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CHAPTER – III
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology to be Adopted for Developing Communicative Skills in English

The methodology to be followed for getting the goal of acquiring the skill to speak English language, was to be designed after a thorough investigation of the difficulties and obstacles on the way to the goal and the inevitability of certain basic tools to ram those difficulties. The methodology followed in the present system was analysed under different heads such as development of conversations, the construction of research tools to assess the skill of the students, the employment of such tools for tests, sampling techniques and techniques for analysing the data obtained.

The Conversations as Learning Material

For the development of speaking and writing skills among students, it was essential to develop the conversational pieces as learning material. It was essential to teach the students both spoken and written communicative skills. This system had a tremendous influence on the students at the collegiate level.

3.2 Elements of Spoken Language

The spoken language includes certain basic elements. They are various tones, accent, grammar, comprehension and fluency. These five elements
make the verbal communication more effective and successful. Whenever a speech lacks these elements, it is said to be defective or improper. The result is improper communication, which leads to misunderstanding or no understanding at all. So, the above-mentioned five components of speaking skills are essential for effective, successful and proper communication. This will ensure effective and easier way of communication on the part of the students. In conversation the features like accent, rhythm, intonation, articulation of sounds and accentuation of words are very important and so they are taught to the students with particular stress to them.

Intonation also makes a student understand the different meanings conveyed by sentences. The language distinctions are signalled by the intonation. Because the intonation distinguishes between a declarative statement and an interrogative sentence. Intonations are of many patterns. Of them two are very common. They are ‘falling tone’ and ‘rising tone’. Generally, the falling tone denotes a certainty, whereas a rising tone marks a question or a request. The falling tone is found when a statement is made. Apart from statement even in exclamatory sentences, the falling tone is used. For making a command, falling intonation may be used. Similarly, falling tone is found in strong exclamatory sentences also. Apart from request and interrogatives, polite denials, greetings, invitations etc., are found in rising tone.

The Indian English is hampered by differences in word accent. There are differences between the ways, a native speaks English and the way an Indian
speaks. Word stress or accent is found in an agreement among the native speaker. But, a variety of ways of stress and accent are found among Indians of different regions. Learning the correct word accentuation and word stress is very much necessary for the students of India. Stress is the force found in pronouncing a syllable. Some words are with single stress and long words have two stressed syllables. The primary stress and the secondary stress are used.

Grammar is the set of rules of language, which governs sounds, words, sentences and their combinations. Grammar saves our effort in language learning. It gives us a framework and a yardstick to correct mistakes and also to prevent their occurrences. Thus it safeguards or rectifies the language from all possible errors. It is helpful to monitor the performance of a person. So it is accepted by everyone that grammar is an essential part of language learning.

Another aspect of the spoken English is comprehension. Generally we find different vocabulary used in written language and Conversational English. The words used in conversation are more common and familiar to all. In conversation hearing, listening and, understanding are not the same. It is easy to hear but listening is different from this. Listening is also possible, while understanding in its fastest extent may not be possible. Listening for understanding the meaning is a skill and it must be developed among the students. The students should be enabled to listen to the conversations between native speakers. When the students listen to conversations of natives they are able to locate particular facts, important facts, sequence of facts, keywords,
phrases, and sentences and the central idea of the conversation. The students make an analysis of the communication and they are able to draw generalisation, inference and conclusion, which result in interpretation of difficult statement and abstract ideas.

Fluency is the ability of a person to speak smoothly and readily on all occasions on professional and general topics without much effort. He is like a native speaker when he indulges in conversation. If he is lacking in fluency his speech is halting, fragmentary, slow and uneven. His speech needs much effort.

3.3 Elements of Written Communicative Skills in English

The elements of written communicative skills in English are Grammar, Vocabulary, linguistic Accuracy, Form and Relevance. All these five elements make the written communication effective and perfect. These elements are essential for the correct use of language. The first element, namely the Grammar is the set of rules of languages and it governs sounds, words, sentences and their combinations. It lays the rails on which the sentences move. The student must be taught English grammar and all its elements. It is the first prerequisite in acquiring written communicative skill. With a sound knowledge in grammar the student can write well and convey his ideas in flawless English.

The vocabulary refers to word power. English is known for its richness of vocabulary. Familiarity with more number of words enables the students to
express their ideas freely without much difficulty. But the use of words differ from region to region. Certain words are popular in the urban areas, while such words do not find a place in rural areas. So choice of the words depends on the need of a person and the region of his dwelling.

The punctuation and spelling are essential for writing the language correctly and with accuracy. A learner must take care when he uses spellings of a word. Learning to spell needs carefulness. The students must be very careful when they use homophones and homonyms. Punctuation marks are guiding the readers to read the same way as the writer intended them to do. The punctuation marks are the signals, which guide the reader. Without punctuation marks sentences will not be sensible. They will be confusing, contradictory and jumbled.

Form denotes the arrangement of ideas. It also refers to the arrangement of words in a sentence and the arrangement of sentences in a write-up. A good write-up reveals the proper arrangement of ideas in the mind of a person. The thoughts are linked with one another in a progressive way. When the ideas are not organised properly the write-up will be confusing, lacking in message and effectiveness of communication. So form is an essential element for effective communication.

One should use the ideas relevant to the purpose of writing. Ideas unnecessarily included will hamper the communication. Similarly the readers for whom it is written must be taken into account, while preparing a written
communication. Irrelevance of any idea will reduce the effectiveness of the communication.

The method of teaching prevalent in India in general and in Tamilnadu in particular is lecturing. More often it is a translation of the text into Tamil from English. Sometimes the direct method is attempted using Audio-visual Aids. The method differs from place to place depending on the nature of the institution and the infra-structural facility of the institution. But, mostly the schools feeding the candidates to the colleges are in the rural areas and the students from these schools give the teachers no other alternative but to follow the method of translation. This translation method gives the students some idea about the contents in a lesson. But, the students neither learn to speak nor to write on their own. All that they do is again urging the teachers to give a prepared essay or notes, memorising the same, write in the exam, score marks and get through the examination. When the purpose of examination is considered with, the essays are of no more useful and they are thrown away. This method of translation of lessons or rendering the prose into lectures in Tamil and capsuling them into small essays help the students to pass the examination. But it has failed to make the students learn the language. So it is necessary to adopt newer methods and approaches in teaching English.

The method of conversation makes a prose to get dramatised so that they indelibly make impressions in the minds of the students. When a prose text presents the picture of a situation, conversation makes the students alive to it. They live in that situation and breath the fragrance of the situation portrayed in
that piece. As the conversation is only a dialogue, the teacher finds it easy by proper intonation, stress and modulation of voice, to teach the spoken aspects of the language.

Apart from statements, the interrogations, commands, requests greetings and every other form of speech become familiar to the students. The students may start using the same questions and requests that occur in the conversational texts. The development of prose text into conversational pieces develops communicative skills easily.

The lessons given in a textbook may be from the book of a great reputed author. A student is required to learn it. He has to familiarise with such treasures of great writers. It will enhance his scholarship. But in the presently prevailing situation of the mental make up and failure of the students and background of the students, it is necessary to effect changes in the methodology of teaching English.

The text books should have the prose pieces, the gleanings from reputed works. Every piece should be immediately followed by its conversational rendering. The students must be taught using the conversational rendering. The ability of the teacher, his imagination, his talents in the art of acting adds more attractions to this method. The students pin their mind with the dialogue and it indelibly makes impressions in his mind.

The reason for advocating this method is not only because it captures the attention of the students and makes it easy to get the message across the table,
but also it is useful in his day-to-day life. The conversational piece he learns inside the classroom becomes his English at situations in the outside world. It starts serving him in all his transactions with his fellow beings. The conversational piece he learns in the classroom does not end with the examination of that year, and it goes all along with him all through his life. A student thus learns to converse, to question, to command, to request, to wonder at and thus to live and serve in the society worth the degree he has taken. This method gains advocacy not because it is something new, which can be experimented, but because it is useful and a potent tool in making student acquire every skill in communication.

This methodology also gets proved. The investigator developed eight conversational texts by rendering prose lessons in the conversational form and took two other conversational texts from already published collections, making a total of ten.

The following are the conversations used as tools in the experiment with the students. These ten conversations are based on different language functions.

**The Conversational Texts and Their Functions:**

1. Golden touch – for learning the art of making inverted questions.

2. Fur - for learning to make requests.

4. A Difficult Customer - for making enquiries about one’s remembrances.

5. My Greatest Olympic Prize – for presenting contrast ideas.


7. Conjurer’s Revenge – to learn the exclamatory form of sentences.

8. A day’s wait – for learning the way to ask for opinions.


10. A chat with Mrs.Smile – for making affirmative and negative sentences and using them in conversations.

On the basis of the language function the conversational texts were prepared. They are dialogues in the written form and much care was taken to adhere to the purpose of the particular language function. Exercises were also provided at the end of the conversations so as to gain mastery over various language aspects. The students were given adequate opportunities to make use of the expressions found in the conversational texts. The classroom activities included different exercises like proper way of pronunciation, stress, formation of questions, making requests, responding to enquiries etc.

This method helped the students to master the language functions, develop effective communicative skills and conversational ability. The
conversational texts and exercise were designed with a sense of accuracy and adherence to the purpose of the tools and with the vocabulary much needed for satisfying the requirements of the language functions. These tools contained a proper and logical progression of questions and response to suit the need of the students. Subject experts were used for editing the prepared tools.

Experimentation:

When the tools got ready, experimentation was resorted to. This was aimed at because the effectiveness and validity of the conversational texts were to be assessed and they were to be further sharpened to serve the purpose of the target groups. The students of first year undergraduate students were taken for experimentation. A group try-out was formed with ten students. They were taught language functions. But before commencing the experiment a pre-test was conducted. The performance of the students was recorded. This was followed by classes for twenty days when language functions were taught. At the end of twenty days a post-test was conducted. The performance in the pre-test and the post-test were noted down and compared. An analysis of the try-out was made to know what modifications and refinements were needed in the conversational texts to make them more effective. Following this modifications were made in consultation with the language experts.

The concurring views of the language experts regarding the conversational tools and exercises were taken as the index of validity of the conversational texts. The refined conversational texts were adopted as reliable
and valid tools for the development of communicative skills in the students. These conversational texts are appended to this research work. (Appendix-A)

3.4 Using the Research Tools

Before commencing the experiment to assess the usefulness of the conversational texts and to compare the performance of the control group and the experimental group, the Achievement tests were conducted for the control group at first. This achievement test was two-fold. They were to assess the speaking skill and the writing skill. The same tests were conducted for the experimental group also. The questionnaires are found in the Appendix B.

3.4.1 Achievement Test for Assessing the Speaking Skill

The achievement test aimed at assessing the speaking skill of the students. It assessed intonation, stress, grammar, comprehension and fluency which are the various aspects of spoken language. There were forty questions covering the first four aspects of the language. Ten objective questions were asked to assess each of these four aspects of the language. The fluency aspect was assessed by the students' performance while conversing. Ten marks were awarded for fluency aspect. For improper response zero was given and for each correct response one mark was given. Thus a total of fifty marks had been allotted for assessing the performance of the students. These questionnaires were also scrutinized by language experts and the vague and inappropriate questions were removed and the questionnaires were made effective by making revisions and modifications.
3.4.2. Achievement Test for Assessing the Written Communicative Skill

The Achievement Test for assessing the written communicative skill covered Grammar, Vocabulary, Linguistic Accuracy, Form and Relevance. The question paper contained fifty objective type questions distributing ten questions to each of the five aspects of the written English. The purpose was to assess the students' achievement in various language functions. For correct response one mark was awarded for each question, while wrong answers were given zero. The question paper carried fifty marks in total. The language experts were consulted to avoid vagueness and to make necessary modifications. The question paper was revised by replacing certain item with more appropriate items and thus the question paper was made more effective. It is given along with the key in the Appendix C.

3.4.3. Reliability of the Achievement Test

Reliability denotes the accuracy a tool has in measuring the skills and knowledge. Unless the tool is reliable, its assessment will not be valid. Reliability coefficient provides the most revealing statistical index of validity. The reliability of a test may be assessed by the common methods of Test-Re test reliability, split-half reliability, Alternate or parallel form test reliability and Kuder-Richardson Estimates. The split-half method was used to estimate the reliability of the Achievement Test used in the study. Because the necessary data for computing reliability are obtained by one testing situation. There may be
variations between two testing situations. So, to avoid such variations this method is adopted.

A group of twenty students from the first year undergraduate classes of both science and commerce was formed. The achievement tests for assessing the spoken communicative skill and the written communicative skill were conducted. In this method the test items in each test were divided into two equivalent halves by pooling the scores on odd numbered items and then pooling the scores on even numbered items. The correlation is found for these half-tests in each test by using Karl-Pearson's correlation co-efficient formula.

\[
\begin{align*}
  r_i &= \frac{N\sum XY - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{[N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2] [N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}} \\

  \text{From the reliability of the half-test correlation, the self-correlation of the whole test is estimated by using Spearman-Brown's prophecy formula.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
  r_{1i} &= \frac{2r_i/2x1/11}{1+r_i/2x1/11} \\

  \text{By using the above formula (i) Reliability of the achievement test to assess the speaking skills of students in English is calculated. The value is 0.87.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
  \text{By using the same formula (ii) Reliability of the achievement test to assess the writing skills of students in English is calculated. The achievement value is 0.89.}
\end{align*}
\]
From the result of the whole-test correlation with regard to speaking skills achievement tests (0.87) and uniting skills achievement test (0.89) are high and hence the test used in the study possesses high reliability.

3.4.4 Validity of the Achievements Tests

A research tool is said to be valid when it measures what it purports to measure. Any achievement test should possess validity. It is particularly important for achievement test. The panel that examined the validity of the conversational text made a logical examination of instructional objectives and the content of the two achievement tests. The agreement of the views of the experts was taken as the index of validity of the content of the achievement test. The achievement tests constructed by the investigator were subjected to scrutiny by the English language experts who had assessed the validity of the rendering the prose into conversations used in the study. It is performed by the students in the classroom. In view of the procedure adopted in the construction of the achievement test in speaking and writing skills, it is said that the achievement tests possessed content as well as face validity.

And then the test possessed intrinsic validity. Intrinsic validity of the achievement tests is given by the square root proportion of true values i.e., square root of its reliability. The obtained square root of reliability for speaking skills achievement test (0.84) and writing skills achievement test (0.92) are rather high, thereby indicating the intrinsic validity of the achievement tests used in the study.
3.5 Sample of the Study

In A.V.C. College where the experiment was undertaken, the strength of each section is fifty. The researcher needed two groups (Control and Experimental Group). Hence for the purpose of the study, 100 college students studying in the first year classes of Science and Commerce disciplines from A.V.C. College (Autonomous), Mannampandal, were selected from 200 students by using simple random sampling technique. The selected students were divided into two groups based on their CIA test marks in English. One was considered to be control group and the other one experimental group.

3.5.1 Description of the Sample and Sampling Technique

From the total of 100 students, finally selected for the study, two groups were formed, following systematic random sampling technique. They were placed in the order of merit based on their performance of their CIA examination marks in English. All the odd numbered students formed the control group while the even numbered students constituted the experimental group. The control group was taught through the traditional method of teaching English while the experimental group students were taught through the conversational pattern, by the selected students in the classroom, developed for the purpose.

3.5.2 Procedure for Equating the Groups

The sample of 100 students was divided into two equated groups of fifty students each. The two groups were equated as nearly as possible in terms of their achievement in the CIA examination. Students having similar range of marks were allotted equally and at random for experimental and control groups.
To find out whether the control group and the experimental group were matched or not, mean and standard deviation were calculated for the achievement scores obtained by each group in the first year degree English subject. Then the t-test was applied to the scores of control and experimental groups. The obtained t-value was found to be not significant (0.74) at (0.01) level and hence the two groups were matched ones in terms of their achievement before starting the experiment.

Later t-test was also applied to the pre-test scores to verify whether these two groups were matched ones or not. The obtained t-values for speaking skills achievement test (0.188), writing skills achievement (0.031) achievement test in English communication skills put together (0.219) were not significant at 0.01 level. Thus the t-test revealed that the two groups were matched ones before starting the study.

3.6 Teaching English prose to the experimental Groups through conversational pattern text and control group through traditional method

The experimental group First year degree students were taught through drama and it is performed by the students for facilitating the English communication skills (spoken and written), for a period of 60 working days at the rate of 1½ hours per day, especially in the evening after the class hours. The rendering prose text conversations influence the thought processes and behavioural patterns of students to a certain extent. From the researcher’s touch with the students it is known that dramas are still student’s favourite media of
reading and entertainment. Students derive pleasure by reading prose text in
dialogue form. This activity, which could provide pleasurable experience, has
been utilized for triggering off the learning of communication-skills. The
researcher has selected the following ten language functions, which are useful
in day-to-day activities of students.

1. Art of making inverted questions.
2. Learning to make requests.
3. Seeking permission.
4. Making enquiries about one's remembrances.
5. Presenting contrast ideas.
6. Use of conditional sentences.
7. Expressing exclamatory sentences.
8. Learning way to ask for opinions.
9. Making specific questions.
10. Making affirmative and negative sentences.

For each category the researcher selected a story line prose rendered into
conversations. While preparing the conversational text the psychology of the
students had been taken into account. Therefore the dialogues contain jokes,
surprise, shock, and variety. Conversations with ten messages and morals are
included.

In the experimental group itself one batch of students were given
conversational and another set of students were given the same text with some
gaps. The members of the second batch tried to guess the context or they put questions to the former group members who helped them by answering the questions or by correcting them. This is one of the methods of generating communication in the classroom. (Asking the students to say about the different functions used in the conversational text and analyse their way of expression is another way). Next to this activity, the teacher asked comprehension questions. Later to train the students in Pronunciation, Accent and different Tones exercises were given.

The researcher made use of three kinds of classroom activities via interaction between the students, extempore speech or asking question and answer and different types of assignments. The purpose of speaking activities was to model target utterances for the learners. This is done with the help of the conversations. In the question and answer activities learners knew that they are expected not necessarily to tell the truth or play a convincing role but to display control of language form. For example, when a student was asked to speak about the important event of his life, he knew very well that the very purpose of this activity was not to inform, amuse or entertain the teacher. It was only to display control over the form of the language. The role play is simply a device to enable the learner to display particular forms. Students adopted, for example, the roles of bank manager and customers simply in order to show that they had learnt expressions like what's the problem? And “I want to open an account”.

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The researcher utilized classroom activities, which focused outcome. They are called assigned reply activities because they replicated within the classroom aspects of communication in the real world. These was a wealth of activities involving problem-solving and information gathering in which learners used language for real communication. Students were also asked to write down dialogues. They were asked to act out the parts. In this way, students were provided with different types of tasks to develop their speaking skills and writing skills.

As already discussed, the dialogues presented to the students create a pre-learning mind-set in the form of generating interest in them. The visual stimuli in the form of dialogues generally develop observation skills with regard to spoken and written language. The peer group interaction in the form of questioning, answering and clarifying the things is facilitated. A conducive atmosphere without fear, anxiety and stress was created. But at the same time the enquiry mind of the student is developed. In fact, all these facilitated effective communication skills among the students, in English. In this process the teacher acted as a guide and facilitator for learning the language skills wherever necessary. At the end the given model dialogue was practiced by the students, by changing a word or a sentence in order to give reinforcement in the learning of a particular language function.

In the total process of learning, the student was made an active partner in giving and receiving information to his peer. Likewise for promoting written communicative skills in English, students were asked to write down a
dialogue using the language function learnt and they exchanged their writings and made discussions. In this process the students got his mistakes corrected with the help of his peer group member or he was rewarded for his correct responses.

For the control group students, language functions were taught orally using the traditional method (Audio lingual method). In the Audio lingual method mechanical drill was given importance. Individual, group and choral drilling activities in language acquisition were provided in a mechanical way.

3.7 Data Collection

At the end of the experiment period, a post-test was conducted to the first year under-graduate degree students of experimental group and the control group to assess their speaking and writing skills. Responses given by the students in the pre-test and post-test formed the data required for analysis. The scores of two groups in the pre-test and post-test achievement in spoken communication skills and written communication skills are given in Appendix-D and Appendix-E.

3.8 Scoring Procedure

The achievement test to assess the spoken communication skills of the students in English consisted of 40 objective type questions and five recorded items used to assess the speaking skills and fluency. For each right response the score is one and for wrong response the score is zero for objective type questions, thus totalling 40 marks. For descriptive type questions (5 questions),
two marks will be awarded for the correct description without any grammatical error, one mark will be given for the correct response with minimum error in spoken language and no mark will be given for incoherent utterances. For each descriptive type answer two marks are given, thus totalling ten marks for five descriptive answers. The investigator allotted 50 marks as maximum for the achievement test to assess the spoken communication skills of students. He assessed the spoken communication skills of each student individually before starting the experiment and after completing the experiment.

Likewise, the achievement test to assess the written communication skills consisted of 50 objective type test items. For each correct answer, the score is one and for each wrong answer the score is zero. The answer key to the achievement test for written communication skills of students is given in Appendix-C1.

3.9 Statistical Techniques Used in the Study

The obtained data were analysed by using appropriate statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation and t-test. The facts of analysis and interpretation are presented in the succeeding chapter.