CHAPTER VII

Methods and Procedure

In the present chapter the investigator has attempted to describe the methods and procedures taken for the present study. The need was felt of evolving methods and procedures for conducting the study in the following lines—

They are—
1) Method of vocabulary collection
2) Method of constructing the check lists
3) Method of drawing the sample
4) Method of administering the check lists
5) Method of collecting the data
6) Method of analysing the data

Method of vocabulary collection

According to the objective of this study, it is worthwhile to evolve a method of vocabulary collection. The present investigator will discuss the merit and applicability of the different methods and clarify the methods adopted for the present study.

Word frequency counts

Word frequency lists are prepared by actual collection of all the words found in different kinds of reading materials and by noting the frequency of occurrence of each. Words are counted for two reasons—

1) To discover in a word-frequency list words which are of more importance so as to teach these in the earlier stages of the course. Thus in Thorndike's Count of 4½ million running words from books, letters and newspapers etc. the word 'pack' occurred 330 times, the word 'pariah' 19 times the word "parlance" 8 times and the word "petite" once.

2) To show how much is to be taught in a certain part of the school course. (1)

High or low frequency hardly reveals difficulty level of a word. Unless it is tested on the students and its difficulty value for a given age is determined statistically, a word-list cannot be considered appropriate or fit for a given grade.

Word-frequency is not, of course, the sole index of value; it merely indicates that the word is probably valuable for speaking and still more important probably for understanding, because it is likely to be heard or read. (2)

Collection of spoken vocabulary

Spoken vocabulary consists of words that a person uses in dialogues, monologues' seminar, discussions, debates, platform speeches and group discussions. The spoken vocabulary of children is collected with the help of various sources.
(a) Home-environment.
(b) Play ground.
(c) Club and local institutions.
(d) Society and social gatherings.
(e) Religious institutions.
(f) School
(g) Tournaments and
(h) Radio programmes.

The spoken vocabulary list is needed to fulfil one of the objectives of language teaching that is to enable the students to speak the language correctly.

Collection of writing vocabulary:

The writing vocabulary of a person consists of words that a person uses in letters, essays compositions, examination scripts and various types of written work. For collection of written vocabulary the kinds of writings, generally sampled are essays, poems, composition of children's magazines, school magazines, academic projects, examination scripts, letter written by children etc.

Collection of reading vocabulary

Written vocabulary are those words that one understands when he sees them in print or writing. The sources of reading vocabulary are text-books, school magazines, children's corner in magazines and newspaper, books in the school
libraries, books written for children etc.

**Collection of reproduction vocabulary**

In eliciting reproduction, vocabulary from children usually essays and letters are sampled. The reproduction vocabulary represent the active vocabulary of the children and thereby the actual vocabulary list can be prepared.

**Collection of listening vocabulary**

Listening vocabulary means the words that a person can follow when heard from various sources like instructions, story telling, Radio broadcasts, speeches, etc. The collection of such vocabularies are generally made for younger children.

**Methods of vocabulary collection adopted in the present study**

The present study has been carried out in two phases. At the first phase the pilot study was undertaken and in the second phase the final study was made.

**Collection of words for the pilot study**

At the outset, the investigator studied the syllabi for classes IV and V as produced by the State Text Book Production and Publication Corporation and other private agencies. The syllabi consists of a number of subjects. They are—
Of these different areas of study, the investigator has left out the English text books as her study is made regarding the Assamese vocabulary only. She has decided to collect the words from the text books for class IV and V in the first phase; because the students of class VI who have read the books for class IV and V though may find the words easy, but the investigator is not sure as which words are easy and what are difficult. She collected the words from text books meant for class IV and V. Again these words of the lower classes are the actual vocabulary of the students.

Finally, a number of books are selected (3) from where words have been collected.

In the tabulation of the words the following principles have been observed—

1) The selected vocabulary have been drawn in the form of a word list.
2) Irregular, inflexional and morphological variations of words have been collected and have been counted as separate units.
3) Homonyms have been counted as separate units.
4) Proper nouns have been omitted.

Thus collecting 1362 words from 125000 running words only the investigator finally selected only 1327 words for the pilot study.
Construction of check lists

The words are alphabetically arranged for constructing the check list and divided into six separate lists. Each word is accompanied by four alternative meanings of which only one is correct. Four dictionaries have been consulted to find the correct meaning of each word. Each list is accompanied by instruction to the students and parallel examples.

Administration of the check lists

The check lists are then tried on 300 students of four secondary schools of greater Gauhati. The students of these schools are representatives of the parent population because, it is observed that they belong to all the districts under investigation of the main study. But the investigator has not gone for sophisticated sampling in the pilot study.

The investigator herself administered the tests on the students. The test was taken for three days in each school. Each day two lists were administered in two sessions with enough time for each list and inbetween the two sessions. Each list was explained to the students by the investigator. Parallel examples were written on the black boards. The investigator was careful enough to see that the students carry on the tests in a calm and quite atmosphere without any strain. No fixed time-limit was set and the students were given enough time to complete the lists. In this way the six
lists were completed. It was observed that all the students were very co-operative, interested and enthusiastic. After collecting all the check lists the investigator checked the lists and the percentages of the children are found out who attempted the correct meanings. Of the 1327 words 490 words were known to more than 70% of the students, the rest were known by less than 70% of the students.

The main study

For the second phase of the study the investigator collected content words from a large number of sources. She collected words from all the text books and reference books written for class VI prescribed by the D.P.I. of Assam and produced by The Assam State Text Book Production and Publication Corporation Limited. She also collected words from other written materials meant for children such as story books, children's magazines, children's corners in the newspapers, award winning books for children etc. She also collected words from children in the classroom, in the playground tournaments, children's gatherings in the social, religious and recreational institutions and from the children's programmes of the All India Radio. With these words, the investigator added the 837 words collected in the first phase of the study and known by less than 70% of the students. Thus the total words numbered 1986. The investigator eliminated those words known by 70% of the students in the first phase on the ground that if 70% of the
children know the word then it must be considered too easy as they are mainly collected from books written for students of class IV and V. So it is considered that these words are too easy for class VI students.

The total 1986 words collected for the final study are then distributed into 8 check lists. Each list consists of 240 to 251 words. Each word has four alternative meanings against it among which only one is correct. To insert the correct and appropriate meaning of each word four standard Assamese dictionaries are being consulted and the list is prepared. Each list is accompanied by instructions to the correct meaning and also to enter the serial number in the bracket provided along with each word. Thus the lists consist of words which are in the form of multiple choice test items.

These lists were printed each with the necessary instructions on the top of the front page of each list. The investigator had taken special care in proof reading in the press so that the printer's devil would not creep into the lists. After proper scrutiny they were made ready for final administration on an adequate number of school children studying in the secondary schools of Assam.