aspects of life in general and particularly, the situations they are in. Humour is a pleasing trait among mankind and will serve as a bait to catch the student's attention. Serious, thought-provoking aspects of life may be mixed with humorous passages at intervals since the comic purport of material will smooth the student's nerves and ease their tension.

Whatever academic material we read, we find that our emotions become reinstated into a kind of pure intensity. A drama like *Hamlet* clarifies and deepens for us emotional incidents of familiar human situations. What counts in what we learn is what we can do with our knowledge, by linking it up with other things we have studied or observed. This is a kind of interpretation of our experience. But the stage, at which one is able to intensify, clarify, and interpret one's experience comes only after one has gained a minimum proficiency in that particular language to reach that sophisticated stage.

*Tughlaq* is a household name in India and occupies a place in the history of India in his own right. Karnad (1977) has written a historical play titled...
"Tughlaq which, in the words of Anantha Murthy (1977 x), "reflects as no other play perhaps does the political mood of disillusionment which followed the Nehru era of idealism in the country". Karnad (1977 viii) himself has commented on this "what struck me absolutely about Tughlaq's history was that it was contemporary". The seventh scene of the play was adapted to a manageable limit for a passage to be contrasted with a piece of drama by Shaw from the text *Developing English Skills* edited by Thaker et al (1983, see appendix 1).

Shaw's passage bears the title "Dolly At the Dentist's" (appendix 4 (vi)(b)) while Karnad's passage is titled "Aziz and Aazam" (appendix 4 (vi)(a)). While the latter deals with the Indian socio-cultural aspects and its present political philosophy, the former deals with a common scene not much coloured by socio-cultural implications. Shaw's passage can be contextualized anywhere but for the words 'shillings' and 'crown piece' in the extract. The socio-cultural implications are minimal. This is to be contrasted with "Aziz and Aazam" to know whether social, cultural, religious and political connotations in the latter will be a barrier to better comprehension. This principle weighed more with the inclusion of this set in the experiment.

As Seliger and Shohamy (1989 136) state, all experimental approaches involve the control or manipulation of three basic components of the experiment: the population, the treatment, and the measurement of the treatment.

### 4.6 THE POPULATION

First year undergraduate students in 1994-95 from five colleges of arts and sciences, two at Pondicherry, two at Karaikal (an enclave of Pondicherry in Tanjore District, Tamil Nadu), and one at Cuddalore (South Arcot District, Tamil Nadu) were chosen for the conduct of the experiment. Tagore Arts College (TAC), practically a men's institution with a negligible number of girl students and Bharathidasan Govt College for Women (BGCW) are in Pondicherry. Arignar
Anna Govt Arts College (AAGAC), and Avvaiyar Govt Arts College for Women (AGCW) are in Karaikal. All these four institutions are now affiliated to Pondicherry University. But they were all affiliated to Madras University till the inception of Pondicherry University in 1986. The fifth institution is St Joseph’s College of Arts and Sciences (SJC), a private college at Cuddalore, run by the Archdiocesan Educational Wing of Pondicherry and Cuddalore. It is affiliated to Madras University.

During the year 1994-95, TAC had 14 undergraduate main courses with a total strength of 578 students in the first year. They include Computer Science, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Commerce, English, Tamil, French Economics, History, Sociology and Philosophy. BGCW offered 14 undergraduate main courses with a total strength of 789 students in the first year. They include all the courses offered by TAC except Zoology and Philosophy and in addition it offered Corporate Secretaryship and Home Science. AAGAC offered seven undergraduate main courses including Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Zoology, Economics, Commerce, and Tamil with a total strength of 251 students. AGCW offered seven undergraduate main courses including Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Commerce, History and English with a total strength of 159 students. SJC offered six undergraduate main courses: Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Computer Science, Commerce and History with a total strength of 336 students.

Eleven main classes—five sciences and six arts—were adopted as experimental groups, since it was convenient to conduct the experiment in a class as it really exists. They were Computer Science, Physics, and English from TAC, Maths and Corporate Secretaryship from BGCW, Chemistry, Economics, and Tamil from AAGAC, Commerce and History from AGCW, and Physics from SJC. Sixty-eight (12%) from TAC, 74 (10%) from BGCW, 46 (18%) from AAGAC, 43 (27%) from AGCW and 51 (15%) from SJC participated in the experiment. That
is, initially a total of 282 students formed the population of the experiment. Thirty
four students were not able to complete all the six sets for various reasons during
the experimental period. Those incomplete sets were excluded from the analysis.
Only 248 students, that is, nearly 12% of the total population of 2113 completed
all the six sets, thus forming the actual population of the experiment.

4.7 THE TREATMENT
The experiment stretched over three months from January to March 1995. The
researcher went to all the colleges and conducted the experiment. Generally, the
experiment in every session started in the General English period. Where there
was a fifty-minute period, the succeeding period was annexed on request from the
researcher to the concerned department. The researcher was assisted by a
teacher of English in the respective college for quick distribution, and collection,
of the passage and the question-cum-answer sheet. Time was strictly observed.

4.8 THE MEASUREMENT OF THE TREATMENT
The performance of the student-testees in all the six sets of comprehension tests
is analyzed in this section statistically. Passage A represents the alternative
materials and Passage B represents the materials from the usually prescribed
textbooks.

In this experiment, a measure called test-statistics or t-statistics is used
and the 't' test is applied to test the hypothesis whether the alternative materials,
that is A, are better for developing intensive reading skills than the usually
prescribed materials, that is B. "A test-statistics is essentially a function of
observations from one or more random variables. It consists of some parameters
which are fixed by hypothesis" (Das 1989:98).

Since any decision to either accept or reject a hypothesis is to be made
on the basis of information obtained from sample data, there is a chance that we
will be making an error. We take a risk in rejecting or accepting a true
hypothesis In practice the limit of 0.05 or 0.01 is customary. Each of these limits is called a level of significance or significance level. Here 0.05% or 5% level of significance is chosen in designing the test of the hypothesis. That is, we are about 95% confident that we have made the right decision. Thus we use the level of significance as a guide in decision-making.

The 't' value at 5% level of significance for the degrees of freedom in this research, 247 (that is, total sample population (248) minus 1) is 1.96, known as the table 't' value. If the 't' value obtained from the data of students' performances in a set is greater than the table value (1.96), then there is said to be significant difference between the two variables, A and B. The more the 't' value is, the more the difference is. Here follows the statistical analysis of the six sets of passages in terms of students' performances.

4.8.1 Set one

In set one, Passage A is "The Indian Cinema" and Passage B is "The Paradox of Hollywood". In A, out of 248 students, 6 scored between 10 and 40, 39 scored between 41 and 70, and 203 scored over 70. In B, 194 students scored between 10 and 40, 49 scored between 41 and 70 and only 5 scored above 70. Table 3 shows the statistical analysis of the two performances and their 't' value.

TABLE 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Computed 't' value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passage A</td>
<td>8.5685</td>
<td>1.4380</td>
<td>37.6425*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage B</td>
<td>3.5524</td>
<td>1.5283</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level of confidence.
The computed 't' value is 37.64 which is greater than the table value (1.96) at 5% level of significance. It is the greatest of all the six 't' values obtained for the six sets in the experiment. It is therefore inferred that the students' markedly better performance in A is proved beyond doubt.

4.8.2 Set two

In set two, Passage A is "Rice Pudding in Ghee" and Passage B is "Mrs Adis". In A, 16 students scored between 10 and 40, 38 scored between 41 and 70, and 194 scored above 70. In B, 92 students scored between 10 and 40, 132 scored between 41 and 70, and 24 scored above 70. As shown in Table 4, the results, when statistically analyzed, confirm the research hypothesis.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Computed 't' value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passage A</td>
<td>7.9516</td>
<td>1.9107</td>
<td>16.7066*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage B</td>
<td>5.1532</td>
<td>1.8185</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level of confidence

The computed 't' value is 16.70 and it leads to the inference that the students' performance is better in Passage A.

4.8.3 Set three

In set three, Passage A is "Dowry Deaths Our National Shame" and Passage B is "Professions for Women". In A, out of 248 students, 9 scored between 10 and 40, 39 scored between 41 to 70 and 200 scored above 70. In B, 177 scored between 10 and 40, 57 scored between 41 and 70 and only 14 scored above 70. Table 5 shows the results of the statistical analysis.
Table 5
Set three (Passage A and B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Computed 't' value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passage A</td>
<td>8.3185</td>
<td>1.7318</td>
<td>27.6153*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage B</td>
<td>3.3508</td>
<td>2.2419</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level of confidence

The computed 't' value is 27.61 which is greater than the table value (1.96) at 5% level. So, there is significant difference between the students' performances in A and B.

4.8.4 Set four

In set four, Passage A is "The Pied Piper of Delhi" and Passage B is "Leonardo Da Vinci". In A, out of 248 students, 12 scored between 10 and 40, 49 scored between 41 and 70, and 187 scored above 70. In B, 122 scored between 10 and 40, 119 scored between 41 and 70, and only 7 scored above 70. Table 6 statistically shows the difference between the performances.

TABLE 6
Set four (Passage A and B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Computed 't' value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passage A</td>
<td>8.3145</td>
<td>1.7314</td>
<td>12.6201*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage B</td>
<td>4.7862</td>
<td>4.0479</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level of confidence
The computed 't' value is 12.62 which is greater than the table value (1.96) at 5% level. The result validates that there is significant difference between the students' performances in A and B, though the 't' value is lower than those of the previous sets. The reason is discussed in the next sub-division (4.9).

### 4.8.5 Set five

In set five, Passage A is "Students' Shame" and Passage B is "Is Progress Real?" In A, out of 248 students, no student scored below 40, 32 scored between 41 and 70, and 216 scored above 70. In B, 157 scored between 10 and 40, 75 scored between 41 and 70, and 16 scored above 70. Table 7 shows the statistical analysis of the relative merits of the two passages in terms of students' performance.

#### TABLE 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Computed 't' value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passage A</td>
<td>8.4919</td>
<td>0.9952</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage B</td>
<td>3.9959</td>
<td>2.0858</td>
<td>30.6316</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level of confidence.

The computed 't' value is 30.63, the second greatest of all the six 't' values, and it shows that there is significant difference between the students' performances in A and B.

### 4.8.6 Set six

In set six, Passage A is "Aziz and Aazam" and Passage B is "Dolly at the Dentist's". In A, out of 248 students, 2 scored between 10 and 40, 40 scored between 41 and 70 and 207 scored above 70. In B, 32 scored between 10 and
40, 118 scored between 41 and 70, 98 scored above 70. Table 8 shows the computed 't' value of significance.

### TABLE 8
Set six (Passage A and B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Computed 't' value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passage A</td>
<td>8.2943</td>
<td>1.0692</td>
<td>13.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage B</td>
<td>6.6612</td>
<td>1.6307</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level of confidence

The computed 't' value is 13.18 which is greater than the table value (1.96) at 5% level. It shows that the students' performance in A has validated their better comprehension of it.

#### 4.8.7 All sets together

Table 9 shows the computed 't' value of significance when the data of all the six sets together are statistically analyzed.

### TABLE 9
All sets - One to Six (Passage A and B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Computed 't' value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passage A</td>
<td>8.3172</td>
<td>1.5468</td>
<td>47.0771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage B</td>
<td>4.5853</td>
<td>2.6377</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant at 0.05 level of confidence

The overall computed 't' value, 47.07 guides us to infer that the students have registered a better performance in the alternative materials.
### 4.8.8 Scoring Percentage

Table 10 shows the students’ scoring of marks in A and B in each set and also the overall percentage of marks distribution in three different categories, namely, 10 to 40, 41 to 70, and 71 and above.

#### TABLE 10

| Set No | Passage A | | Passage B | | | | |
|--------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|        | Marks 0-40 | Marks 41-70 | Marks 71-100 | Marks 0-40 | Marks 41-70 | Marks 71-100 | |
| 1      | 6 | 39 | 203 | 194 | 49 | 5 | |
| 2      | 16 | 38 | 194 | 92 | 132 | 24 | |
| 3      | 9 | 39 | 200 | 77 | 57 | 14 | |
| 4      | 12 | 49 | 187 | 122 | 119 | 7 | |
| 5      | - | 32 | 216 | 157 | 75 | 16 | |
| 6      | 2 | 40 | 206 | 32 | 118 | 98 | |
| Total No Test Papers 1488 | 45 | 237 | 1206 | 774 | 550 | 164 | |
|        | (3.02%) | (15.92%) | (81.04%) | (52.01%) | (36.96%) | (11.02%) | |

In A, a small number of 45, that is, 3% students scored below 40 whereas the number of students in B in this category stands at 774, that is, 52% In A, an impressive number of 1206 students, that is, 81% scored above 70 whereas only 164, that is, 11% scored above 70 in B It is to be noted that 98 students scored above 70 in B of set six alone and this has boosted the percentage Otherwise the percentage would have been poorer.
4.9 Discussion of the major findings

"The Indian Cinema" as an alternative material in the first set has appealed most to the students since their performance in the comprehension test is the best with the 't' value of significance at 37.64. The passage discusses what the students are already familiar with. They are culturally and socially bound with the details described in the passage. Nearly 97% of the students out of 248 liked and understood this passage better. Some of the reasons expressed and shared by most of them are given below in the students' words:

a) "It makes us know what other people think and their opinion towards the Indian Cinema and culture."

b) "It was about my own country's cinema and I had experienced it. But Hollywood, which I had not even familiar of its plus and minus points, felt somewhat strange to understand it."

c) "To read about a known topic is better than to explore about an unknown topic and the one which does not suit the Indian's way of thinking and reasoning."

d) "It is about our own country, our people whom we know better. "We live in India and we know our film industry better", "it is interesting and we know about it in our day-to-day life."

e) "Since we are nothing know about the Hollywood, so we have no any knowledge to write about the hollywood artists, films. But we know more about the Indian films."

"Rice Pudding in Ghee" in the second set was more easily comprehensible than Mrs Adis. The title itself extends a cordial and instantaneous invitation to the students' attention. There is no hardship for the student in the second language classroom in India to become absorbed in the description at the very first reading of the materials. Nearly 91% of the students had indicated their
preference for this passage. Some of the reasons, shared and expressed by them, are as follows

a) "the background of the family is according to an Indian family and the feelings of the man in that passage was easily understandable"
b) "the passage speaking about the life and an incident took place in his life who was my own country and has customs of my own. The second one [Mrs Adis] speaking about the place unknown to me"
c) "it shows the real life that a man or a woman should face", "it is quite simple and realistic", "the language is agree our today life"
d) "it seems to be practical and more interesting than Peter Crouch's theft and murder"
e) "it shows the definite and the happening which have been happen in the middle-class family"

"Dowry Deaths Our National Shame" in the third set proved to be more interesting. The students' effortless grasp of this social problem in India helped the students to bring into play their emotional stirrings about the various dimensions of the dowry problem generated by the material. The passage will easily initiate a lively interaction in the classroom between the text and the student. The Indian students are far away from the concept of the Angel in "Professions for Women", and get irritated and bored to continue their interest in it since the wings of their initial enthusiasm are clipped and the clipping results in a kind of apathy toward the material. A student has remarked in the answer sheet "I am very much know about dowry, I cannot understand about the ANGEL in Passage 2 ["Professions for Women"] Another has said "I got fed up with this type of passage from childhood."

The students had abundantly responded to the two subjective questions and, due to the constraint of space, a few of their opinions for liking the first
passage better are given here in their own words

a) "it makes easier to express our views", "it is very interesting and easily understandable", "it gives a picture of the reality"

b) "it explains a practical problem which is predominantly prevailing in India", "it deals with the social problem (dowry system), we experience practically"

c) "it is really useful to us It discusses problems faced by us also", "very important to our society"

d) "it is informative", "it is very touching and I myself realized this in our family"

e) "because of dowry deaths is a national shame and spread among muslims, christians, sikhs and lower-class Hindus as well"

"The Pied Piper of Delhi" was a better passage for comprehension according to 72% of the students Nearly 24% of them liked both the passages Students who had schooling in Matriculation system had indicated that they had already studied "Leonardo Da Vinci" in their tenth standard They were already familiar with the material Some others had noted that they had already heard about Da Vinci in history and science books So, the name was not altogether strange to them Some of the reasons given by the students for liking and understanding "The Pied Piper of Delhi" better are given below in their own words

a) "it looks as if it is a real story of a cartoonist", "easy and understandable, humorous tool"

b) "I am an Indian So, the work done by an Indian, attracted me very much"

c) "it is about a great personality in India And shows how he came up when he faced failures"
d) "it belongs to Indian history but the second passage ["Leonardo Da Vinci"] is refers to a man I would not known him"

e) "the subject is quite interesting with our national leaders The history of man, how to win in society by standing as a single man"

Students had fared well in "Students' Shame" in the fifth set The reason is obvious Though roughly sixty years old, it has contemporary relevance and is now one of the serious problems among the students It also disturbs our social and cultural fabric in society in general outside of the campus life Though it aims at moralizing the student community, it drives home the message in such an interesting way that the students of India today are likely to be provoked into thinking about themselves since what Gandhi discusses is socially and culturally relevant and contemporarily concerned with them

Despite the claim of the editor that it is "a topic of immense contemporary interest", "Is Progress Real?" discusses something too abstract and remote from students' interest Even the authors' nice argument is helpless to break open the channels of the students' sensibilities and prod them into getting closer to the ideas discussed It is evident from the students' performance in the comprehension test and also from the following opinions in their words

a) "it is the passage about the present day and the thing which we are in So we have easily understood the first passage ["Students' Shame"]"

b) "it deals with the day to day problems faced by this generation's women", "it is useful for the modern boys", "it gives the real meaning of progress"

c) "the first passage deals with some ideas which we face practically, whereas the second ["Is Progress Real?"] talks about
civilization of past, present which we don't find interesting than the first one"

d) "it shows the life of our modern world and the behaviour of boy's and girl's in the society, which is must for our life"

e) "that is concerning with something practical and we want to know it is concerning with ourselves"

"Aziz and Aazam" in the sixth set, is invested with Indian cultural, religious, social and political overtones whereas "Dolly at the Dentist's" is comparatively free from all these Yet, the students have showed a slightly better performance in the former A piece of drama encapsulating a slice of life with which the students are familiar and empathically bound will not only enable him to evince keen interest in that life situation—be that political, social, religious, or moral—on account of his collective unconsciousness shared by one and all in the community of which the students are members but also promote the learning process quicker and faster since the way of thinking and behaving of a particular character in the drama like "Tughlaq" share the same collective unconsciousness And this collective unconsciousness has helped the second language learners to comprehend the passage "Aziz and Aazam" better Here are some of the opinions in their own words

a) "The political state of India is well known to Indians now, but I didn't think it so even before This was more interesting"

b) "it deals with the good and bad of politics in India"

c) "it is fitted for the today's present politics also"

d) "well known characters"

e) "Indians itself tried to exploit their own brothers This kind of passages can bring some kind of pathetic and patriotic feelings in the Indians by creating unity in diversity"
4.10 CONCLUSION

When the second language learner gets disappointed and discouraged at the very first glance of the materials, it is practically difficult in a limited allotted time to motivate the student and familiarize him with the materials for improving conditions of teaching/learning language skills. The students are not able to bring their knowledge to the text, and the text, in turn, does not lend itself to invite their willing participation. So, interest in the reading material will certainly lead to interest in the linguistic aspects of the language under the guidance of a teacher of English. The first impression is the best impression. The analysis of the students' responses to a formal test establishes the fact that passages which are culturally less difficult and more immediately appealing to the students contribute more readily to the development of reading skills at the factual, inferential, and evaluative levels.