CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY
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METHODOLOGY

3.1 OVERVIEW

The research problem and a thorough review of related research were discussed in the preceding chapters. This chapter outlines the methodology of the study. The first section brings out the overview of the chapter. The second section states the problem, objectives, and the hypothesis to be tested. The third section describes the selection of the sample and content materials. The fourth section brings out the design of the study. The fifth one furnishes details on instrumentation. The final one deals with the procedure of data collection and statistical techniques used in data analysis and interpretation of data.

3.2 Development of Task based communicative activities to develop writing skills in English

The major objective of the study is to prepare task based communicative writing activities for the teacher trainees at the Elementary level. In developing the task based communicative activities, the investigator kept in mind the components of the writing skills. For the effective writing communication, the mastery over the different kinds of writing were felt necessary. To assess the achievement of the writer in each kind of writing, the components of writing skill such as communicative quality,
organization, relevance, linguistic accuracy and linguistic appropriacy are essential. The effectiveness of writing is largely depending on the right use of the various components by the learners. The main goal of all kinds of writing is communication.

All writers have an aim, a purpose, which they want to accomplish. All writing has one of these fine basic aims or some combination of them such as to describing, narrating to arguing, to persuading, explaining and reflecting. The purpose of each type of writing attains perfection by the right use of the respective components.

The right knowledge of the components depends upon the proficiency of the learners in grammar, vocabulary, mechanics and form. For written communication, the language aspects such as fluency of writing, accuracy in writing, using new vocabulary, paragraphing, inductions and conclusions, organising the ideas and using the correct style are to be mastered. The effectiveness of writing skills depends once again on the right use of these language aspects in the process of writing by the students. Grammar is concerned with the correct use of language. Knowledge of grammar is essential for the students to write paragraphs without any mistakes. The students must be trained to write without making any error in grammar or word order. Then only they could convey their ideas clearly. Effective use of right vocabulary is an essential input in developing writing skill. The use of words should aim at the use of
language to express one's ideas and wishes for all practical purposes. The use of punctuation and spelling has been termed as mechanics. In writing, punctuation marks are the signals that help the reader the same way that pauses and changes in voice help the listener. Form refers to organization. When there is no organization, connectivity will not be there in the written passage. Because of lack of organization, communication is seriously impaired. Hence for an effective communication, the writer should take care of organization.

Language is not inherited but learnt. It is generally believed that the secret of all language learning is through practice because language is a skill subject. The students should gain great amount of practice in every English classroom. Although writing skill is an indispensable part in the English language learning process, the skills of writing remains a daunting one for many students. They generally do not perform well up to the expected standard. An obvious reason for this failure is due to the teaching strategies adopted by the teachers in teaching writing skills. The stereotype pattern of teaching tends to be demotivating and unproductive. So it is necessary to provide good writing classroom environments to the learners, adopting innovative pedagogical strategies. In this context, it is right to think of using task based communicative activities to develop the writing skills of the student teachers at the Elementary level.
As the present study is aimed at using task based communicative activities to develop writing skill, the investigator developed task based communication activities keeping in mind the written function in English. The task based communicative activities were keenly edited with reference to accuracy and relevance of the material, style, vocabulary, density of presenting the language functions and content interest. This scanning was very useful to eliminate ambiguities and inadequacies. It also helped to improve the logical sequence of presentation and also to improve the technical accuracy of the content presented. For editing the task based communicative activities, the services of English language subject experts were utilised.

3.3 Validity and Reliability of the Task based communicative activities to develop writing skills in English

Once the editing was over the task based communicative activities were ready for try out. This was essential for validation and refinement of the task based activities so as to make them relevant to the target population. The task based activities were subjected to the group try-outs.

The group contained ten student teacher trainees. The investigator herself being the language teacher taught the different kinds of writing to the student teacher trainees for group try-out. A pre-test was conducted to assess the
achievement of students before teaching language functions. After a period of fifteen days, the achievement of the students in the pre-test and post-test items was calculated. The reactions of the students during the try-out were also noted down. On the basis of the analysis of the try-out, required correction, modifications, refinements were made wherever necessary in the task based activities. The group try-out ensured better refinement and task based activities were used. The agreement of the views of language experts who reviewed the task based activities was taken as the index of the content validity. The analysis of the result of the group try-out regarding the task based activities used in this study was reliable and valid to develop communication skills of student teacher trainees in English. The task based communicative activities used for developing the major kinds of writing are given in Appendix – A.

3.4 Construction of Research Tools

This section deals with the development of tools of research employed in the study. The investigator after thorough discussion with her research guide and a panel of experts in the field of educational research and ELT specialists decided to study the effectiveness of task based communicative activities in developing the writing skills of the D.T.Ed. students’ in English with regard to the five kinds of writing namely, Narrative, Expository,
Argumentative, Descriptive and Reflective and its components. Thus a tool in the form of achievement test was prepared. It was descriptive in nature. It aimed to study the knowledge level of the D.T.Ed. students' in five major kinds of writing and its components in English Language Education.

The draft tool thus prepared is given in Appendix-2.

3.5 Establishing Validity

3.5.1 Theoretical Validity

After going through a wide range of studies related to developing writing skills in English, the investigator finds that it is a comprehensive ability involving grammar, vocabulary, mechanics and other elements. The investigator made use of the studies related to developing writing skills and prepared the draft tool with five kinds of writing along with its components. Therefore it may be stated that the tool is built on a valid theoretical base.

3.5.2 Content Validity

Deobold B. Van Dalen (1979) states that the investigator analyses the content of the area and structures a representative instrument to measure the various aspects of that content in order to establish content validity. According to C.R. Kothari (1985) content validity is the extent to which a measuring instrument provides adequate
coverage of the topic under study. The following panel of experts analyzed the draft tool and identified that the items were relevant to develop the skill of writing in English.

1. Dr. S. Mohan,
2. C. Bright
3. Mr. Y. Arul Raj
4. Mrs. Vijayakanthi, ELT Specialist

3.6 ADMINISTRATION OF TEST FOR TRYOUT

The investigator constructed 20 descriptive type items to test the five kinds of writing in English. After a preliminary scrutiny 20 items were retained for the try out. The try out test was administered to a random sample representative of 75 D.T.Ed students, representing boys and girls.

The objective of the tryout is to refine the tests by finding out the most suitable items to be included in the final test. Item analysis is done usually to determine two characteristics of an item. One is difficulty index and the other is discrimination index. Here the investigator applied only the discrimination index.

Index of discrimination which is based on an analysis of the proportion of persons in contrasting the criterion groups who pass each item. It measures discrimination between two groups (i.e., good and poor students). In this study Gronlund's (1976) procedure is followed to find out
the discrimination index of each item. The investigator personally scored all the papers. The scoring was done without the use of any formulae for correction for chance.

After administration of the test and its scoring, the investigator took the answer scripts, arranged them in a descending order placing the answer scripts with highest score at the top and the lowest score answer script at the bottom.

Upper 27% of the sample formed the 'upper group' and the lower 27% consisting of 20 answer sheets formed the lower group. Thus 27% of the 75 students making the highest scores constituted the superior group and 27% making the lowest scores comprised the inferior group. Only these two top and bottom piles were taken into consideration for computing the discrimination value of the items.

The discrimination index of each item was found by finding out the ratio of the difference between the upper and lower. It was calculated by using the following formula.

\[
D.I = \frac{RU - RL}{\frac{1}{2} T} \times 100
\]

D.I = Discrimination Index
RU = Right answers in the upper group
Discrimination indices were calculated for each item.

The investigator took into consideration the discrimination value of each item and screened all the 20 items, and 10 items were retained for the final test on the basis of higher values of discrimination indices 0.2 and above.

The investigator thus prepared two research tools and established validity and reliability of the test items.

### 3.7 POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

A population is the totality of all possible values of a particular characteristic for a specific group of objects and a sample is part of a population selected according to some rule or plan.

As the researcher is a teacher educator, teaching English language education to the student teachers in District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) in Kanyakumari District, the population for the present study consisted of all those student teachers studying in the institution in the academic year 2005-2006. Since the study used two groups of student teachers one for the control group and the other for experimental group, it was not possible to include the entire population for the collection
of data. So it was considered inevitable to draw a representative sample.

The sample was drawn from teacher trainees in I year D.T.Ed course in District Institute of Education and Training, (DIET) Theroor in Kanyakumari District. The sample consisted of 100 teacher trainees representing 50 female teacher trainees and 50 male teacher trainees. The available 100 teacher trainees were assigned to two groups based on the marks scored by them in the achievement test in English conducted prior to the pre-test of the study. Then they were assigned to the experimental and control group by the flip of a coin. Thus a desired sample of 50 teacher trainees consisting of 25 male teacher trainees and 25 female teacher trainees formed a single group.

3.8 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The present study is an experiment. It is based on pre-test and post-test equivalent group design.
### 3.9 SEQUENTIAL STAGES OF THE STUDY

The sequential stages of the study is given under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Sequential Stages of the Study</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Orientation of task based communicative activities to the Experimental group.</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Administration of the pre-test to both the control and Experimental group in Narrative writing</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Treatment through traditional method to the control group and task based communicative activities to the Experimental group in Narrative writing</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><strong>Post-test</strong></td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Administration of the pre-test to the control and Experimental group in Expository writing</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Treatment through traditional method to control group and task based communicative activities to the Experimental group in Expository</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td><strong>Post-test</strong></td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Administration of the pre-test to both the control and Experimental group in Argumentative writing</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Treatment through traditional method to control group and task based communicative activities to the Experimental group in Argumentative writing</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td><strong>Post-test</strong></td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Administration of the pre-test to both the control and experimental group in Descriptive writing</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Treatment through traditional method to the control group and task based communicative activities to the Experimental group in Descriptive writing</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td><strong>Post-test</strong></td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Administration of the pre-test to both the control and Experimental group in Reflective writing</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Treatment through traditional method to the control group and task based communicative activities to the Experimental group in Reflective writing</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td><strong>Post-test</strong></td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.9.1 The sequential phases of operation

The sequential phases of operation of the study are as follows;

Step I: Two different modes of instruction (Traditional and Task Based Communicative Activities) are devised for the content areas.

Step II: A pre-test for each content area is structured and administered to both the groups before intervention.

Step III: Each content area is taught through traditional method to the control group and using Task based communicative Activities to the experimental group.

Step IV: A post-test for each unit was structured and administered to both the groups after intervention.

Step V: Suitable statistical techniques are employed to analyse the data collected.

3.10 Data Collection

After the administration of try out and finalisation of the research tools they were administered to both the groups of the sample population. The tools were administered with the previous permission from the head of the institution. The investigator administered the tools personally. It took nearly three hours to answer all the items in the test of five different kinds of writing. Since the investigator administered the tool personally all the
subjects had responded properly. The responses were scored and the data were organized in tabular form for analysis.

3.11 Scoring procedure

The achievement test to assess the writing skill of the student teachers in English consisted of five different kinds of writing which were descriptive in nature. For each descriptive type question marks were awarded according to their ability level in using the component in writing. The marks allotted for each component ranged from 1-5 . The highest score was 5 for a single component and the lowest was 1. The scores indicated the ability level of the writer in each component on particular and each kind of writing in general. The total marks for the achievement test in each different kind of writing is 25 . The investigator assessed the writing skill of the student teachers individually before starting the experiment and after the experiment. The scoring procedure for each component has been devised based on the information given in the book entitled Testing for Language Teachers, written by Arthur Hughes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Communicative Quality</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>Linguistic Accuracy</th>
<th>Linguistic Appropriacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The writing displays no ability to communicate</td>
<td>No organizational structure or message is recognizable</td>
<td>A meaning comes through occasionally but it is not relevant.</td>
<td>The reader sees no evidence of control of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar</td>
<td>There is no sense of linguistic appropriacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The writing displays a limited ability to communicate which puts strain on the reader throughout</td>
<td>The writing lacks a clear organizational structure and the message is difficult to follow.</td>
<td>Some elements of information are present but the reader is not provided with an argument, or the argument is mainly irrelevant.</td>
<td>The reader finds the control of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar inadequate</td>
<td>There is inability to manipulate the linguistic systems appropriately which causes severe strain for the reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The writing displays an ability to communicate although there is occasional strain for the reader</td>
<td>The writing is organized well enough for the message to be followed through out</td>
<td>Arguments are presented but it may be difficult for the reader to distinguish main ideas from supported materials; main ideas may not be supported; their relevance may be dubious; arguments may not be related to the writer's experience or views</td>
<td>The reader is aware of errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar, but these occasionally</td>
<td>There is limited ability to manipulate the linguistic systems appropriately but this intrudes only occasionally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The writing displays an ability to communicate with few difficulties for the reader</td>
<td>The writing displays good organizational structure which enables the message to be followed with out such effort</td>
<td>Arguments are well presented with relevant supporting material and an attempt to relate them to the writer's experience or view</td>
<td>The reader is aware of but not troubled by occasional minor errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar</td>
<td>There is an ability to manipulate the linguistic system appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The writing displays an ability to communicate in a way which gives the reader full satisfaction</td>
<td>The writing displays a completely logical organizational structure which enables the message to be followed effortlessly</td>
<td>Relevant arguments are presented in an interesting way with main ideas prominently and clearly stated, with completely effective supporting material, arguments are effectively related to the writer's experience or views</td>
<td>The reader sees no errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or grammar</td>
<td>There is an ability to manipulate the linguistic systems with complete appropriacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.12 PROPOSED STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

Statistical techniques used for analysing the data are:

1) 't' test to find out the significance of difference between the means of achievement of the pre-test and post-test between control and experimental groups.

2) Graphical representation to show the comparison of the variables with one another.

The details of analysis and interpretation are presented in Chapter IV.