CHAPTER 3

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In this chapter on the analysis of the data collected through the survey we have tried to make a very simple analysis of them to meet some basic needs of this dissertation. In relation to that only the most relevant items from the responses made by the teachers and learners are incorporated in the study. And as such, they are included in two separate tables in the Appendix.

3.1.0 Data Analysis: Students’ Responses

Before going into the study of the data collected we are to set the gender ratio of learner respondents in this survey. It may throw some new light on the gender issue in the H.S. English teaching in our institutes here. There are 90 girls from 3 girls’ schools and 51 girls from 3 co-educational schools. The total goes up to 141. The rest 219 out of 360 students approached are boys of which 90 are from 3 boys’ schools. And the rest 129 boys are from six co-educational schools. The ratio of the total number of girls and boys covered in the survey thus stands at 1:1.6. The number of girls and boys are equal in strength (90 each) from each set of 3 girls and boys’ schools covered in the survey. But the difference between them in number is wide in the other six co-educational schools. The number of boys and girls are 129 and 51 respectively in those schools. It may be due to the unequal gender representation in our public life. In the co-ed schools the ratio of girls and boys is 1:2.67 respectively.

While recording the responses made by students, the focus is mainly placed on some of the most basic items, such as those from 4d. to 4h. (excepting 4g) and 6A. and 6B. Those items mentioned are directly related to the area of our research here. Responses to some other items are just posted on counting sheets for any future studies of social and academic interests. In terms of general response to the most difficult area of the four basic
items (Appendices III and IV), the majority of respondents (48.88%) opted for vocabulary (questionnaire item 4h). Options for grammar stand at 16.13% among the respondents, while 18.05% of respondents opt for local meaning (stated as ‘meaning’ in questionnaire) and 16.94% for global senses (‘themes’ in their academic context). This ranking is done in terms of learners’ selection of most difficult items from their learning point of view in a descending order. Out of four chosen areas of difficulty in learning a hierarchical framework is offered. We want to be concerned here only with the first choice of difficulty made by learners. For the further vindication of this result, a comprehension test (questionnaire items no. 6A and 6B) on the actual text pieces follows. In item no. 6A, 51.94% of learner respondents have successfully opted for the correct answer (iv) for its global sense. To question no. 6B the success rate is a meagre 9.16%. This shows the poor skill of skimming on their part to reach the global information. In the case of reading prose the choice for global sense is near the range of choice for vocabulary need. In case of poetry, it is very low, which caused a great problem in comprehension.

The report of the survey posts vocabulary at the top of the difficulty scale, and it is most likely to vindicate the basis of the hypothesis of this project. In the current L2 studies vocabulary assumes special significance chiefly for its semantic properties. In that sense one may calculate the students’ demand for vocabulary as being kindred in a sense to the other two items of 4h. (iii) meaning and (iv) theme. As such, if we club those three items together, the total score of student needs would shoot up to an overwhelming 83.89%. In relation to their text pieces, respondents’ difficulty ranking (4g) also places vocabulary at the top with 44.79% followed by ideas (24.56%), style (21.11%) and grammar (9.34%). The near merging trend continues even separately also between North Bengal and South Bengal. In these parts of North and South, the choice for vocabulary as their most difficult areas are 43.88% and 45% respectively. These two figures individually also approximate the overall state-level figure of 48.88%. The other choices under this term also show a similar trend. To break up the choices of hierarchical difficulty made by learners along the gender line, the ratio falls within a similar range of the general learner ratio. For girl-students vocabulary gets
the highest 45.78%, and for the boy-students it is at the top with 50.55%. Again, the lumping together of vocabulary choices with the other two semantic ones (20% for meaning and 9% for themes) would take the sum total to the level of 73.58% in the case of girl-students and 70.97% (13.81% for meaning and 6.61% for themes) for boy-students. In this text-based approach, the other three items, ideas, style and grammar, rank accordingly receiving 24.11%, 20.36% and 12.61% respectively.

This apart, there are some academic questions enquiring about learners’ attitudes to and habits of learning. Question no. 4d. reflects a low rate of learners who are used to reading English dailies (37.22%) whereas the readers of L1 newspapers are greater in number (83.33%). This happens despite their passing through the Secondary English course which includes a teaching item on reading newspapers. Item no. 4e. has looked for learner motivation in reading English. The external motivation like examination (Hill, Lewis and Lewis 2000: 95) places students’ choice at 66.38% and the motivation for language use in daily life is chosen by no less than 45.55% of respondents. For intrinsic motivation, i.e. for pleasure the score is not so encouraging (16.94%), and for job it is 34.72%. Of course, there is a great deal of overlap in choices being multiple in individual cases. Item no. 4f. is left out of this reckoning in the text as there is no scope seen for its immediate use here.

These three basic aspects are focused as it can be put to some use for the sake of major learning objectives of the syllabus. First, if it is the language skills, like reading and writing, the likings and dislikes of learners would be a major factor to be taken into account in classroom teaching. For the development of reading skill among learners the teacher can well depend upon learner-friendly aspects like those newspaper items. 45.55% of respondents favour the use of language in everyday life. In later chapters it will be attempted to show how to deal with the syllabus in the classroom in the light of above findings. The above findings can be at least made to address major areas of learning, like reading, writing, and above all vocabulary development in a meaningful way.

The study of all other data is left out for the time being to facilitate the smooth
progress of the present work within its limited space. Those were initially incorporated to cover up any major shortcomings in the outcome of the survey. The areas like learner family and social backgrounds (item no.s 4a to 4c, 5a and 5b) would have been a key factor, had the data on academic issues been found absolutely insufficient for the study of the present context. The data relating to the personal information of learners would have been utilized otherwise, if the scope and space of this work had absolutely needed it.

Some other sociolinguistic aspects of learner responses are also taken into account in the survey so as to make a little bit of their needs study. This aspect of needs study is rarely attempted in this area earlier. Following Munby's (1972) principles it is also necessary to take this into consideration for some analysis and understanding of classroom activities. The relevant data from the survey are to be included here so that they can inform classroom teachers in the main and educators, the authorities, scholars, the learners as well as their guardians also. First of all, item no. 4d sought the learner habit of private reading, particularly newspapers. Again, a converging tendency is very prominent among respondents across the state.

Of course, there is an overlap of choices in this reckoning; every one was given a free hand to choose more than one goal. This motivational graph of the learner needs would not only serve the present author, but also the target teachers of this paper. That's why in Chapter I it is set as twin goals to upgrade the success rate in the examinations as well as to develop the learning aptitudes of the learners in general. However, this project did not seek to go into the complexity of further balancing of percentage in the overlap choices. Partial score-sheets are presented in the Appendices for any further academic curiosity and future research. It is hoped that just some simple calculations would be enough for mapping up the general perspectives of the ELT at the tertiary level of the intermediate course.

The teachers in the urban context can do what those in the other two can hardly afford to follow. It entails for those latter categories of teachers to use quite a different set of techniques to deal with their students in the classroom. The crux of the problems lies in the
latter two cases with the classroom teachers to present a woman-friendly approach to
teaching, particularly in dealing with the male-dominated texts ('Rajam and Mani'), and to
give emphasis on the few woman-friendly texts (Manikuntala Sen’s, ‘Bishop’s
Candlesticks’). In all three types of area the urban preference for vocabulary is way ahead
with 58.80% whereas the semi-urban is 41.63%, the rural 45.54%. Again, vocabulary
ranks topmost individually in each region followed by their choices for meaning and themes
as poor second (17.12% and 18.89% respectively). In semi-urban cases vocabulary
choice(41.46%) is just a few points ahead of its closest follower ‘themes’ (36.38%). In the
rural case, vocabulary is 44.33%, followed by the next two aspects in terms of numerical
strength, grammar and meaning (23% and 22.65% respectively). One interesting point in the
whole table is the lowest number of demands for grammar (16.13%) beside meaning
(18.057%) and theme (16.94%). None of them is individually half the total score of
vocabulary. All the three together (52%) is just 3-4% ahead of the individual score of
vocabulary (48.88%). In that unequal balance of strength among these four vital aspects of
language study vocabulary proves to be a strong contender for special attention, due to its
unique attraction for both teachers (to be seen later) and their learners.

3.1.1 Teacher Responses Aanalysed

Besides the responses from some students in the +2 classes in the state, the responses
from some of the practising English teachers to another set of questions in the form of a
separate questionnaire meant for them, are also similarly processed and analysed. The basic
frame of approach and the framework of the study share some points with those of stu-
dents' questionnaire. There are certain areas there which may follow the same points as with
the set for the students (like the items of hierarchy of difficulty and ease). But, obviously this
is for a different outlook at the learner position from their teachers’ viewpoint. The rest of
the items in the questionnaire are connected with the teachers’ exclusive rights to be con-
cerned with their professional paraphernalia (e. g. their attitude to the structure of the
syllabus, to the role of teaching experiences, the teacher training, etc.). And at the end their
suggestions were sought in relation to their respective individual context.
Though the respondent-teachers did not get any more scope to address some of the questions from the questionnaire, their other responses to some very vital points are set forth in the analysis. In item No.’s 8 and 9, in the main, for instance, one cannot hope to seek the sufficient quantity of responses for any proper processing to be appropriate to this study. It has happened despite my special caution to check that all the earlier queries are being adequately addressed by the informants.

Their answers to question no. 9B (Appendix III) are to be considered as being their great reflective observations. In the statistical analysis their observations show some definite inclinations which are to be proven significant in the case of the impending change that is now apparent in the current syllabus. Sixty per cent of them do not support the earlier distribution of marks between two major components of language and literature in the syllabus, which was 50:50. Out of those 60% forty-seven per cent (47%) had thought of it otherwise, that is, it is not all right. They had rather favoured some increase in language component. And the rest remained silent in making comments here. For literature only 24% per cent of the respondents answered favourly. Of the teachers who were interviewed, a majority possess one or two professional degrees, and are positive about its worth. Of the 24 teachers only three do not have any professional degree in their possession, and of these three two ‘freshers’ are yet to get it, and the remaining one without any further scope for he is so elderly. In response to question no. 8, 91.66 per cent posted a positive reply, and only 4.16% is not in its favour. And the other 4.16% (just one among twenty-four) skipped it without giving any reply.

Item no. 11 (Appendix III) has got a special significance for its tally with the learner response for a common target. The teachers’ response to item no. 11 is as such: 41.66% for vocabulary, 29.16% for grammar, 16.66% for meaning and the rest of 12.5% in favour of themes being hierarchically most difficult in the syllabus. The lumping together of all the semantic components, as in the case of the learners’ reply, the total sum would move up to an overwhelming 70.83%. For item no. 12a the same 70.83 % favoured a special stress on vocabulary teaching. And to question no. 12b, 66.66% favour the use of dictionary (iv) for vocabulary development. 20.83% are in favour of glossary (ii), and 12.5% shows their
sympathy for teaching word forms. In item no. 13 87.5% replied negatively and the rest 12.5% the otherwise. Finally item no. 14 elicits a favourable reply from 29.17%. 45.83% made a negative reply for reforms in evaluations, and 25% made no commitment.