CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
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1.1. General

Language is a versatile endowment to human beings whether they are beggars or bankers or savage or civilized. Without language human civilization would have remained an impossibility. It is present everywhere—in our thoughts and dreams, prayer and meditation, relations and communications, ceremonies and rituals etc. Besides being a means of communication, and a storehouse of enlightenment, it is an instrument of thinking as well as source of delight. Since it is the most powerful, convenient and permanent means and form of communication, all sections of the people have to use it for carrying out many of their social activities and other functions as effectively as possible.

1.1.2. Linguistic skills

Language skills include listening skill, speaking skill, reading skill and writing skill. The former two skills are known as oracy and the latter two are known as literacy. Both oracy and literacy form linguacy. Among these four skills, two skills viz., listening and reading are used as the channels of receiving information. Thus, these two skills are called as receptive skills. The remaining two skills viz., speaking and writing are used as channels of sending information. Thus these two skills are labeled as
productive skills. To carry out the communication both productive skill and receptive skill are imperative. Absence of either of the skills will effect the process of communication. That is the reason why either in oracy or in literacy both the skills (productive and receptive) are present. One can communicate through either oracy (spoken language) or literacy (written language). Each code has its own merits and demerits. A code can be used only in certain domains and environments, where another code cannot be used. And there are some domains in which both the codes can be used. However, the literacy is not an alternative code of oracy rather it is an additional code of language. A developed language should however posses these two codes. A language speaker has to acquire those two codes for equipping himself to be fit for carrying out the daily and routine activities in the modern world.

1.1.3. Language learning and Acquisition

Among the language skills the first skill a child acquires in his or her mother tongue is the ability to understand the spoken words i.e., the skill of listening. Then he/she tries to reproduce the sound sequences heard from others to express his/her desires, aspirations and needs, and thereby acquire the skills of speaking. Similarly reading and writing skills are also acquired one after another.
The oracy skills of a language are generally acquired in an informal way in the social setting in which it is used (socialization). This is because the children are placed in a position which obligatorily requires a mode of communication for many reasons, to acquire the oracy. That is, the demand of communication channel compels them to acquire oracy. In some contexts, especially in the case of second language, oracy is learned or taught through the structured means. But the skills of literacy (whether mother tongue literacy or other tongue literacy) are being learned or taught through the formal system. Generally man learns four linguistic skills of his mother tongue one after another and also simultaneously to a certain extent. Literacy cannot be acquired through other than the structured means whereas oracy can be acquired either informally or formally.

1.1.4. Illiterates

In the present day context, there are people who acquire all the four linguistic skills. There are also people who acquire only some of the (two) skills.

This shows that some speakers acquire both oracy and literacy while some others acquire only oracy. In the case of second language one may acquire literacy alone even without acquiring the oracy first.
1.1.5. Types of illiterates

A person is called as a literate when he acquires literacy in his language or the other. Literates are of different types: Monoliterate: a person who is able to read and write in a language. Poly-literate or multiliterate: a person who knows to read and write in more than two languages. Biliterate: a person who knows to read and write in two languages. Semiliterate: a person who knows only to read and not to write in a language. Neoliterate: a person who has acquired the literacy a little bit and only very recently. Future literate: a person who is about to enter into the literacy learning process or a person who is in the threshold of literacy.

1.1.6. Adult Education

As mentioned earlier all people of the world intentionally or unintentionally acquire the spoken variety of their language for carrying out many of their social activities. Literacy is imparted to all people in terms of different modes. Formal education system takes care of children by imparting them literacy, besides educating them. But there are some people who have not been provided with the opportunity to get literacy through their mother tongue. To facilitate them or to cater to the needs of such illiterates various efforts are being taken now by different agencies.
To the adult illiterates who are in the age group of 15-35, literacy is being imparted (along with some other components viz., awareness, functionality, etc.,) through the non-formal system in the adults education programmes. One of the main objectives of the adult education programmes is to impart 3R skills (Reading, writing and arithmetic) to the adults of the 15-35 age group. In Tamil Nadu, literacy is imparted to the adult illiterates through the Adult Education Programme of different sorts namely, (i) Area based approach, (ii) Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP), (iii) Mass Functional Literacy Programme (MFLP), (iv) Total Literacy campaign (TLC). These diversified efforts have approached the causes of eradication of illiteracy in Tamil Nadu by using different strategies. The main reason for implementing those programmes for annihilating the illiteracy is that a large quantum of illiteracy was found to exist*.

In spite of the efforts taken so far the percentage of illiteracy continues to be high. In order to identify the underlying reasons for the failure of different programmes of adult education and to locate the bottlenecks

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* In India 118.13 million people have become literate and 22.10 million are illiterate. Of the latter, 5.78 million are males and 16.32 million are females. In Tamil Nadu the total literacy rate is 53.72% - 74.66% for male and 52.23% for female. (Source: 1981 Census Literacy Report : Govt. of India)
the programmes have experienced in their endeavors for achieving cent per cent literacy in Tamil Nadu, an objective type of research becomes a must. This idea has motivated the present researcher to study the above phenomenon from the viewpoint of linguistics. Thus the present study attempts to analyse the language learning/teaching process and the problems experienced by the adult learners, reflected through the adult education programmes of Tamil Nadu, especially in the Coimbatore district from the perspective of Educational Linguistics.

1.1.7. Work done so far in this area: a review

The researches that have been accomplished so far in this domain are not adequate and well formalised in several respects, and are also sporadic in nature. Many works on adult education in the Indian context are in the form of status studying, assessing the situation and describing the aims, methods, structure, history and development of adult education Programme. There are works carried out by Gadgil (1945), Khan (1958), Singh (1957) Ansari (1969) and others which are available. The problems of shaping the aspiration of adults or motivation have been explored by scholars like Abdul Rashid (1966), Talsale and Buch (1979) and Kundu (1984). Taldar (1975) has studied the problems related to organizational difficulties, dearth of teachers and so on.
Nowadays it is felt that the knowledge of linguistics will be quite useful to impart literacy. Realising this, many linguists like Baucon (1975), Goodman (1978) and Chafa (1985) have studied the different dimensions of literacy. Daswani (1986), Annamalai (1988), Thirumalai (1988), Karunakaran (1988) and others have explored some of the aspects of literacy programmes undertaken in India. Moreover, it is to be mentioned here that no serious attempt has been made so far on the process of imparting literacy by the adults of Tamil Nadu. Therefore, this study, as a pioneering attempt tries to analyse the process of Tamil literacy learning through the adult education programmes.

1.2. Aim of the study

The research study that has been undertaken here aims at assessing and analysing the strategies followed in imparting literacy and the problems of Tamil adult learners in the adult education programmes implemented by applying the methodology of educational linguistics.

1.3. Significance of the study

In the present state of affairs of literacy, it is found that even the adult literates who have successfully completed the literacy course do not seem to have acquired the literacy skills effectively. The quantum of literacy
acquired by them is highly deplorable. It is often seen that they are unable to write or read even some Tamil letters correctly. It has been observed by the researcher that the animators who impart literacy to the adults adopt more or less the same method in imparting literacy in the formal educational system. Hence, there is a necessity to revamp the whole system of teaching literacy in adult education programmes, so that the adult learners will be able to obtain at least a basic working knowledge through literacy or get functional literacy. This need and gap motivated the researcher to undertake a research of this type.

1.4. Use of the study

The present study is undertaken in order to find out the reasons as to how and why the adult learners fail to develop the skills of reading and writing. Thus the identification of the reasons for the occurrence of learning problems will be quite useful for adult educators to make necessary changes and to give reinforcement with reference to the principles, strategies etc., followed now.

This study aims at explaining the merits and demerits of the existing methods and materials meant for literacy. Thus it will be very helpful for giving necessary guidelines for the material producers of adult education.
In the process of language teaching especially literacy teaching, error analysis finds a vital place. Error analysis helps in obtaining information on common difficulties faced by the learners, in their learning process. Such informations will enable the material producer to plan the lessons so as to avoid or overcome those difficulties.

By understanding the demerits of teaching methods which are being adopted in the present day adult education programmes, it would be possible to device certain teaching strategies/methods to be followed by the animators in future.

This study will have social relevance, besides the educational value. The findings of this study will by and large help the adult educators who have not explored this problem from the linguistic point of view to liquidate completely the illiteracy in a sense, this study is quite relevant to the society and its development.

1.5. Objectives of the study

The present study has the following objectives:

a. to present a brief outline on the general language teaching methods and theories.
b. to assess the various language learning/teaching methods used in the adult education programmes of Tamil Nadu in general and that of Coimbatore district in particular.

c. to identify the learning problems in the skills viz., writing, reading and numeracy encountered by the Tamil adult learners.

d. to identify the learning problems and their indicators 'errors' in 3Rs viz., reading, writing and arithmetic.

e. to evaluate the literacy and numeracy competence of adult learners and

f. to suggest remedial measures/strategies for overcoming the learning problems faced by the adult learners in terms of the guidelines given to material producer and trainer and principles meant for the planners of adult education.

1.6. Methodology

The present study is totally of field oriented one. The researcher has selected a few methods and applied them in this study. The primary data for the present study have been elicited through the field work conducted with the adult learners who were studying under the adult education Programme implemented in the Coimbatore district. A special questionnaire for this task has been prepared and the same
administered to some selected learners. The test questionnaire has been classified into four major divisions. Division one is meant for drawing personal information about the learner, Division two is meant for testing the reading competence of adult learners, section three is meant for evaluating the writing competence of adult learners and the fourth division is meant for assessing the numerical skills including calculation.

1.6.1. Methods of data collection

Different methods were adopted for eliciting the data required for the present study. Data for the present study were collected both from learners and animators by employing some methods.

1.6.1.1. Questionnaire method

The questionnaire mentioned above has been administered to hundred adult learners. The first column was filled up by the researcher after obtaining information from the learners. The second section meant for testing the reading skill was given to the adult learners for reading. The third section which consists of questions to test the writing skill of the learners was given to the learners to write on their own. Eventually the last section was also given to adult learners to write the numerals on their own.
However, for reading and writing exercises assistance was rendered to the learners by the animators and the researcher.

1.6.1.2. Observation method

Interaction between animators and students inside and outside the centre was observed by the researcher in order to identify the problems they face in the teaching and learning process respectively. Apart from this, the animators were asked some questions for obtaining information regarding the following:
(i) the method of teaching literacy, numeracy and creation of components. (ii) the general experience of hardship in teaching those components and (iii) the defects they have identified in the teaching/learning materials and in the training components.

Similarly the learners performance in literacy and numeracy skills have also been observed informally and the researcher himself evaluated the teaching learning materials by scanning them and by attending personally in the actual training session for adult educators and in the classrooms of adult education centers.

1.6.2. Instruments/tools used

Apart from the questionnaire, a tape recorder
was also used to record the reading process of adult learners during the administration of questionnaire and during the interview conducted with animators and informal chat with the adult learners. This in turn helped the researcher to get fairly good amount of data and to check the authenticity of the data.

1.6.3. Method of Analysis

The method of analysis followed in this study was in three levels, namely, analysis of teaching methods obtained from the animator and secondary sources and analysis of the learners data. Findings of the former data have been presented in terms of discussion and suggestions. The findings of the analysis of the learners data have been classified into three divisions viz., reading problems, writing problems and numerical problems. Each of this division has been further classified into different units, such as sound level problem (error), grapheme level problem (error), word level problem (error), phrase level problem (error), sentence level problem (error), discourse level problem (error) etc.

1.6.4. Presentation of the study

The study made through the present research has been presented in the chapters as given below.
CHAPTER - I : INTRODUCTION

The introductory chapter presents the relevant background aspects. Information regarding the aim, objective, data, methodology of the present study are presented. Data processing and analysis of the data presentation followed in this study, significance of the study, etc. are also presented in detail in this chapter.

CHAPTER-II : LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS: GENERAL

The second chapter points out the concepts on the terms like learning and education. It also presents the significant learning theories, learning environments, factors responsible for effective learning, learning various skills, language learning, etc. It also presents various types of education, difference between learning Vs. acquisition, various kinds of language teaching-learning methods to different target groups, etc.

CHAPTER-III : LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS IN ADULT EDUCATION

The third chapter discusses the concepts of non-formal education, andragogy, adult learning theory and conditions of adult learning. This also speaks about the origin and history of adult education programmes, their
objective, different aspects of literacy, different methods of literacy teaching, etc. The end part of this chapter evaluates the Literacy Teaching Methods adopted in adult education programmes of present study area.

CHAPTER - IV : READING SKILLS

The fourth chapter traces the significance of the reading skill to adult, the reading problems of adult learners while learning and manifesting the reading skill acquired through the adult education programmes. Different kinds of reading errors identified in all the levels of language are presented in this chapter with reasons and suitable remedial measures.

CHAPTER - V : WRITING SKILL

The fifth chapter brings out the importance of writing to adult, writing problems and writing errors of adult learners that are found in all the levels of language. The causes for such errors are described in detail with some remedial measures and suggestions. A statistical quantification of the writing skill of adult learners is also presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER - VI : NUMERACY SKILL

The sixth chapter discusses concept of Numeracy and its importance to the adults. It also tells various kinds
of error the adult learners commit in realizing the value of numeral, writing the numerals and calculating the numerals. The reasons for such errors and problems are traced out and suggestions for overcoming those problems are also advocated in this chapter.

CHAPTER - VIII : CONCLUSION

The concluding chapter is a total summing-up of the findings of the study. This chapter gives briefly, different types of errors in 3R skills. It also mentions the areas to be explored further on these lines.