Chapter - 3

Methodology of Investigation
3.0 Introduction

3.1 Selection of the sample

3.2 Objectives, Hypotheses and Variables of the study
   3.2.1 Objectives of the study
   3.2.2 Hypotheses of the study
   3.2.3 Variables of the study

3.3 Data gathering tools of the study
   3.3.1 Construction of Competency based achievement test
      3.3.1.1 Study of objectives of teaching English in secondary schools
      3.3.1.2 Identifying the important components included in the test
      3.3.1.3 Selection of items for each component
      3.3.1.4 Pilot study
      3.3.1.5 Item analysis
      3.3.1.6 Details of the final form of the Competency based achievement test
      3.3.1.7 Scoring key for the test
      3.3.1.8 Standardization of the Competency based achievement test
   3.3.2 Construction of English language usage inventory
      3.3.2.1 To identify the purposes of learning English language
      3.3.2.2 Collection of items for the inventory
      3.3.2.3 Pilot study
3.3.2.4 Standardization of the English language usage inventory

3.3.2.5 Scoring procedure of the inventory

3.3.3 Construction of Personal data sheet for the students

3.3.4 Construction of Questionnaire for secondary school teachers of English

3.3.5 Construction of Questionnaire for the Heads of the Institutions

3.3.6 Standardization of the Questionnaire

3.4 Experimental study

3.4.1 Design of the experiment

3.4.2 Writing Package

3.4.3 Experiment in action

3.4.4 Scoring of data

3.4.5 Analysis of data

3.5 Conclusion
3.0 Introduction

The first chapter reviewed the language and its significance in human life. Importance of English language, the present day position of teaching English at the secondary school and the various changes that have been brought in the teaching and learning of English both before and after Independence. In addition, a brief discussion on the different methods and approaches of teaching English was presented. Thereafter, importance of four language skills and the emphasis on the skill of writing was focused. It also specified its need. Further, as a prelude to the thesis, the problem, objectives, hypotheses, variables, under investigation were defined.

The second chapter assessed the retrospect and prospect of research on the communicative competence in written English. The subject was presented under the review of related theoretical literature and the review of related research studies.

This chapter gives an overview of the procedure adopted by providing the details of the survey and the experiment conducted to show the effectiveness of the approach. The investigator explains the tools used, the sample involved, the objectives aimed at, and the hypotheses assumed in the investigation. The design of the writing package to be implemented in the training programme (experiment) is also explained.
In the present society - parents, educationists and politicians comment that there is a general fall in standards of education and more so in English language teaching (ELT). It is a common observation that even after completing their secondary education the students are not able to express their opinions freely and correctly either in English or in their mother tongue. Realizing the need of the hour this study was undertaken to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Keeping this in view the present investigation has been designed using a relatively new approach i.e. the Communicative Approach. This chapter is devoted to the presentation of the method adopted in this study. The study was conducted in two phases. They are Phase 1 Survey and Phase 2 Experimental Study

In the first phase of the investigation a survey was conducted to examine the existing ground conditions namely school related variables and family related variables. A Competency based achievement test to measure the competency based achievement and an English language usage inventory to know to what extent the students were using written English in their day to day situations were administered to the secondary school learners in the survey phase.

In the second phase a secondary school was selected to conduct the experimental study. A training programme to develop the competencies required for written English among the secondary school learners was devised based on the needs identified in the first phase. It was tried out in the selected secondary school spread over a period of two months.
3.1 Selection of the Sample

A stratified multi-stage random sampling technique was employed in the selection of the sample for the survey part of the investigation.

Sri Venkateswara University covers three districts of the state of Andhra Pradesh namely Chittoor, Nellore and Cuddapah. In the first stratum the geographical area covered in this study was considered. This area was divided under urban, semi urban and rural areas. 20 schools covering 4 urban, 6 semi urban and 10 rural areas were selected at random giving due representation for type of school and medium of instruction. In the second stage from each school, 10 students were selected at random giving equal importance to boys and girls (five each). Thus the sample consisted of 600 students covering 60 secondary schools.

3.2 Objectives, Hypotheses and Variables of the study

3.2.1 Objectives of the study

The study has been designed with the following specific objectives:

1. To develop a Competency based achievement test for measuring the competency based achievement in English language among secondary school learners.

2. To develop English language usage inventory, for measuring the ability to use written English language among the secondary school learners.
3 To find out the mean differences in competency based achievement of learners on some selected school related variables.

4 To find out the mean differences in the ability of learners to use written English on some selected school related variables.

5 To study the association between performance of students in written English and some school related variables.

6 To study the association between performance of students in written English and family related variables.

7 To design a training programme and to develop a strategy to improve communicative competence in written English among secondary school learners.

8 To study the impact of communicative approach on the competency based achievement of students.

9 To study the impact of communicative approach on the English language usage ability of students.

3.2.2 Hypotheses of the study

To realise the above objectives the following hypotheses were formulated in null form as it is more akin for testing:

1) There exists no significant difference among the different groups of students on the basis of locality, management, type of school and.
medium of instruction in their competency based achievement in English.
(The four independent variables will be considered separately)

2) There exists no significant difference among the different groups of
students on the basis of locality management type of school and
medium of instruction in their ability to use written English. (The four
independent variables will be considered separately)

3) There exists no significant association between performance of students
in written English and school related variables. (All the school related
variables will be considered separately).

4) There exists no significant association between performance of students
in written English and family related variables. (All the family related
variables will be considered separately)

5) There exists no significant difference in the competency based
achievement of students in written English taught through either the
traditional method or the communicative approach.

6) There exists no significant difference in the students' ability to use written
English taught through either the traditional method or the
communicative approach.

3.2.3 Variables of the study

Based on the review of related literature, the following dependent and
independent variables were selected to be included in the investigation.
a) Dependent variables

1) Achievement of students in English language based on the competencies in written English was the main dependent variable in this investigation.

2) Ability to use written English in day-to-day activities by the secondary school learners was considered as another dependent variable.

b) Independent Variables

1) The School related variables: The variables such as location management type of school medium of instruction physical facilities in the school strength of the school instructional facilities in the school procedures of evaluation adopted in the school library facilities in the school and co-curricular activities conducted in the school were considered to be the independent variables under the school related variables.

2) The Family related variables: Variables such as social status to which the family belongs educational levels of parents, occupation of parents, income of the family and size of the family were considered as the family related variables.

3 3 Data Gathering Tools of the Study

The tools used to gather data for the investigation were
1) Competency based achievement test

2) English language usage inventory

3) Personal data sheet for students

4) Questionnaire for secondary school teachers of English

5) Questionnaire for heads of institutions

3.3.1 Construction of Competency based achievement test

Achievement tests attempt to measure what an individual has learnt based on his or her present level of performance. Most tests used in schools are achievement tests. They are particularly helpful in determining individual or group status in academic learning. Achievement test scores are used in placing advancing, or retaining students at particular grade levels. They are used in diagnosing strengths and weaknesses as a basis for awarding prizes, scholarships or degrees.

Frequently achievement tests scores are used in evaluating the influences of courses of study, teachers, teaching methods and other factors considered to be significant in educational practice. In using tests for evaluative purposes, it is important not to generalize beyond the specific elements measured. For example, to identify effective teaching exclusively with the limited products measured by the ordinary achievement test would be to define effective teaching too narrowly. It is essential that researchers recognize that the elements of a situation under appraisal need to be evaluated on the basis of a number of criteria, not merely on a few limited aspects.
The following steps were followed in constructing the competency based achievement test used in this investigation.

3.3.1.1 Study of objectives of teaching English in secondary schools

The objectives of teaching English of both the English and Telugu media schools at the secondary school level were examined. The experts in the area of educational research, educational administration, curriculum design, and authors of the textbooks were also consulted. As English is taught as a second language in almost all the schools of Andhra Pradesh, the objectives of teaching English have been emphasised. The present syllabus in English textbooks of VIII, IX, and X classes were studied in relation to various topics covered in teaching prose and poetry to identify the relevant items to be included in the Competency based achievement test.

3.3.1.2 Identifying the important components included in the test

Based on the objectives of teaching English at the secondary schools syllabus and textbooks prescribed for the same in Andhra Pradesh the following components were considered to be included in the Competency based achievement test.

1. Identification of sounds and letters
2. Identification of words and meanings
3. Application of word meanings in sentences
4. Letter writing
5. Composition
3.3.1.3 Selection of items for each component

Due weightage was given for each component and a good number of items were collected from the text books, experienced English teachers who are handling the classes VIII, IX and X, and from other sources of research studies. The items thus selected were organised logically in the preliminary form of the test. They were presented before a panel of experts which consisted of English teachers, educationists, researchers, and language experts. The panel was asked to scrutinise the items and comment critically on the adequacy and accuracy of the items. After taking into consideration the suggestions given by the panel of experts the items were modified and refined accordingly.

3.3.1.4 Pilot Study

A representative sample of 100 students was selected for conducting the pilot study of the test. The students were asked to answer all the items without imposing any time limit to complete the test.

3.3.1.5 Item Analysis

An analysis of the responses to the individual items of a test will prove helpful for two reasons. First, the teacher can discover if there are certain points that a sizable number of the students have failed to master. Remedial work may be indicated before proceeding to the next unit. Second, the teacher can verify how well certain items have performed in relation to the test as a whole. This information will be useful in constructing new tests.
Item difficulty is determined by observing what percentage of the students answers the item correctly. The more difficult the item is, the fewer will be the students who select the correct option.

Discriminating power tells how well the item performs in separating the better students from the poorer students. If the upper third of the students gets the item correct and the lower two-thirds generally get the item wrong, then it is a good discriminator between these two groups. Very difficult items should discriminate between the very good students and all of the others; relatively easy items should discriminate between the majority of the students in the class and the few poor ones.

In the present study, the answer scripts of pilot sample (100 students) were scored according to the scoring key prepared in the test construction. Based on the total score obtained by each student, the answer scripts were arranged in ascending order. 27% of the top group (scripts) and 27% of the bottom group (scripts) were selected and the remaining scripts were discarded.

Examining each item in the low group as well as high group, the marks obtained by each student for each question item were posted. Thus, the score obtained by the high group and also the low group for each item was obtained. The difference between high group and low group scores indicated the discrimination power of the item. The discrimination power and difficulty value of each item were calculated. Items possessing reasonable difficulty value and good discrimination power were retained for the final form of the test.
3.3.1.6 Details of the final form of the Competency based achievement test

The final form of the competency based achievement test has fifteen items and the maximum marks are 100. In the final form of the test 5 components that were included. They are

a) Identification of sounds and letters contains 2 questions for 15 marks
b) Identification of word meanings contains 5 questions for 25 marks
c) Application of word meanings in phrases and sentences contains 3 questions for 30 marks
d) Letter writing contains 1 question for 10 marks (10%)
e) Component composition contains 3 questions for 20 marks

Table No 3.1 gives the details of the test items based on the components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S No</th>
<th>Name of the component</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Identification of sounds and letters</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Identification of word meanings</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Application of word meanings in sentences</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Letter writing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table no 3.2 gives details of the items based on the Type of questions

Table 3.2 Details of the Competency based achievement test items based on Type of questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S No</th>
<th>Type of questions</th>
<th>Q No</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>1 2 3 4, 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Short answer</td>
<td>10 11 14 15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>12 13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table no 3.3 gives details of the items based on the Difficulty level

Table 3.3 Details of the Competency based achievement test items based on the difficulty level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S No</th>
<th>Type of questions</th>
<th>Q No</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>1 2, 3 6 10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>4 7 8 11 14 15</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>5 9, 12 13</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.1.7 Scoring key for the test

The scoring key was prepared for valuing the test. All objective type of questions were allotted one mark for correct answer. For short answer questions one mark was allotted for correct formation of sentence. For paragraph question the key points were noted to cover the allotted marks.
3.3.8 Standardisation of the Competency based achievement test

a) Validity of the test

i) Content Validity

The final form of the test was presented to a panel of experts consisting of experienced teachers, educationists, researchers and language experts for scrutiny. They were requested to examine the coverage of content in the test items keeping in view the objectives of teaching English in secondary schools. They expressed their satisfaction regarding the coverage of important components in the test. The experts also accepted the weightage given for each component as shown in the final form of the test. They were also asked to examine the clarity of language used in the instruction as well as in the question items of the test.

ii) Construct Validity

While constructing the test, the scientific procedure of constructing the achievement tests was meticulously followed in each and every step. All the tables shown in the final form of the test reveal the appropriate weightage for various aspects of the test viz. components, content, type of questions and difficulty level of questions. The experts examined the percentages given for the each sub-item and they have given their consent over the distribution of items in the test. The item analysis procedure followed while selecting the test items and the tables of components in the final form will reveal that the test contains construct validity.
b) Reliability of the test

Test-retest method was adopted to determine the reliability of the test. The final form of the test was administered to a representative sample of students at the first instance and the same test was administered to the same group of students after a gap of 4 weeks. The scores obtained in the first trial were compared with the scores obtained in the second trial. The high correlation revealed that the test is reliable (r = 0.875).

With the designing and standardization of the Competency based achievement test, the objective “To develop a Competency based achievement test for measuring the Competency based achievement in English language among secondary school learners” is realized. (Final form of Competency based achievement test is shown in Appendix 1)

3.3.2 Construction of English language usage inventory

To estimate the extent of the use of written English language by the secondary school students, an English language usage inventory was constructed by adopting a scientific procedure.

The steps followed in constructing the inventory are:

3.3.2.1 To identify the purposes of learning English language

To measure the effective use of language by the students in various day-to-day activities, the following broad purposes were identified.
One of the main objectives of teaching English at secondary school level is to develop communicative skills. The two types of communication are 1) Oral communication and 2) Written communication. Oral communication includes listening and speaking skills, whereas written communication involves reading and writing skills. Usually, students assimilate knowledge of English language through listening and reading and express the same through speaking and writing. Getting mastery over these four skills is the indication of efficiency in that language. Keeping in view these facts, the present inventory is designed to know the extent of language use by the students in the activities such as i) learning their school subjects ii) writing their tests, examinations, letters, payments of bills, etc, and iii) expressing themselves through announcements, creative writings, etc.

3.3.2.2 Collection of items for the inventory

To identify various situations in which the students were expected to use written English, various groups were consulted viz. experienced teachers of secondary schools, some educated parents of the students, and some students who had already completed their secondary school education. They were asked to give various situations, which demand the language use in the day-to-day activities of the students. Some of the research studies reviewed were also taken into consideration to identify the areas.
3.3.2.3 Pilot Study

The questionnaire developed in the preliminary try out was administered to 20 teachers and 50 students. They were asked to tick against each item depending on the relevancy.

After collecting the information the responses were tabulated and the items commonly identified by the teachers and students were selected. Depending on the frequency of the responses all the items were categorised under 3 broad components viz. 1) Language used for learning purpose 2) Language used for communication purpose and 3) Language used for self-expression. Similarly keeping in view the highest frequency of the items 10 items for each component was identified. Thus the revised final form of the inventory consisted of 30 items under 3 components. The respondents were asked to rate the use of each item in a five point scale depending on the frequency of use of the item ranging from very rarely to most often.

3.3.2.4 Standardization of the English Language Usage Inventory

a) Validity

i) Content Validity

The items selected to be included in the inventory were gathered based on the objectives of teaching English in secondary schools. Major persons involved in this area viz. experienced teachers and students were consulted in
collection of the items. The experts' opinion was sought with regard to the
accuracy and adequacy of the items. Thus it can be claimed that the inventory
possesses content validity.

ii) Construct Validity

Major areas of using language in day-to-day activities of students were
identified as learning activities, communication activities, and expression
activities. The items selected under each category were also organized on a
5-point scale based on the highest frequency obtained for each item in the
preliminary try out. In order to ensure the relevance of each item, the correlation
was calculated. The correlation of scores among the 3 categories was positive
and significant which revealed the construct validity of the inventory.

b) Reliability

Test-re test reliability

The final form of the inventory was administered to the representative
sample of students at the first instance and the same inventory was
administered to the same group of students with a gap of 4 weeks. The scores
obtained in the first trial were compared with the scores obtained in the second
trial. The high correlation (r=0.78) revealed that the inventory possessed
reliability.
With the designing and standardization of English language usage inventory the objective "To develop English language usage inventory for measuring the ability to use written English language among the secondary school learners" has been realized. (Final form of the English language usage inventory is shown in Appendix 2)

3.3.2.5 Scoring Procedure of the inventory

All the items (on a 5 point scale) were arranged ranging from highest frequency to lowest frequency of use. The scoring key was:

- **5 points** very frequently (more than once in a week)
- **4 points** frequently (at least once a week)
- **3 points** occasionally (less than once in a week)
- **2 points** rarely (at least once in a month)
- **1 point** very rarely (less than once in a month)

Sub scores for the three components viz learning purpose, communication purpose and expression purpose was calculated using the scoring key. The sum of the three sub scores is the total inventory score.

3.3.3 Construction of Personal Data Sheet for the Students

A questionnaire was developed to get information from the student related to the independent variables included in the investigation. The personal data sheet contains the information regarding their identification data which
includes name, sex, age, class, school in which s/he is studying, location of the school, management of the school, type of school, medium of instruction in the school, etc. Information regarding their family background - social status of the family, educational level of the parents, occupation of the parents, income of the family, size of the family, etc. was collected. (Final form of Personal data sheet for the students is shown in Appendix 3)

3.3.4 Construction of Questionnaire for Secondary School Teachers of English

A questionnaire was developed to get information from the secondary school teachers teaching English. The items included in the questionnaire meant for teachers who were actually teaching English were collected from the other researches mentioned in the review of literature. Some of the experts in this area such as educationalists, researchers, and experienced teachers were consulted to prepare and finalize the relevant items for the questionnaire. The information was collected from the English teachers working in all the 60 schools.

The questionnaire contains items to collect information regarding the classroom activities such as oral activities, mechanics of handwriting, time allotted for the written exercises, types of written exercises, evaluation of writing skills, and guidance in writing. (Final form of the Questionnaire for the secondary school teachers of English is shown in Appendix 4)
3.3.5 Construction of Questionnaire for the Heads of the Institutions

A questionnaire was designed for the heads of the institutions to get the information regarding the independent variables included in the investigation.

The information regarding the identification data such as name of the school, location, management type of school, medium of instruction etc. was obtained. The details regarding a) physical facilities in the school such as buildings, class rooms, furniture, library, labs etc., b) the strength of the school-number of teachers and students to know the teacher-pupil ratio, c) availability of instructional facilities in the school, d) procedures of evaluation adopted in the school, e) library facilities available in the school and f) co-curricular activities conducted in the school which includes games, cultural activities and social activities were also solicited. (Final form of the Questionnaire for heads of institutions is shown in Appendix 6).

3.3.6 Standardisation of the Questionnaires

The questionnaires were designed to collect data regarding the variables included in the study. While collecting the items to be included in the questionnaires, experienced teachers were consulted. Various activities of the schools were observed and research studies in the related area were examined. Adequate number of items were gathered and arranged under meaningful headings. The preliminary forms were presented to a panel of
experts for scrutiny regarding the adequacy, accuracy, and clarity of the statements. Their suggestions were properly incorporated. The questionnaires were administered to a sample of students, teachers, and heads of the institutions. Based on the responses regarding the variables included in the study, some modifications were done in the final forms of the questionnaire.

3.4 Experimental Study

3.4.1 Design of the Experiment

The pre-test post-test equivalent-groups design was found to be appropriate to conduct the experiment of the study. The design is represented as follows:

$$\begin{align*}
R O_1 X O_2 & \quad X \text{ gain } = O_2 - O_1 \\
R C_3 C O_4 & \quad C \text{ gain } = O_4 - O_3 \\
\text{Impact of Communicative Approach } O_4 - O_2
\end{align*}$$

Where

- $X$ is the experimental group
- $C$ is the control group and
- $O_1, O_3$ are the pre-test scores and
- $O_2, O_4$ are the post-test scores

(John W. Best, 1989)

3.4.2 Writing Package

A writing package was developed to conduct the experiment. The opinions gathered from the secondary school English teachers were used in designing the writing package.
The investigator prepared the instructional material based on the principles of Communicative approach. The instructional material was prepared to improve the communicative competence in written English among secondary school learners. The material designed for the purpose of instruction includes strategies to develop—

1. the competency to recognize sounds and letters
2. the competency to use the right form of word depending on the context in which it is used
3. the competency in building correct structures of the language
4. the competency to express ideas and
5. the competency to understand and appreciate various literary forms of expression

The writing package was organised on the following sub heads

1) Spelling
2) Vocabulary
3) Punctuation
4) Grammar
5) Composition

The instructional model in the package was based on the following steps

1. Introduction
2. Presentation
3. Practice
4. Production and
5. Evaluation
Each of these steps is supplemented with a good number of illustrations and exercises.

With the preparation of the writing package the objective “To design a training programme and to develop a strategy to improve communicative competence in written English among secondary school learners” has been realized (Final form of the Writing package is shown in Appendix 6).

3.4.3 Experiment in action

The experiment was conducted in a selected secondary school by adopting Communicative Approach. The experimental sample consisted of sixty students of class IX. The competency based achievement test was administered to the select group of students and the pretest scores were tabulated.

The sixty IX class students of the experimental school were divided into two identical groups based on the pre-test scores. The Group1 and Group2 consisted of 30 students each. The instructional material was taught to the students of class IX for eight weeks. The investigator handled about 80 periods adopting Traditional Method for Group1 and Communicative Approach for Group2. It was ensured that identical content aspects were covered for both the groups with the same zeal and commitment without any experimental bias. At the end of the programme a post-test was administered to measure the competencies of students in their written English.
3.4.4 Scoring of data

1) Score obtained by the student in all the selected five components included in the Competency based achievement test was considered to be the achievement score of the student in English.

2) The English language usage inventory was developed on a five point rating scale. So the responses given by the student were converted into their respective numerical scores for calculation purposes. The numerical score on each sub-unit was calculated and considered as the score for that particular sub-unit and the total score on the three sub-units put together was considered as the score of the student on English language use in day to day activities.

3) The sum of the Competency based achievement test score and the score on English language usage inventory was taken as the performance of the students in written English.

4) The responses obtained through the questionnaires were converted into numerical values to be fed into the computer for quick and accurate analysis.

5) The pre-test and post-test scores of the Competency based achievement test and English language usage inventory of both the groups – Experimental Group 1 and Experimental Group 2 were the data gathering devices for the experimental part of the study.
3.4.5 Analysis of data

The statistical techniques used in the analysis of data were

1) Measure of Central tendency: Mean
2) Measure of Dispersion: Standard deviation and Standard error
3) t-test to measure the significance of difference of means

3.5 Conclusion

The third chapter was devoted to present the methodology adopted in the study. The details of survey which enabled the researcher to identify the variables of study were explained in detail. The procedure adopted to conduct the experimental study was also described. The data gathering tools and analysis techniques were also dealt with. The next chapter will be devoted for presentation, analysis and interpretation of data.