CHAPTER – V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the unique gifts that make human being different from other creatures in this world. It enables one to take an active role in this literal world and to creatively contribute to it. It is an essential tool for meaningful learning in all subject areas and it facilitates learner’s emotional, social and cognitive development. New entrants in school with poor language background remain poor learners and poorest performers in all subject areas unless specially helped in language skills. Failure to develop language competence properly and adequately in the early years will lead to difficulties in learning subsequently through the upper primary, the secondary and higher secondary stage. So language education has to be given a significant place in our educational system. And in the present context, where the whole world has become a global village, where multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception, language education cannot be confined to the study of first language; that is mother tongue or regional language only. It should go beyond that. It has been addressed in India through three-language formula. The basic objective behind three-language formula was and continues to be, national unity and facile intra-state, inter-state and international communication.

The teaching of English Language got much significance in the present context. In the 21st century the whole world has become a global village. Now information is sent and received at an interesting speed. The competitive demands of government, industries, and corporation both national and multinational for technological purpose require an understanding of the language of the technology –

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English. It opens up the ways for global communication and brings people in the global community closer. The global spread of English in the last several years is remarkable. It is unprecedented in several ways: by the increasing number of users of the language; by its depth of penetrating into societies; by its range of functions.

In the teaching of English, the major focus was on the mastery of language skills along with the mastery of communicative competence. Children should have proficiency in all the modalities of language including listening, speaking reading and writing. In the present study the focus is on two aspects that are reading and writing.

Improving reading comprehension and written expression is always been an area of concern for the majority of language teachers and researchers. Numerous researches have been carried out in this area and it resulted in the development of various theories. The domain of reading has always responded to internal and external forces resulting in both gradual and dramatic changes to the domain – changes that have changed the study and practice of reading and writing. The traditional view of reading was influence by the behaviouristic theories. But it has got discredited with the emergence of cognitive theories.

The cognitive and constructivist oriented theories of learning put a lot of emphasis to the knowledge (prior knowledge) that a learner bring to the learning task. The schema theory also shares this view. According to them, all readers both novice and expert readers use their ‘existing knowledge’ and range of cues from the text and situational context in which the reading occurs to construct the meaning from the text and they also make use of cognitive strategies to construct meaning. It leads to the development on instructional strategies. The researches show that cognitive strategies can be taught, and when taught, they can lead to increased performance. The researchers used strategy instruction to promote reading comprehension such as the
use of – mental imagery, generating specific type of questions, summarizing, semantic mapping, story mapping, predicting etc.

Semantic mapping is a technique developed by Johnson and Pearson (1978). A semantic map is a graphic arrangement of words and it shows how new words and ideas are related to each other within a text. Or it is been defined as “a graphic arrangement showing the major ideas and relationship in text or among word meanings (Sinatra, Stahl-Gemake & Berg, 1984, p. 22).

Semantic Mapping is a term, which “embraces a variety of strategies designed to display graphically information within categories related to central concept” (Johnson, in the forward to Heimlich & Pit leman, p. v). In other words categories and associations are indicated visually in a diagram or “map”. The Semantic Mapping Strategy used in this study is designed by following the constructivist and social constructivist paradigms. The steps used in modified semantic mapping strategy used in this study were guided by these constructivist and Social constructivist principles.

5.2 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Reading and writing are the two areas where the children have a lot of difficulties. These are two vital skills that child should master, along with the other skills to creatively participate in this literal world. They make use of reading and writing widely in and out of schools. Apart from that reading gives a lot of pleasure and it gives access to the world of knowledge. Writing is also equally important. Writing is been viewed as a necessary skill for participation and success from primary level to higher education and it provides access to the powerful social, professional, and organizational roles. Writing is actually thought in the paper. But it is one of the highly neglected areas in school education. So there is still a lot to do in our school education to foster the reading comprehension and written expression of the children.
The cognitivists and constructivist view of reading comprehension emphasize the interactive nature of reading (Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977) and the constructive nature of comprehension (Anderson, Reynolds, Shallert & Goetz, 1977). The reader constructs meaning by making use of their prior knowledge. Thus, two important characteristics of readers - the knowledge that reader bring to the task and the strategies that they use to foster and maintain understanding – play an important role. The schema theory also shares this view.

In most cases a common problem students experience in reading classes is the feeling that they know absolutely nothing about the subject they are reading about. However, this feeling may be more complex than generally thought. The problem may not be the lack of background knowledge, but rather the failure to activate that knowledge.

According to Chia (2001) many teaching techniques have been developed to activate students’ prior knowledge for effective top-down processing in order to facilitate reading comprehension. And one of the major activities that activate student’s appropriate background knowledge of a given topic is semantic map (Freeman, 1980; Heimlich & Pittleman, 1986). The map is an organized arrangement of vocabulary concepts which reveals what students already know about the topic and provides them with a base upon which they can construct the new information learned from the text. It is true with writing too.

There are other studies which show that graphical organizers like semantic mapping improve the reading comprehension of students. Kim, Wanzek and Wei (2004) clearly depict that the activation of prior knowledge and the visual representation of information in the form of graphical organizers can be used effectively to promote reading comprehension and written expression among students.
An extensive review was carried out in this area. In the light of the review, the researcher made a few observations. The first one was, there is contradicting evidence on the effectiveness of semantic mapping as a strategy to improve students’ comprehension. While some studies suggest that semantic mapping is effective, there is some other that shows it is not effective in promoting comprehension, so the investigator felt that there is a need to ascertain the effectiveness of the strategy through further study.

The second observation, based on the review was, though there are researches carried out in the area of semantic mapping; semantic mapping under constructivist paradigm is unexplored. So the researcher was keen in investigating the effect of a semantic mapping strategy that is designed by incorporating the principles of constructivism and social constructivism in promoting reading comprehension and written expression in English.

The review of the literature suggests that the types of text one read have got an impact on reading comprehension. So in the present study, an effort has been made to see the effect of semantic mapping strategy on two different types of texts – expository text, and argumentation and persuasive text, in finding the effect on reading comprehension. The effect of semantic mapping strategy was studied at different levels of comprehension in order to understand whether the strategy promote comprehension at all levels of reading comprehension, which was not properly addressed in the earlier studies. The three levels considered in this are literal, inferential and critical level of reading comprehension.

The review further reveal that, though there were studies carried to study the effect of semantic mapping strategy on writing, the effect of the strategy on improving
various communicative purposes like – to persuade, to explain and to convey experience etc. were not studied. So that also has been included as a part of this study.

There are studies conducted on reading comprehension, that suggest that, sometimes it takes longer time to see the effect of a strategy instruction (Berkowitz, 1986; Heinze-Fry & Novak, 1990) and the investigator could not find studies that investigated the delayed effect of semantic mapping strategy on reading comprehension. So an effort has been made in this study to see the delayed effect of semantic mapping strategy on reading comprehension.

In the light of all the observations, it was felt there is a need to study the effect of semantic mapping strategy on reading comprehension and written expression in English among secondary school students. The study helps to understand how a semantic mapping strategy that has incorporated the principles of constructivism and social constructivism will work out in the classroom and how far it helps in promoting the reading comprehension and written expression of students.

5.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The semantic mapping strategy under constructive paradigm is used in the present study. It is a modified version, designed by the researcher following the constructivist and social constructivist principles. This study intends to find out the effect of the semantic mapping strategy under constructivist paradigm on developing reading comprehension and written expression in English among secondary school students.

Thus the present study is entitled as “Effects of Semantic Mapping Strategy on Reading Comprehension and Written Expression in English among Secondary School Students”.
5.4 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

a. Semantic Mapping

Semantic Mapping is defined as a categorical structuring of information in graphic form.

b. Strategy

Strategy is thought of as conscious, instantiated, and flexible plan a readers adapts to a variety of texts and tasks.

c. Reading Comprehension

The operational definition of Reading Comprehension, used in this study is a modified version of definition used by NAEP (Reading Framework, 2009, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2008).

Reading comprehension is defined as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. It is an active and complex process that involves

- Understanding written text
- Developing and interpreting meaning

Understanding written text: Readers attend to ideas and content a text by locating and recalling information and by making inferences needed for literal comprehension of the text. In doing so, readers draw on their fundamental skills for decoding printed words and assessing their vocabulary knowledge.

Developing and interpreting meaning: Readers integrate the sense they have made of the text with their knowledge of other texts and with their outside experience. They use increasingly more complex inference skills to comprehend information implied by the text.
Levels of reading comprehension

1. Literal Reading Comprehension

Literal reading comprehension refers to locating and recognizing information that is presented in a very straightforward manner. It covers facts and details and relationships between ideas (such as comparison, contrast, sequence of events, or cause and effect) that are stated directly in the passage.

2. Inferential Reading Comprehension

Inferential reading comprehension is the ability of students to interpret and determine what is implied or meant rather than what is stated in the text, by tapping one’s prior knowledge or experience, attaching new knowledge to old information and making logical leaps and educated guesses.

3. Critical Reading Comprehension

Critical reading is defined as an active and purposeful process of comprehending, questioning and evaluating information presented in the text in order to react objectively and intelligently to the writer’s ideas.

4. Written Expression

Written expression is the ability to express one’s thoughts, ideas and feelings, correctly and meaningfully in a systematically organized manner through writing. It is a complex, multifaceted and purposeful act of communication.

5. Secondary School Students

The students who study in 8th, 9th and 10th standard of schooling are considered as secondary school students in this study.
5.5 VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

Independent Variable

Semantic Mapping Strategy

Dependent Variable

Reading Comprehension

Written Expression

5.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to:

1. develop Semantic Mapping Strategy under Social Constructivist paradigm

2. find out the effectiveness of the Semantic Mapping Strategy on Students Reading Comprehension at
   - literal level
   - inferential level
   - critical level

3. to find out the effectiveness of the Semantic Mapping Strategy on the reading comprehension of various texts:
   - expository and
   - argumentation and persuasive in English at three levels.

4. find out the delayed effectiveness of Semantic Mapping Strategy on Student’s Reading Comprehension at
   - literal level
   - inferential level
   - critical level

5. find out the effectiveness of the Semantic Mapping Strategy on Student’s Written Expression.
6. find out the effectiveness of the Semantic Mapping Strategy on Students’ ability to use writing for various communicate purposes like
   - to persuade
   - to explain
   - to convey experience

5.7 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study.

1. Semantic Mapping Strategy is more effective than Conventional Teaching in enhancing Students’ Reading Comprehension in English at
   - literal level
   - inferential level
   - critical level

2. Semantic Mapping Strategy is more effective than Conventional Teaching in enhancing Students’ Reading Comprehension of
   - expository text
   - argumentation and persuasive text in English at three levels

3. Semantic Mapping Strategy is more effective than Conventional Teaching in enhancing Students’ Written Expression in English.

4. Semantic Mapping Strategy is more effective than Conventional Teaching in enhancing students’ ability to write in English for various communicative purposes:
   - to persuade
   - to explain
   - to convey experience
5.8 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The present study was carried out to find out the effect of Semantic Mapping Strategy on Reading Comprehension and Written Expression in English among secondary school students. The design adopted in this study is Quasi Experimental, wherein a non-equivalent Pre-test, Post-test design was used. Quasi experimental designs are those that are “almost” true experimental designs, except that the participants are not randomly assigned to groups (Mertens, Donna, M.). It is different from true experimental design in two ways. Firstly, the participants are not randomly selected from the specified population and secondly, the participants are not randomly assigned to experimental group and control group. Nevertheless quasi experimental designs provide a relative high degree of experimental control in natural settings and they clearly represent a step up from the true experimental designs as they enable the researcher to compare the performance of the experimental group with that of a control group.

The Non Equivalent- Groups Design is often used in classroom experiments when experimental and control groups are such naturally assembled groups as intact classes, which may be similar (Best & Kahn, 2006). To conduct the study, the researcher selected intact groups, rather than assigning students randomly to experimental group and control group as it was not possible since it affects the schedule of routine activities at school. Quasi experimental design is commonly used in studies of this nature as it has a high internal validity. The experimental group and control group were selected from the same school.
The design of the study is represented by the following diagram.

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
O_1 & X & O_2 & O_3 \\
O_1 & C & O_2 & O_3 \\
\end{array}
\]

Where
- \( O_1 = \) Pretest
- \( O_2 = \) Post Test
- \( O_3 = \) Delayed Post Test
- \( X = \) Experimental Treatment
- \( C = \) Conventional Teaching

5.9 SAMPLING

The researcher was interested in studying the effect of the Semantic Mapping Strategy on reading comprehension and written expression at the Secondary School Level. The secondary school students of Kerala were the population. Purposive sampling technique was employed in the selection of school. One of the co-education schools at Thrissur district in Kerala state was selected for this study. The school has got six sections at 9th standard level. Out of which two intact sections were randomly selected as experimental group and control group by using simple random procedure.

5.10 TOOLS

The researcher intended to assess students’ Reading Comprehension and Written Expression in English. So the following tools were developed and used in this study.

1. READING COMPREHENSION TEST

a) Reading Comprehension text -1

   (Based on Argumentation and Persuasive Text)

b) Reading Comprehension text -2

   (Based on Expository Text)
II. WRITTEN EXPRESSION TEST

a) Written Expression Test – 1
   (Communicative Purpose – ‘to persuade’)

b) Written Expression Test – 2
   (Communicative Purpose – ‘to explain’)

c) Written Expression Test – 3
   (Communicative Purpose – ‘to covey experience’)

5.10.1 Steps Followed in the Development of Reading Comprehension Test

1. Survey of the aims and objectives in the subject field.
2. Test Specification.
3. Preparation of test items.
4. Formulating precise instructions for administration and scoring.
5. Critical evaluation of the reading passage and test items by the experts.
6. Tryout of the trial form.
7. Statistical analysis of the items to know the difficulty level and discriminative index.
8. Selection of the best items for the final test.

5.11 PROCEDURAL DETAILS OF THE STUDY

   In the present study, the following procedure was adopted. At first pre tests were conducted on the month of October, 2010 for both experimental group and control group to assess their reading comprehension and written expression in English. Later, the experimental students were taught 5 selected units in English by using Semantic Mapping Strategy by the researcher where as the control group was taught by the regular teacher by using conventional method. The intervention
extended over a period of 13 weeks, once the intervention was over, post tests were conducted for both experimental group and control group and a delayed post were also conducted for both groups in reading comprehension after a gap of 8 months after intervention.

**The study was carried out in the following stages**

Stage I – Preparatory Stage

Stage II – Implementation Stage

**Stage I: Preparatory Stage**

Following steps were carried out in the Preliminary stage

1. Development of Semantic Mapping Strategy used in this study
2. Content Analysis
3. Development of Unit Plan for Standard IX
4. Development of Lesson Plans

**Stage II: Implementation**

The study was carried out in the following phases

Phase I: Pilot Study

Phase II: Administration of Pretests

Phase III: Experimental Intervention
   a. Modeling of Semantic Mapping Strategy
   b. Intervention

Phase IV: Administration of Post tests

Phase V: Administration of Delayed Post tests
Non-equivalent control group design showing the phases, tools, intervention and sample of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td><strong>READING COMPREHENSION TEST</strong></td>
<td><strong>READING COMPREHENSION TEST</strong></td>
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<td>(1) Reading Comprehension Test (Based on Argumentation &amp; Persuasive Text)</td>
<td>(1) Reading Comprehension Test (Based on Argumentation &amp; Persuasive Text)</td>
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<td>(2) Reading Comprehension text (Based on Expository Text)</td>
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<td>(2) Written Expression Test (To Explain)</td>
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<td>(3) Written Expression Test (To Covey experience)</td>
<td>(3) Written Expression Test (To Covey experience)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intervention (13 weeks)</td>
<td>Teaching English using Semantic Mapping Strategy</td>
<td>Teaching English using Conventional Method</td>
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<td>Post test</td>
<td><strong>READING COMPREHENSION TEST</strong></td>
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<td>(1) Written Expression Test (To Persuade)</td>
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<td>(2) Written Expression Test (To Explain)</td>
<td>(2) Written Expression Test (To Explain)</td>
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<td>(3) Written Expression Test (To Covey experience)</td>
<td>(3) Written Expression Test (To Covey experience)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delayed Post test (8 months after intervention)</td>
<td><strong>READING COMPREHENSION TEST</strong></td>
<td><strong>READING COMPREHENSION TEST</strong></td>
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<td>(1) Reading Comprehension Test (Based on Argumentation &amp; Persuasive Text)</td>
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<td>Number of Students</td>
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<td>36</td>
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5.12 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The data was analyzed by using both descriptive and inferential statistics. ANCOVA was used for inferential analysis. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) is a method of analysis that enables researcher to equate the pre-experimental status of the groups in terms of relevant known variables. ANCOVA is particularly useful when treatments have been randomly assigned to intact groups, since it can adjust for small pre-existing differences on key variables that may exist among intact groups prior to the research. The initial difference in the status of the groups can be removed statistically so that the groups can be compared as though their initial status were same. Therefore, ANCOVA was selected for the analysis of data. ANCOVA was used to control the initial difference between the experimental group and control group by adjusting the pre-test means of the groups.

5.13 MAJOR FINDINGS

- Semantic mapping strategy was effective in developing reading comprehension in English among secondary school students and the effect was sustaining over a period of 8 months.
- Semantic mapping strategy was effective in developing reading comprehension in English at literal level among secondary students and the effect was sustaining over a period of 8 months.
- Semantic mapping strategy was effective in developing reading comprehension in English at inferential level among secondary students and the effect was sustaining over a period of time.
- Semantic mapping strategy was found to be not effective in developing reading comprehension in English at critical level among secondary students and the same result was reported even in delayed post test.
- Semantic mapping strategy was effective in developing reading comprehension of ‘argumentation and persuasive text’ in English among secondary school students and the effect was sustaining over a period of time.
- Semantic mapping strategy was effective in developing reading comprehension of ‘argumentation and persuasive text’ in English among secondary school students and the effect was sustaining over a period of time.
- Semantic mapping strategy was effective in developing reading comprehension of ‘argumentation and persuasive text’ at literal level among secondary school students and the effect was sustaining over a period of time.
- Semantic mapping strategy was effective in developing reading comprehension of ‘argumentation and persuasive text’ at inferential level among secondary school students and the effect was sustaining over a period of time.
- Semantic mapping strategy was effective in developing written expression in English among secondary school students.
Semantic mapping strategy was found to be not effective in developing reading comprehension of expository text in English at critical level among secondary students and the same result is reported even in delayed post test.

Semantic mapping strategy was effective in developing written expression in English among secondary school students.

Semantic mapping strategy was effective in developing secondary school students’ ability to write in English for the communicative purpose ‘to persuade’.

Semantic mapping strategy was effective in developing secondary school students’ ability to write in English for the communicative purpose ‘to explain’.

Semantic mapping strategy was effective in developing secondary school students’ ability to write in English for the communicative purpose ‘to convey experience’.

5.14 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study examined the effect of a semantic mapping strategy (that is developed based on the principles of constructivist and social constructivist principle) on reading comprehension and written expression in English. In the light of the study, certain pedagogical implications are presented.

1. The English language teachers can effectively integrate a learner centred Semantic Mapping Strategy in their classroom inorder to develop students reading comprehension in English.

2. Semantic mapping strategy can be integrated at all the phases of reading instruction – pre-reading, while reading and after reading to promote the reading comprehension of students.

3. The more learner centred and constrvist based semantic mapping helps to lower the affective filter in a language classroom, so that the learner will actively participate in the classroom activities with out fear and anxieity and it will have a
positive effect on their language acquisition. Even the shy and timid child will participate in the activity.

4. The pair work and group work that are carried out as part of the semantic mapping strategy provides a lot of opportunities for meaningful interaction and it will facilitate language acquisition.

5. The teachers of English can effectively integrate the semantic mapping strategy as part of their instruction to promote written expression of students. It is one of the effective strategies that could be integrated at all phases of a writing instruction – pre-writing, while writing and during revision process.

6. Teachers should show interest in teaching cognitive strategies to the children; so they can use it independently as and when it is required. Semantic Mapping strategy could be used at any level of reading instruction.

7. The textbook writers can integrate various semantic maps in the textbook that will facilitate better comprehension of students.

8. Semantic Mapping strategy can be used as an evaluation tool, where teachers can ask students to complete the map.

9. The semantic maps drawn by the students could be displayed in the classroom, so they feel proud about their work, and it also help them to revisit the ideas and reinforce their learning.

10. Teachers can adopt more process-oriented writing strategies by using semantic maps.
**5.15 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

1. The study can be replicated with other population including students in the primary level and secondary level.

2. The study can be carried out in English as a foreign language context also.

3. In the present study, the use of semantic mapping strategy was restricted to the teaching of English only; it can be used for the teaching of other languages.

4. The studies could be carried out to see the effect of semantic mapping strategy on content area instruction.

5. In the present study, only reading comprehension and written expression were taken, a study could be carried to see the effect of semantic mapping on other language skills.

6. A qualitative analysis of maps drawn by students and its relation to their reading comprehension and written expression can be explored.

**5.16 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. The study was confined to IX standard students.

2. Only two language skills i.e., reading and writing were taken for this study.

**5.17 CONCLUSION**

In this study, an attempt was made to see effect of a semantic mapping strategy under constructivist paradigm on reading comprehension and written expression in English among secondary school students. The study also explored the effect of the semantic mapping strategy on various text structures, and different levels of reading comprehension – literal, inferential and critical. The findings of the study show that semantic mapping strategy can be effectively used to develop reading comprehension and written expression in English. So child centred and constructivist based semantic mapping strategy could be effectively integrated in English language classroom and that will make the learning of English more effective and enjoyable to the student.