ABSTRACT

This thesis entitled, Effectiveness of Teaching Prose through Communicative Language Teaching to the Undergraduates (Pari II English): A Study is an overview on the different methods of teaching of English prose at UG part II level at five different colleges in Dindigul District and an effort / attempt to study in particular, the effectiveness of CLT method. Without aiming at developing the communicational skills both inside and outside the classroom, English language teaching will only be farcical. In the growing days of Information Technology one cannot survive without language competence in communication in English.

English as a second language is taught compulsorily to all undergraduate students of Science and Humanities in all colleges and universities in India. The students admitted to the UG courses are drawn from heterogeneous backgrounds viz., socially, economically, culturally, linguistically and educationally. So, their proficiency in English at the entry level varies.

Various methods and approaches like, Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Structural Approach and Situational Approach
are being practised by teachers of English in colleges at UG Part - II English course through Lecture mode.

The problem is that at the end of the UG course, in spite of the effective coaching provided, the students are not able to perform effective communication either in writing or speaking. The overall result in English is also deplorable. But the same students perform better in their chosen major subjects. What is inferred from the above is that something is wrong somewhere in their language acquisition. As a teacher, the researcher felt it right to explore the existing methods of teaching English to know if at all there is any pitfall in teaching. If efforts are taken to evolve a better method to cater to the needs of the UG learners the output will definitely be more than what is expected.

The researcher after a careful study in five chosen colleges in Dindigul District infers that the method of teaching English requires to be bettered. The Experimental Group trained through CLT method also seems to fare better in the feedback than the control group that was trained through TLT.

In all the five colleges chosen, prose lessons have been prescribed at least in the first two semesters out of the four semesters allotted for learning part II English. There is a great scope to pick up the English
Language through prose lessons, like, diction, syntax, semantics, phonetics, stress and intonation, grammar and usage; and above all the four broad skills of learning a language, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing could be easily learnt. Usually prose lessons are taught only through the lecture method in which learning process is teacher-centred. In all the colleges observed for this research, the teachers of English are constrained to teach the prose lessons through conventional methods believing that this will enable the learners to prepare for the end-semester examinations. Interaction in English is very less on the part of the learners regarding the lessons before learning or while learning or even after learning. They go straight to the examination hall solely depending upon the cheap market notes available.

This research therefore confines to the Communicative Language Teaching method wherein the teacher plans a comprehensive lesson plan comprising all the components of language proficiency. Time may be a restricting factor but then again a competent teacher who is really innovative may exploit the available time meticulously. In all the five colleges, the researcher could get a positive response from the Experimental Group. Even the testing is not that taxing as that of in a normal method. So in all the stages of learning a prose text, like in the
pre-reading stage, while reading stage and post reading stage and even up to the examination, the learner feels confident and competent.

This thesis is conveniently divided into six chapters, namely.

1. English Language Teaching in India: A Chronological Overview
2. Review of Literature & Research Methodology
3. Teaching Prose through CLT
4. Research on CLT Lessons
5. Analysis of the Data & Interpretation
6. Summing up: Findings & Suggestions

The period of study was between the academic years 1999-2000 and 2003-2004 respectively.

The five colleges chosen for this research are situated in Dindigul District but each college is of a different category. They are categorized as follows:
506 students of the above colleges from science departments were taken for observation and they were grouped under Control Group and Experimental Group. According to the syllabus in each college, a lesson was chosen by the researcher for teaching the Control Group and the Experimental Group. For the Control Group TLT was followed and for the Experimental Group CLT was followed by the researcher. A test was given at the end of the lesson to collect the feedback from the students and the effectiveness of TLT and CLT was analysed. In addition a questionnaire on the students’ exposure to ELL through prose was administered to gather information about their language learning process.
The students’ score in the test and the data collected through the questionnaire have been analysed to test the research hypothesis.

The analysis through Correlation Co-efficient, ‘t’ test and chi-square test has proved the research hypothesis.

Teaching prose to the undergraduates through CLT seems to have a better impact on the students. The learning of the language through CLT was gradual, methodical and pleasurable. Even the retention level is found higher and long-lasting. The communication games adopted in the course of learning made the students feel the comfort and joy of learning a language.

The present research is a pioneer project and there is ample scope for further research.