CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MODEL SPECIMEN PASSAGES AND EXERCISES

"Most of the reading that the future doctors and engineers of India will have to do will be narrow, laborious, inartistic and exact. Teaching this kind of reading is far less humane - and far less self-indulgent - business than teaching the reading of literature, but vital for India's future."

- D.Y. Morgan

The investigator's approach to the problem of teaching English as a library language and the findings of his investigation make it imperative that he suggest suitable text-book material along with suitable exercises on it.

In this chapter, five passages are presented which can form part of a text-book of Compulsory English for Pre-University Commerce. The exercises worked out on these passages are not meant to be used for only the Pre-University level. They are model specimen exercises the investigator would like to see appropriately introduced at one or the other of the four levels. The passages have been selected and adapted in the light of the principles which have been followed in evaluating the syllabuses and text-books prescribed by universities in Gujarat for their Commerce and Science faculties (Chapter Eight).
Given below are the details regarding the selection and adaptation of the passages and the vocabulary they contain.

Selection:

In selecting the passages, the investigator skimmed a number of books by modern writers, and periodicals. The criteria of selection were readability of the contents, 'usefulness' of the vocabulary contained and adaptability of the language in general.

It was, indeed, an arduous task, this selection of passages. If the challenge of meeting the objective were no inducement, it would have been found extremely dull. An awareness of the challenge he was facing, made it a labour of love for the investigator. The dull moments, if any, receded into insignificance when his labour of hours together was rewarded by a single passage that was 'useful'.

Of a few passages thus collected, five were finally selected and they have been presented in Appendix L-1. Three of them are short stories and two are brief articles.
Two of the three short stories are by reputed men of letters - one by O. Henry, the other by Stephen Leacock. Both are immensely interesting literary pieces. The third story is not by a writer of recognized merit. It is very interesting all the same. Each story is developed in a background which is no less suitable than the investigator would have expected. What with the romance of a broker, the affairs of an income-tax inspector with his client, and a comedy of errors unwittingly created by a customer in a bank, the stories have the intrinsic quality of satisfying human interest and, in the process, dropping around vocabulary items 'useful' to commerce students. There cannot be a better way of learning or teaching a 'useful' vocabulary without tears!

One of the two articles selected has a sort of story element. The writer, an accountant as he is, discusses girls in terms of their cash value, saleability and so on, with his daughter and her friend who have been a film based on 'Pride and Prejudice'. The discussion ends up with the news which proves that at least his daughter has substantial cash value - she has been appointed as a stenographer with a handsome start.
Adaptation:

The passages have been adapted in more than one respect. Structures and vocabulary items which were very difficult and of doubtful utility have been eliminated. In the case of one passage, taken from an American magazine, American spelling has been replaced by English spelling and, where necessary, articles have been inserted. The story by the writer of unrecognized merit, has also been polished up. Both the articles taken here have been abridged lest they should be found dull to read.

Vocabulary Analysis:

New vocabulary items introduced through the five passages were determined by checking the possible new vocabulary items against the School Vocabulary (Appendix F). The 149 new vocabulary items thus found have been given in Appendix L-3.

The size of the five passage is about one sixth of the desirable size of a text-book of Compulsory English for Pre-University Commerce. The passages contain 149 new vocabulary items. At this rate, the full text-book for the level can contain around 1,500 new vocabulary items and can thus fairly well exploit the vocabulary learning potential of Pre-University Commerce students.
The vocabulary items 'useful' to commerce students were determined following the same method that was used to determine the number of 'useful' vocabulary items on the College Vocabulary Samples (Appendices H-1 to H-5). As many as 25% of the new vocabulary items of the passages were found 'useful'. Incidentally, the percentage of vocabulary items 'useful' to Pre-University Commerce students alone was found to be over 60%.

EXERCISES

The exercises (Appendix L-2) set on the passages cover the following aspects of teaching English: (a) Vocabulary, (b) Reading Comprehension (c) Translation skill, (d) Reference Technique, (e) Composition. They are aimed at consolidating the learning of the items they present rather than testing students' knowledge of them.

No exercises have been given on Grammar and Rapid Reading. Exercises on Grammar depend on remedial grammar work and new grammar items prescribed in the syllabus. For the purpose of developing the rapid reading skill, separate material must be prepared with a small percentage of unfamiliar vocabulary and grammar items sprinkled proportionately.
The language aspects covered by the exercises besides grammar and rapid reading, which have not been covered, cannot all be expected to be taught at a single level. They must be proportionately distributed over the four years of study. The exercises given are only specimen exercises that should form part of text-books of Compulsory English for the four years.

The questions, which are twenty seven in all, have been explained below, aspectwise. They are meant to illustrate various types of questions that can be set on respective aspects.

**Vocabulary:**

Questions One to Nine are related to vocabulary. They fall into four categories.

(a) Question One is on a few general vocabulary items from the school vocabulary, to be precise. These items, frequently encountered in English writing, occur in one of the five passages, and the investigator thinks that, since they probably belong to the area partly forgotten by the students, their learning needs to be reinforced.
(b) Questions Two to Nine are on some of the difficult Special Vocabulary items contained in the passages.

(c) Questions Seven and Eight are set with the objective of cultivating among students the habit of guessing the meaning of certain unfamiliar vocabulary items from the context and thus inspiring them to go confidently to passages with unfamiliar vocabulary items.

(d) The ninth question consists of four types of sub-questions:

(i) Sub-questions intended to familiarize students with derivations of very common affixes. A familiarity with such derivations can help students recognize a number of words which appear to be new.

(ii) 'Drew' is the key word in 'drew nearer', but its meaning in this context is not very common. One type of sub-questions is, therefore, intended to familiarize students with the meaning of some of such common words in such special contexts.
The third is meant to familiarize students with the meaning implied by certain very frequently occurring structures like "Brown has been trying for promotion for two years."

Comprehension:

Four types of questions on comprehension (Questions Ten to Thirteen) have been illustrated. Of these, three are objective questions - multiple choice questions, true and false statements, and sentences describing events to be arranged in proper sequence. In the fourth type, there are short subjective questions, most of them beginning with What, Why and How. These questions are set to test students' comprehension of the passages in detail. It is probably not possible to set good objective questions on all important details of passages intended to be studied in detail, and the passages presented here are meant to be studied in detail for they are set to meet the objective of introducing a special vocabulary.

The subjective questions are not intended to substitute objective questions. They are rather meant to substitute essay-type questions beginning with
"Describe ...", "Compare and Contrast", "Draw the character sketch of ....", "Discuss..." etc. The writing skill, it is true, need not - perhaps cannot - be divorced from the reading skill. Within limits, it plays a significant part in consolidating the knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. But it should not be allowed to assume an all important place in the teaching of English. It is important only so far as it helps the development of the prime skill of reading by way of helping the student build up his special vocabulary. Hence the importance of questions expecting short answers.

Translation:

Three types of questions on translation have been illustrated (Questions Fourteen to Sixteen). Two of these questions are on literal and free translation. The third question presenting three translations of a paragraph and expecting the student to study and comment on each and to select the best attempt, serves a two-fold purpose. It makes the student study the original and the translations minutely and thus intimately familiarises him with the process of translating; it also helps him distinguish between a good translation and a bad translation. The former is a more relevant gain in the context of the
The latter is, of course, a gain more useful to a student specializing in translation. The three translations are not bad translations as far as the context is concerned. They differ from one another only in language. A question on translations differing from one another in the reproduction of the original, can also be set.

Reference Technique:

Questions on reference technique are six (Questions Seventeen to Twenty Two). They are of the following types:

(a) Arranging words in alphabetical order
(b) Looking up a dictionary for unfamiliar words
(c) Understanding how entries in card indexes in a library are made
(d) Looking up indexes of books
(e) Looking up encyclopaedias
(f) Going to books, magazines, articles of one's interest.

Composition:

There are five questions on composition (Questions Twenty Three to Twenty Seven) based on the passages. The nature of these questions anticipates comprehension of the passages, a knowledge of the special vocabulary introduced through them, and looking up material similar to the one studied.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CONCLUSIONS

"All experience is an arch wherethro' 
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades 
For ever and for ever when I move."

- Tennyson

What Tennyson said of every experience in life
in general is true of every exploratory step in any field
of knowledge. This research is not claimed to be the last
word on the teaching of English although it might lend a
new perspective to reformative efforts in the field.

The teaching of English as a compulsory subject
in India, especially in Gujarat, has the association of
marathon debates, often acrimonious and notorious in
character. Precious little has been done to cut the
Gordian knot where misguided sentiments shroud reason
and false pride obstruct right decisions. This research
is not, at any rate, a great stride but, it is hoped, it
has the potentiality of initiating a chain of relevant
studies in the vast relative areas of English teaching
which it was not possible for this researcher to explore
adequately.
The research, as the investigator perceives, blazes a trail and 'ere the hazy outline it draws fades away, those concerned with the teaching of English, it is hoped, will prepare a blueprint of meaningful English teaching in Gujarat.

Of a number of aspects related to the teaching of English as a library language, vocabulary has been considered the nucleus. Its present teaching has been examined in depth and the desirability in respect of it has been clearly spelt out. The course designs and the patterns of question-papers have been critically reviewed in the light of specific objectives of teaching English as a library language. The analysis of the course designs and patterns of question-papers is not as extensive and precise as that of the vocabulary. Nevertheless, it does not lack in depth, and hence is reliable enough for conclusions on them.

Text-books have been studied chiefly from the viewpoint of the vocabulary they introduce, though their readability and structural suitability have also been incidentally considered. Certain principles regarding text-book material have been implicitly recommended, and based on them are selected, adapted and presented in the study, a few model passages for Selections in English for the Pre-University level of Commerce. This select
work in the field of producing suitable text-book material is illustrative enough.

The teachers' equipment, the students' equipment and teaching methods are the factors no less important for an efficient teaching of English. While teaching methods have been left almost untouched, the teachers' equipment and the students' equipment have been examined through limited samples and data.

**MAJOR FINDINGS**

The following are some of the major findings of this study:

1. The specific objectives of teaching English as a library language can be spelt out in terms of the abilities it should develop. The following are these abilities:

   (i) ability to comprehend English writing on one's special subject;

   (ii) ability to read English at a reasonable speed;

   (iii) ability to extract information on one's subject from English encyclopaedias, indexes of books, dictionaries etc.;

   (iv) ability to quote (in English or in the mother tongue through accurate translation) from the English books one has read, to support one's statements on a subject;
(v) ability to summarize precisely, in the mother tongue, the whole or part of what one has read in English;

(vi) ability to communicate in one's mother tongue what one has read in English.

2. (a) It is possible to evolve special vocabularies, one each for the faculties of Commerce and Science.

(b) It is possible for the teacher of English to teach a special vocabulary in a general context.

(c) The knowledge of a special vocabulary, learnt in a general context, can help students comprehend the material which uses that vocabulary in a special context.

3. (a) The college-entrant knows not more than 1100 vocabulary items of the General Service List. The course designers of Compulsory English at college assume, generally, that the college entrant knows the basic 2,000 vocabulary items. Consequently, there remains a gap between the vocabulary he knows and the new vocabulary he is taught. No special steps are taken to bridge this gap.

(b) The vocabulary introduced to college students
is general, not special, in nature. Its introduction is not based on any scientific approach.

(i) In a number of cases, words like 'Amenable', 'Cajole', 'Dodge', 'Ingenious', 'Palatable', 'Soggy' and 'Unnerve' (all above the 4th thousand range in Thorndike) are introduced at the Pre-University level. Such words can better be learnt at a more mature stage.

(ii) In a number of cases, the size of the vocabulary introduced at a faculty is either too ambitious or too scanty. The estimated size in one case, for example, is 11,600 words, and 1,044 words in another.

(iii) The vocabulary bulk at both the faculties of universities in Gujarat is unsystematically distributed over the years. Two glaring examples are - 1,000 : 2,500 : 1,200 : 6,800 and 800 : 2,700 : 200 : 1,100.

4. (i) In the Commerce faculty of universities in Gujarat, the percentages of 'useful' vocabulary items out of the total vocabulary items introduced range between 31 and 37.

(ii) In the Science faculty of Universities in Gujarat, the percentages of 'useful' vocabulary items out of the total vocabulary items introduced range between 40 and 51.

5. In the syllabuses of English and the question-papers in it, there is a welcome trend for language-orientation. In both the faculties of Universities in Gujarat a few syllabuses and question-papers reflect
their framers' awareness of some of the new objectives of teaching English in India today. These syllabuses and question-papers are, however, not free from shortcomings. Some of these shortcomings are as follows:

(i) The type of language-orientation of some of the syllabuses and question-papers is not scientific.

(ii) At a number of places, there is a glaring lack of co-ordination between different levels.

(iii) Besides vocabulary and grammar, there are three more constituents of a syllabus of English as a library language: Reading Efficiency, Translation Skill and Reference Technique. While comprehension has been given some place in the syllabuses and question-papers, rapid reading has been totally neglected. Translation skill has a place in only a few syllabuses and question-papers. Reference technique has also not been overlooked.

6. A large number of relatively younger teachers of English in the Commerce and Science colleges of Universities in Gujarat do not have an adequate language equipment and the desirable clarity of approach to the problem of teaching English in the present circumstances.

7. Only a few commerce students visit a library. Fewer still are the students who read English books and journals. Those who read English, do so at a poor
speed. The general language proficiency of commerce students is also poor.

8. It is possible to introduce library language oriented syllabuses at the different levels of graduate courses for Commerce and Science and produce readable text-book material with a strong bias for a special vocabulary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

All efforts at teaching English at the college level must be geared to the development of the language abilities specified in "Major Findings". In framing syllabuses, producing text-books, teaching English in the classrooom, setting question-papers in it, and training teachers of English, the primary stress must invariably fall on the development of these abilities. Appreciation of literary points, sharpening sensibility, developing the ability to speak English fluently, making students use it as a medium of expression (even in written form) etc. are much higher and more alluring goals, but pursuing them in the given context would be quixotic. We must, once for all, make our mind not to allow our vision of what is the right thing to do, blurred by unrealistic goals.
Reading Courses:

Students' efforts at learning English at the college level must converge on developing the reading skill. The development of one or many of the other skills might be only incidental. For their own sake, they need not be practised. This does not disregard any linguistic principle. It is a most practicable proposal. Dr. R.N. Ghosh, indeed, says (p. 83), "At the college level, a one-skill course viz. a reading course is a perfectly viable proposition." Mr.-J.M. Hardman, in effect, confirms Dr. Ghosh's view when he says (p. 84), it is perfectly possible "to teach reading alone and none of the other skills."

But the question is: Is it possible to follow one-skill courses at the college level in the present situation?

A one-skill course presupposes that at the preliminary level, all the four language skills, viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing have been taught and taught well. Indeed, the best order in which a language can be naturally learnt is listening, speaking, reading and writing. One cannot, in a regular course, soundly teach or learn reading a language, beginning with the recognition of its alphabet. Man is a resourceful animal and when faced with no alternative but to learn it so, that he can do so is a different story.
Remedial Teaching:

College-entrants are evidently ill-equipped in the basic language skills in English. They are not as yet attuned to the basic sentence patterns, let alone complex ones, in English and have a scanty vocabulary. And, these impediments have blunted their interest and confidence in reading anything in English.

Once, therefore, we accept the need to introduce a one-skill course in English at the college level, it follows that the students for whom it is introduced must have successfully taken a sound preliminary course in all the basic language skills.

In practice, the students for whom this investigator recommends a one-skill course, do take a preliminary course in the basic language skills but complete it rather poorly. Consequently, there remains a gap between the desirable and the actual entry language equipment of these students. To see the expected results of a one-skill course at college materialised, it is necessary that there is no significant gap between the knowledge the students have already acquired and the knowledge they are expected to acquire now.
It is ideal if steps are taken at the school level so as to leave school-leavers equipped in the language satisfactorily enough to enable them to take a one-skill course at the college level. Until this is done it becomes the responsibility of the course-designers of English at the college level to take relative steps for bridging the gap if only they wish that their courses are meaningfully followed and completed.

This, of course, adds a new dimension to English teaching at college which is already extremely difficult to manage. But, after all, in doing anything, one does not just perform the ritual of doing it; one rather concentrates on its details and tries to complete it with a fair measure of perfection. No sacrifice will be too great to relieve the students of the burden they have been made to carry.

In the circumstances, there is a strong case for remedial teaching of certain items at the Pre-University level. The programme of remedial teaching must be designed, initiated, pursued and completed in all earnest and with vigour. It bears no fruit if learners find that it is nothing but a replay of the dull, monotonous teaching they had put up with at an early stage. The teaching at this stage must be sound enough to whet as well as feed their appetite to know the language.
Determining the contents of remedial teaching is a task by itself. It becomes necessary to spot, through diagnostic tests, the language areas where average college-entrants are generally weak. Especially, the knowledge of the vocabulary of the General Service List and common structures must be considered essential. The use of articles, though a known antagonist of students, should be given secondary importance in view of a course on a receptive skill to follow.

In the department of remedial teaching, as indeed in introducing the proposed one-skill programme of teaching English in general, there is ample scope for experimentation at an initial stage and an imaginative approach at all stages. Thinking along these lines, it occurs that auto-instructional material can be made use of with advantage for remedial teaching to college-entrants. There is, of course, no substitute for an able teacher; however, in view of the fact that remedial teaching can be made a regular part of the college time-table only by overburdening it or giving less weightage to the new items to be introduced, programmed learning is a good compromise. This would prevent the load of teaching at the Pre-University level from becoming too heavy and spare the students time to set things right.
It is necessary that the students take the task of "remedial learning" seriously. They should, therefore, be made to maintain a journal in which they record their progress with regard to their text-book for programmed learning. Items of programmed learning must also invariably form part of all the tests in English at the level.

**Regular College Courses:**

Regular college courses must consist of five items:

(i) Vocabulary, (ii) Grammar, (iii) Reading Efficiency, (iv) Translation Skill and (v) Reference Technique.

(i) **Vocabulary**: Vocabulary has a special role to play in teaching English as a library language. The vocabulary that should be introduced at the college level is a 'special' vocabulary - a special vocabulary for commerce students and a special vocabulary for science students. This must be evolved by analysing standard English books on the subjects taught at the respective faculty and as many items of this vocabulary as possible should be introduced through text-books of Compulsory English.

(ii) **Grammar**: In view of rather unemotional communication students of commerce or science are to receive, it is possible to list sentence patterns they are going to encounter frequently. The students should be familiarized
with these patterns, especially through suitable exercises in the text-books of Compulsory English.

(iii) Reading Efficiency: Rapid reading must form part of the syllabuses in English at least for the first three years in both the faculties. The students must be taught the technique of efficient reading and provided with enough time on the time-table to apply the technique to their reading and thus improve their reading efficiency.

It is doubtful whether the customary supplementary reader - which is an abridged and adapted version of a novel, generally - could substantially contribute to a student's reading efficiency. Going through around a hundred and fifty pages of simple English for non-detailed study in a year is not much of a challenge or invitation to one's reading capability. One might only leisurely complete the ritual of 'reading' the book without, in the process adding, substantially, to one's reading ability.

One also wonders whether the reading of a hundred and odd pages could be instrumental in sufficiently exposing a student to good literature. Three to four of such simplified works could be an adequate exposure.

In the opinion of the investigator, the Supplementary Reader/s, which can be renamed Rapid Reader/s,
should comprise at least fifty passages along with questions meant to test the reader's comprehension. These passages should be used for timed reading by students as part of classroom teaching and home assignment. The length of the passages for the Readers should be 300 to 600, 600 to 1,000 and 1,000 to 1,500 words in Pre-University, First Year and Second Year classes respectively.

The size of the passages has not been recommended on the basis of any principle. It has been prompted by the investigator's insight combined with his knowledge of undergraduates' language proficiency horizons.

(iv) **Translation Skill**: By making this skill an important part of the syllabus, the students must be helped to acquire it. While at an initial stage, word-to-word translation should be considered satisfactory enough, the goal should be to give the students some measure of competence also in free translation.

(v) **Reference Technique**: The students must be familiarized with the ways they can make use of a bibliography, locate a book in a library, look up dictionaries, encyclopaedias and indexes of books and quote from their sources. Imaginative exercises on these should be so worked out that they meet the wider goal of exposing the students to English
sources of knowledge in their discipline and encouraging them to go, of their own, to such sources time and again.

Text-book Material: In the light of the need to introduce a special vocabulary and the investigator's success in selecting model specimen passages which are highly readable, it is recommended that such vocabularies be introduced through selections from creative literature and journals. Only when some very 'useful' vocabulary items are found not to have been covered in these selections, should a couple of passages be specially written.

The selected passages should be adapted in the following manner:

(a) Structures peculiar to emotional communication must be reduced to the minimum.

(b) 'Useful' vocabulary items are of practical value to the students of a given discipline and are related to their experiences. They will, therefore, be learnt with motivation and positive efforts. Other vocabulary items, however, small in number, must be subjected to a strict selection and substitution. Where possible, they should be substituted by simpler words or phrases. Where necessary, they can be omitted along with a sentence
or two, if need be, without affecting the context and a smooth presentation.

(c) Difficulties, if any, arising out of cultural differences must also be reduced to the bare minimum.

Exercises aimed at consolidating the learning of vocabulary, grammar, reading skill, translation skill and reference technique must be an indispensable part of the text-book material. These exercises, must be systematically done in regular classes or tutorials. Exercises meant to reinforce the knowledge of common language items should also form part of the text-book.

Requisites for the Courses:

The importance and dimensions of the reforms that must be introduced in the field of English teaching make it absolutely necessary that there be a team of research-minded persons who have an insight into the problem. These persons must be given the tools they find necessary and also the privilege, which in effect will be an onerous responsibility, to frame need-oriented syllabuses based on their research, and train college teachers. In other words, there must be a language institute whose prime responsibility should be to produce practical syllabuses and text-books of Compulsory English for various faculties of
universities in Gujarat and train teachers in teaching English in the light of the syllabuses.

For an effective teaching of English as a library language, having trained teachers is a necessity. Almost all of the present teachers of English have an orientation in literature. Most of those who join the profession as yet have the same orientation. Teaching English as a library language requires a two-fold orientation - orientation in language teaching in the first place, and that of teaching it in a particular discipline in the second. For example, the vocabulary for commerce - technical, semi-technical and descriptive words and phrases, frequently repeated affixes, etc. - is quite different from that for science. Though in the teaching of English in both the faculties the basic approach to vocabulary teaching remains the same, details vastly differ. A special training to teach English in a particular discipline, therefore, can produce competent teachers for respective disciplines.

The need to have language oriented teachers can be met in another way. One should be allowed to take a Bachelor's or Master's degree with English language as the special subject.
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The investigator's is but a very modest contribution to resolving the problem of teaching English in Gujarat. A complete resolution of the problem anticipates a tremendous endeavour, spread over a number of years and embracing numerous aspects. The kind of endeavour requires that various researches, big and small, be carried out. A few relevant research topics have been suggested below:

1. A study of vocabulary resources of School-leavers and of final year College students

2. A critical review of the degree of proficiency in English of students and teachers at various stages

3. An investigation into the co-ordination of English teaching between the school stage and the college stage and between different levels of each stage

4. Development of useful vocabularies, one each for various disciplines

5. Preparation and try-out of auto-instructional material for remedial teaching to college-entrants
6. Preparation and experimental try-out of text-books intended to teach the 'useful' vocabulary in various disciplines

7. Experimental studies for developing suitable methods for increasing the reading proficiency of school and college students

8. Developing programmes for appropriate training and orientation of college teachers

9. A critical review of courses leading to specialization in English at B.A. and M.A. levels

10. Developing methods for utilizing the mass media for promoting the teaching of English.