CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

"IF WE TEACH TODAY AS WE TAUGHT YESTERDAY, WE ROB OUR CHILDREN OF TOMORROW."

– JOHN DEWEY

Poetry is an embodiment of the experiences of the poets. The experiences are diverse in nature – aesthetic, spiritual, personal, or social. They are expressed in such a way as to have a strong rhythmic beat and emotional intensity. However, on a printed page these expressions of musical beauty and creativity appear colourless. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to recreate the emotional and rhythmic content for students in order to broaden their visual and sensory images and strengthen their expertise in language learning.

5.1 CONTINUANCE OF CONVENTIONAL TEACHING

The Conventional Teaching Method (CTM) is a time-tested process and it ensures a secured environment, social affability and group learning in the language classroom. The language teacher has full faith in this method, as evidenced from its wider practice across continents, and he also feels comfortable with it as it does not pressurize him much. The CTM per se cannot be discarded for any other method in teaching poetry. The first finding of this study points to this fact that “both the instructional strategies viz. CTM and PAMSS are effective in modifying the appreciation and study skills relating to learning of poetry.”

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The teachers, both at the primary and the secondary levels, would do better if they add a number of activities to their conventional mode of teaching poetry. The text-books in use have them in plenty and in varied manner. These tasks are simply ignored for the sole reason that they are not tested in the terminal and public examinations. The given tasks are primarily meant for exposing students to poetic terminology and techniques and familiarize them with these devices. They also serve the purpose of developing a taste for poetry in the learners. Even at the secondary level (which, of course, includes the higher secondary level), students should be encouraged to read poetry loudly and recite poems from memory. There are a number of poems which have a scope for dramatization in the class. In the CTM, there is ample space for this practice. Students should also be encouraged to go beyond the prescriptions and limitations of the syllabus.

5.2 IMPACT OF ANIMATION ON LEARNING POETRY

All other findings of this study are related to use of animation films in teaching poetry at the higher secondary level. It is found from these findings that the Presentation in Animation Mode as a Support System (PAMSS) is also effective as a strategy to teach poetry at this level. According to the second finding, “PAMSS is a more effective instructional strategy than CTM in modifying the appreciation and study skills relating to learning of poetry at the higher secondary stage.”

It is pertinent at this stage to recall what Susan O’Hara and Robert Pritchard (2006) report: “Research literature throughout the past decade has shown that technology can enhance literacy development, impact language acquisition, provide
greater access to information, support learning, motivate students, and enhance their self-esteem.” There is also a large body of research that supports the benefits of technology for language learning and acquisition (Leu, 2005; Cummins, 2005; Zhao, 2005; Duran, 2005; Egbert, Chao and Hanson-Smith, 1999; Pennington, 1996). Numerous other studies demonstrate that students who learn in multimedia environments show greater gains in areas of language development than students who learn in more traditional environments (Martinez-Lage, 1997; Ayersman, 1996; Charney, 1994; Boon and Higgins, 1992).

An animation film is a multimedia presentation. The film has video, images, sound and text all embedded in it. As such, it can be used to augment language learning in the following ways:

1. **Motivation**: As a relevant, meaningful and novel form, the animation film increases the learner’s intrinsic motivation.

2. **Access efficiency**: With instant playbacks, the learner can have quick and easy access to different sections of the film.

3. **Comprehensibility**: With key-word captions and visual presentations, the learner can easily comprehend the message.

4. **Authenticity**: With culturally relevant and context-rich pictures, the learner finds the material more useful than a printed text.

The findings of this study do not suggest that animation films can substitute any other means or methods in second language learning. PAMSS, as the phrase
itself suggests, is a supporting system. In addition to what is available to students in a technologically scarce environment as it exists in our schools today, they should also have multiple opportunities to be involved in a variety of experiences provided by technology as it exists outside. Whether they are working independently, in groups, or as a whole class led by their teacher, they should be directly involved in such experiences. The second finding of this study has just proved this point.

5.3 Gender Equity

In the battle of the sexes, the question that is often posed is: Why men are more intelligent than women? Satoshi Kanazawa (2009) comes out with the answer: The men aren’t. She states that “meta-analyses of a large number of published studies throughout the world,… conclude that men on average are slightly but significantly more intelligent than women, by about 3 – 5 IQ points… one possibility is that men are more intelligent than women, not because they are men, but because they are taller… In fact, once we control for height, women are slightly but significantly more intelligent than men.”

A number of demographic studies tried to find out whether girls are better at language. Hyde and Linn (1988) reported that data from 165 studies revealed “a female superiority so slight as to be meaningless, despite previous assertions that girls are better verbally.” The authors did not find any evidence of substantial gender differences in any component of verbal processing. There were even no changes with age. But, according to a Pew Research Center survey (2008), the
respondents rate women superior to men in such traits as honesty and intelligence.

So, the battle continues.

As far as technologies are concerned, they are equally accessible to boys and girls. Yet, a gender gap exists between the two sexes in the use of technology. According to Sakamoto (1994), “…in a group of fourth through sixth graders who are defined as heavy computer users, the ratio of girls to boys using computers is 1:4. This is only the beginning of a trend which reveals a gap between boys and girls that continues into high school, college, and beyond.” However, another study revealed that “internet use was nearly identical between males and females” (A Nation Online, 2002). While this is the case in developed countries, the situation is no better in India. Social factors, teachers and the educational system here influence the gender gap in the use of technologies. If girls get equal consideration on par with the boys from society and teachers, they will be able to narrow down the gap. The third finding of this study which states that “PAMSS as an instructional strategy is equally effective for girls and boys in modifying the appreciation and study skills relating to learning of poetry” is a positive step in this direction.

5.4 RURAL – URBAN DIVIDE

“Hell is a city much like London,” said P. B. Shelley. It is a fact that city life is worse than country life in many aspects. The urban dwellers develop anxiety disorders and mood disorders at levels more than their calmer rural counterparts. Meyer-Lindenberg (2011) states, “…schizophrenia is more common among city dwellers than country folk.” Yet, in another experiment, he established that living in
cities brings many benefits and this factor was linked to performance. The same sort of association can be found in the fourth finding of this study which states that “the instructional strategy PAMSS is found to be more effective for urban students than for students of semi-urban and rural localities in modifying the appreciation and study skills relating to learning of poetry.”

Being students, the sample of this study can be said to be free from tension and worries. There is minimal possibility for them to develop psychological disorders. The urban students have an edge over their semi-urban and rural counterparts in using animation as a technology because they are more exposed to technology-enhanced learning environments.

5.5 Scholastic Achievement

Sandoltz et al. (1997) studied the effects of technology on students for nearly eight years. They report an interesting finding from their longitudinal study on the Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow (ACOT) Project. They found that the students who performed better on achievement tests were developing a variety of competencies not usually measured. These bright students “delivered lectures along with their teachers. They became socially aware and more confident, communicating effectively about complex processes. They became independent learners and self-starters, worked well collaboratively, and developed a positive orientation to their future.”

Thus, in any intact class consisting of bright, average, and below average students, it is not unusual that the bright scholars score better than the rest. In
achievement tests, the bright students always show a statistically significant increase better than other categories of students in the class. In the same vein, the fifth finding of this study corroborates: The instructional strategy PAMSS is effective for students of all categories. It is seen to be more effective for bright students than for medium or average students in a class in modifying the appreciation and study skills relating to learning of poetry at the higher secondary stage.

5.6 POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS ANIMATION

Out of 90 respondents, more than 55 have expressed in favour of using animation in poetry teaching as evidenced in the following lines. It should be seen that the statement “Learning poems through animation mode makes learning more enjoyable” has been well-received by 80 participants.

1. Learning poems through animation mode makes learning more enjoyable. (80)
2. I am aware that animation can be used as a tool for education. (63)
3. Animation intervention should be followed for other subjects also. (64)
4. Animation characters are stronger than characters visualized in poems and stays in our mind for a longer time. (69)
5. I can improve my knowledge of poems with the help of animation films. (55)
The responses to the negative statements also confirm that the majority of the students have developed a positive attitude towards the use of animation films in teaching poetry.

1. Watching animation movies is boring. (61)
2. I feel that learning poems through animation is an expensive process. (50)
3. I do not like either comic books or graphic novels. (61)
4. Certain other visual media like video and television are more effective than animation mode. (53)
5. Animation confines our imagination to its own boundary. (59)

The overall result of the administration of the attitude scale revealed the positive effects of technology on both learning poetry and usage of technology itself. The finding of the study in this regard states that “the higher secondary students feel comfortable in learning poems with the support of animation and their attitude towards use of animation in poetry is highly positive.” It is found that animation films used in the teaching of poetry enhanced development of vocabulary and usage, poetic forms and features and critical insight. It is also found that reference skills, study skills and perception of themes were enhanced considerably through complementing animation films in the teaching process.

In the studies of Collins (1978), Caraballo (1985), Beak and Lane (1988), Riber (1989), Hobbs (1998), Wu and Chang (1999), Brisbourne (2002), Lim (2004), Marabach-Ad (2007), and Anthony (2010), animation was found to be more
effective than any other tool in learning situations of different subjects. The responses given by the sample of the present study validate the finding that animation is an effective tool in understanding and appreciating poetry.

According to Velleman (1996), animation facilitates concept learning. In the words of Lysne and Rouble (2010), animation is an effective tool for understanding the creative art of poetry. The feedback from the sample of the present study also point to this factor: allusions, myths, and symbols in poetry are understood more properly through a visual medium like animation than through verbal contexts.

Hickoke (2003), Sueyoshi and Hardison (2005) and Kelly (2009) said that the learners could grasp faster through body language than what they heard. Skipper (2007) found out that a person who watched visually could do word identification faster than a person who listened to the voice. On line with these earlier findings, the present study justifies that visual identification and listing as well as auditory recordings in the animation medium have made it possible for the students to grasp the central themes of the poems faster.

The findings of the study, therefore, support the conclusion that use of animation documents in teaching poetry in second language environments can enhance the capabilities of students in developing their appreciation and study skills. It is not to be construed that all poetry lessons should be supported with animation documents. There are cases where the use of animation documents shot on specific poems would facilitate significant improvement in learning, and there
are cases also where alternative modes would lead to better results. The classroom teacher is the best judge here. The eclectic method is the byword.

5.7 Overall Summary

This research study demonstrates one important significant factor associated with teaching in innovative, access-to-technology second language classrooms: use of technology in the language class has its own merits. Data analysis indicated that improvement of language skills could be achieved with the intervention of technology as a support system. The feedback from the students showed that motivation and interest in learning could be enhanced using technology. The study tended to increase the confidence levels of the language teachers (i.e. L2 teachers) so that they might also think of incorporating various facets of technology into their teaching of English in its varied aspects.

5.8 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Keeping the important conclusions of this study in view, the following suggestions for further research are given:

1. Research can also be conducted to determine whether non-technological tools can be useful in teaching poetry as well as other genres of literature.

2. This study is limited to only three districts of Tamil Nadu, viz. Erode, Coimbatore and Tiruppur. Further studies can be conducted in other districts of the state or taking whole of Tamil Nadu or whole of India as a single unit.
3. The investigator has limited this study to only ten poems. More poems can be taken up in future studies.

4. The investigator has made use of animation films already available. It is recommended to shoot animation films as to the needs of students and the trainer.

5. The present study made use of 10 animation films Standard XI students. The same set of 10 films can be used for Standard X students or Undergraduate Students and the results can be found out.

6. The present study can be extended with such variables as medium of instruction, socio-economic factors and literacy levels of parents.

7. The sample size of this study is limited to 180 subjects. The sample size may be enlarged in further studies.

8. Pattern poems and visual poems can be used as pedagogical tools for L2 learners of English. A study on teaching such poems can be undertaken.

9. Studies can also be conducted to find out whether animation films can be useful pedagogical tools in developing other genres of literature like prose, fiction, etc.

10. Studies can also be conducted to ascertain whether other technological tools can be useful in teaching poetry.

11. Studies can be conducted to find out whether animation can be used in teaching other basic skills of language.

12. Studies to find out the attitude of English teachers towards incorporating technology into their teaching can be conducted.
13. Longitudinal studies in access-to-technology environments and inclusion of innovation in such environments can also be undertaken.

14. It is recommended to use such advanced technological tools like 3-Dimensional movies, virtual reality, 3G tablets and teleconferencing for future research.

5.9 Implications for the Future

A number of studies investigating innovation in the domain of English Language Teaching point out that it may take months and years to effect appropriate changes in the transactional process and in the overall system. In a scenario warranting the intervention of technology in methods and materials of language teaching, changes are slow as the classrooms have to be drastically altered to suit the needs of technology and the attitude of teachers to be drawn towards innovation. There would certainly be problems of implementation and adoption, but they would certainly disappear as teachers and students adjust to the practices of innovation. The findings of this and other similar studies can assure the benefits of the use of technology in the classroom and implore the future generations of teachers to be fully prepared to make use of available technology and other resources in English Language Teaching.