Chapter V: The Experiment (Rural schools)

5.1 Description of the experiment

5.2 Administration of the test
5.0 This chapter goes on to describe the experiment / try out of the material prepared and techniques in the rural schools. The purpose was to get a larger base for the study, and to see if the students coming from the rural background had better/less understanding of poetry than those coming from urban/semi-urban background. Students coming from these areas, are less exposed to L-2 than those coming from urban/semi-urban background.

For the purpose of the experiment, the investigator randomly selected two schools from Mahesana and Bharuch districts. They were:

1. J.M. Kanya Vidyalaya Higher Secondary (Unjha)
2. Sarvajanik Higher Secondary (Nabipur)

The school in Mahesana district was a girls school, while the one in the Bharuch district was a co-educational one.

The investigator worked for a period of eight weeks in each of these schools. The experiment/tryout in each of these schools like those in the urban schools had four parts to it.
1. Levelling test
2. Pre-test
3. Try-out of the material and
4. Post-test.

The details of the levelling test, pre-test and post-test are given in Chapter III: Tools and Procedures. In this chapter the investigator will deal in detail on the try-out of the material and techniques in the above mentioned schools.

5.1 Teaching Sessions Try-out of the Material and Techniques

The material comprised of ten poems to be tried out in the experimental group (Refer: Appendix). The details of the material are given in chapter III. Though the poems used were the same in the experimental and control groups, the treatment given to them in both the groups was different.

The poems in the controlled group were taught in the conventional way, i.e. reading the poem, explaining line by line in L-1, translating the lines in L-1, paraphrasing, giving the summary and so on.

At the beginning of the try-out the investigator gave them an idea of her way of working with them, everyday. The investigator spoke to them in L-2 to them, to see their response. They were used to their teacher speaking in L-1 in the English
class. After giving them an introduction to the work, each student was given a set of poems, the same as in the urban schools. The names of the students were written on the set, so that they could work on it, for the rest of the tryout period. The sets were collected after each session.

Each of the poems was task based. The students for most of the time had to work on their own. They also had to work in pairs. The objective of the try-out was to make them read, understand and appreciate the poems.

b) Approach adopted:

The approach adopted was learner-centered. The focus was on the process, not on product. The aim was to familiarise them to the different forms and aspects of the poem. This was done by making them work on different tasks. The aim was also to help them to respond to poetry in their own way.

These tasks were also designed to develop their creativity to build their confidence that they too can create something.

c) Student Response to the Material

The students, specially the girls, were highly motivated. They had the motivation to do, learn and achieve. In these
sessions they saw an opportunity to speak in L-2, without any inhibition. The students from Mahesana district had very good knowledge of L-2. The students of the other school too tried and did their best. There was no difficulty working with them.
THE EXPERIMENT: Rural Schools

Try-out of the material

Poem No.1 Boats Sail on the Rivers - Christina Rossetti

There were four tasks set under this poem.

Task 1 - The gist of the poem was given. They were then asked to read and look carefully at the contexts of words and the rhyme scheme.

- After doing this they were asked to supply the missing words.

- Before they did the task, the investigator gave them the idea of rhyme scheme, by taking another poem, and also by giving examples from an L-1 poem.

- As this was the first task, the investigator helped the group by giving clues, and asking them to look at the context.

- Most of the students in the two schools were able to give the words. They had to supply the following words.

Sea, clouds, these, bow and prettier.

Following are some of the responses

1. And ships sail on the seas
But clouds that sail across the sky
Are prettier far than these.
(2nd stanza)
But the bridges that bridges heaven
Is prettier far than these
2. And ships sail on stars,
But cloud that sail across the sky
Are prettier far than these.
(2nd stanza)
But the ___________that bridges heaven_________
Is prettier far than these.
There were some variations in the answers.
For e.g.
And ships sail on the moon/sun/lake
But the rainbow/the star/the sun that sail across the sky.
Are prettier far than these/rainbow/stars/clause.

Task 2 This was a completion task. One list was given; they had to complete the other list, under climate or nature.

Responses
rivers earth rainbow
sky moon stars
trees clouds flowers
birds sea rainbow
Variations

Two to three students included *air* and *elements* in this list. Four to five students did not attempt this task while two of them gave only one item.

**Task 3** Draw a picture based on this poem.

This activity created a lot of amusement, interest and anxiety. All the experimental groups attempted this. Majority of the subjects included the important aspects of the poem. There were a few who did not understand this activity.

**Task 4** Here they had to work in pairs. They had to describe the picture to their partners. A frame work was given for this.

**Responses**

- These are *trees*. These are *birds*. The *boats* are more beautiful than the *birds*.
- These are *clouds*. These are *birds*. The *shipes* are more beautiful than the rainbow.
- These are *river*. These are *trees*. The *trees* are more beautiful than *somethingsces*.

This task was not a mechanical grammar exercise. It was a meaningful task. They were putting their theoretical knowledge of grammar into practice. The various responses show how they handled the language. One of the students bringing in elements brought that were not in the picture.

The investigator worked for two class periods per poem.
Poem 2  On His blindness  -  John Milton

There were six tasks under this poem.

This poem introduced them to the sonnet form.

Task 1  They had to find out the meaning of 'sonnet' from the dictionary. At the beginning of the experiment, the investigator asked them to carry dictionaries. Most of the students carried the dictionaries, therefore they had no difficulty in finding the meaning of the word 'sonnet'.

Responses
- a short poem of 14 lines
- sonnet means a poem of fourteen lines centered on one subject

A short poem of fourteen lines was the common response.

Task 2  The rhyme scheme was given. They had to understand it and fill in the missing words. To help them do the task, the investigator once again gave them an example to show what was meant by rhyme scheme.

As the poem belonged to an earlier period the investigator had to use various strategies to lead them to the words. She led them to the words by asking questions, asking them to give the opposites and so on.
Not all of them were able to give all the words. The responses were as follows:

They had to supply the following words: hide, spent, chide, denied, speed, haste and wait.

Task 3

They were introduced to the technical term 'octave'. They were told what the poet expressed in this part. They had to read the sonnet and answer the question: What is his complaint?

The responses were as follows:

- The complaint regards blindness. He is very unhappy. He is very sad.
- The complaint is about his blindness. He is very useless. He is very sad.

The investigators from their answers concluded that though they did not have enough language, they were able to understand the poem. For understanding the poem they referred the dictionaries, discussed among themselves and also consulted the teacher.

Task 4 This task introduced them to the other technical term 'sestet'. It also told them what happens in this part of the sonnet. They had to read the poem and answer the question.
How does the poet accept his condition?

This resulted in a variety of answers like the following:

- They also serve who stand and wait.
- The poet accept his condition that his state is kingly.
- My true account lest he returning chide.

In this task it seemed that there were a number of students who understood the poem, while there were quite a number who did not understand the question.

**Task 5** In this task they had to copy the line they specially liked.

**Responses**

That murmur soon replies ; God doth not need

- Doth God exact day labour.light denied ?
- My true account, lest He returning chide,
- Either man's work, or His own gifts, who best.

From these responses one can see that they did come out with some kind of responses, even when they did not understand the meaning of the word line. Only a few students could give a line having a meaning in it.

**Task 6** Here they discussed their answers with the partners.
Poem No.3  Noise  –  J. Pope

This poem draws their attention to the quality of words. In this poem their attention is drawn to the sound quality of the words.

Task 1  The meaning of the word 'onomatopoeia' is given with examples. On the basis of that they had to find more such words.

Responses  chuk chuk, meow, bang bang
            ka ka, chi chi, ku ku
            tick tock, ha ha ha, tin tin

other responses  slep, sang, tatoo, sound,
                 chakoo, lamb

Task 2  Introduced them to the content of the poem. The task also gave them instructions for doing the task. The investigator divided them into A's and B's to do the task.

Most of the students in both the schools were able to do it.

Task 3  They had to close their eyes for a minute and try to listen to noise. After which they had to describe the noise in two three sentences.

- loud laughing, cry. It gave a headache. Some time it was very high.
scream, laughing, crying, sound, headache, some time it was very high, some time it was very low.

Sparrow chirping. The sound is good in hearing. When this poem was being done, the sparrow was chirping, and therefore it was the most prominent sound, as a result the whole class wrote the same thing. Though of course the word sparrow and chirping were spelt quite differently.

e.g. Sparrow, sparow, sperow and sparow.
cirriping and cirriping.

Task 4 They had to complete the sentence: I like / do not like this noise because __________________________

Responses I like this noise because it gives soul stirring joys.

I like sound of choo khoo because it is silent and melodious.

I like the sound of anklet because it is melodious.

I like the sound of rain because it is soft.

This task helped them to express their feelings. From the responses one can see that they are able to express! The only
thing is that they are not given the opportunity to do so. Another reason for our failure to get any kind of response is, paying far too much attention to the correctness of the language rather than their response!
Poem No. 4  Music, When Soft Voices Die - P. Shelley

This poem introduces them to another form of poetry:
The Lyric.

Task 1  They had to look up the meaning of the word 'lyric' and write its meaning.

Practically all the students were able to find the meaning and write it. Though the word 'emotional' appeared in the meaning, it was no cause for worry. They understood the word because they had the L-1 meaning too from the dictionary.

Task 2  The lines were jumbled in both the stanzas. They had to read each stanza and put the lines in order. Here they had to recall all that they had done from poem No.1 to poem number 3. They had to think of the rhyme scheme, context for doing this task. This task took up a lot of time. They took the help of the investigator quite often. What was important here was not whether they were able to put the lines in order correctly; but their struggle to do so. Their going back to the poem over and over again, their reading it with understanding!

Task 3  Here the gist of the poem is given. They are also told that the poet does not express his love directly. He does this through imagery. They had to find out the meaning the word 'image'.

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Response Image = not real

= picture
= fancy
= statue

After finding the meaning they had to list three images used in this poem.

Responses Soft voice, rose, odours, rose leaves, beloved's bed.

Task 4 This task, like the other tasks encouraged them to express their own views / personal response. They had to mention any one aspect of the poem which they liked, and give reasons for it.

The responses were as follows

- I like the image of the rose because when rose is bad life becomes dull.

- I like Rose-leaves, when the rose is dead because this poem is about love and rose.

There were a number of students who did not attempt this task, may be because the first task too up a lot of their time, or may be they found it difficult to express their thoughts.
Task 5  This was a pair work task. They had to discuss their answer with the partner and write in the space provided.

Response  My partner likes soft voice because it is very pleasant.
Task 1 They had to write the names of any five trees which they find near their school. This was to lead them to the subject of the poem. This proved to be a very interesting and enjoyable task. For the first time they became conscious of their surroundings. For the first time they felt the need to know the names of the trees in English. This task generated a lot of discussion between them. They also got an opportunity to ask questions in English.

The responses were as follows:

Mango tree/s, ashoka/asopalav trees, coconut tree/s, neem tree, banyan tree/s, eucalyptus, peepal, tamarind, banana, apple and sunflower trees.

In one of the schools they consulted the investigator for banyan and tamarind tree.

Task 2 Here they had to talk about their favourite tree. They had to write it like this: My favourite tree is _______. I like it because __________.

Following were the types of response got.

- My favourite tree is mango tree. I like it because good trees and fruits.
My favourite tree is mango tree. I like it because it is give a mango’s.

My favourite tree is coconut tree. I like it because it is very fine.

My favourite tree is neem tree. I like it because it gives a sad (shade). It is beautiful, fine.

My favourite tree is tamarind. I like it because it gives me tamarind and I like it.

This kind of a task encouraged them to express their likes and dislikes.

Task 3 Here they had to read and find out the writer’s favourite tree. Most of them wrote the correct answer, except for one who wrote ‘coconut’ tree. The correct answer was ‘the christmas tree’.

Task 4 They had to list the adjectives the poet used for describing the tree. This task proved to be quite interesting and easy.

Response They listed the following adjectives.

- tall
- stateliest
- green
- fragrant
- fairer
- straight
Task 5  This was a creative exercise. It gave them an opportunity to associate things meaningfully. One example was given, they had to do the rest.

Responses
- A star is the language of the sky.
  Pick (peak) is the language of the mountain.
- A eyes is the language of the love.
  Gestures are the language of the deaf and dumb.
- A sky is the language of the star.
  Ship is the language of the sea.

Task 6  They worked in pairs. Students from both the schools did not attempt this task, as task No.5 took up quite some time.
Poem No.6 The Beasts — Walt Whitman

Task 1 Like most other poems, this poem too began with a warming up exercise. Here they had to name their favourite animal, giving two reasons for their liking it.

Responses

The goat is my favourite animal (goat).
I like it because it gives milk.

- The horse is my favourite animal.
  I like it because it is a very fine animal.
- The elephant is my favourite animal.
  I like it because it is a very important animal.
- The tiger is my favourite animal.
  I like it because it is very beautiful.
- The horse is my favourite animal.
  I like it because the useful to in a travel.
  It is very speedily run.
- The dog is my favourite animal.
  I like it because it is a very useful animal.
  It is a protex.

From the responses one can see that they did make an attempt to say something about their favourite animal. Though the
language is not correct, one can comprehend what they wanted to say.

**Task 2** This task introduced them to the poem. They had to read the poem and underline the adjectives used for the animals.

**Response** They underlined words like placid, self contained, industrious, sweat and whine, dark, weep, sins, mania. This response shows that they did not really understand adjectives, they therefore underlined the other words too. They are able to use adjectives, when talking on a subject related to them.

**Task 3** Here they had to make a list of the qualities which the animals possessed. Here the response was fairly good.

**Response** - the animals are placid and self-contained
- they do not sweat and whine about their condition
- they do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins
- they do not make me sick discussing their duty to god
- they do not kneels
  (they tried to use their own expressions / language)
- self-contained, seat and whine, to complain, to go out of control, they do not industrious.
These responses show that though they are not able to express themselves, they are able to comprehend it.

**Task 4** Here they had to mention any two qualities they would like to learn from the animals.

**Response** - Placid and self-contained
- the animals do not kneel
- they do not seat and whine about their condition
- placid, self-contained, industrious.

**Task 5** Compare your answer with your partner's. Which qualities are common in your list?

**Responses** - self-contained and do not sweat and whine
- not one kneels to another and not one demented with mania of owing things
- industrious and they do not seat and whine about their condition
- self-contained and they do make me sick and demented.

There were a few who gave one word answers. For e.g. sick demented / mania kneel / self-contained kneel to one another.
Poem No.7  The Beggar Maid  —  Lord Tennyson

They had to do six tasks under this poem. The investigator observed that the subjects were fully involved in this task. The response was same in all other schools too; rural and urban.

Task 1 They were led to the subject of the poem by asking them to describe any beggar maid seen begging in the streets. This task created a little amusement for the class, specially the boys.

Responses

1. Yes. The girl looked very poor. Her clothes are very dirty, and reached. She was hungry. Her hair not in order, she was bare footed (dirty and wretched).

2. Yes. the girl looked very poorly. Her dress was very dirty, but she was hungry. He was begging. Her hair were not in order. She was bare footed.

3. Yes, I have seen a young girl begging in the street. She is very ugly. Her skin is black. Her face full of pimples. She worse a long big frock. The frock very dirty and there are so many hole in it.
Task 2  They had to read the poem to do the next task.

Task 3  The poem given was incomplete. The was cut at a point when the king says something. They were asked write what the king might have said.

Response  -  The king says that the beauty of the land never seen come and she is beautiful like a flower so delicate. Take this money and buy the cloth for the.

-  The king said her marry with him.

-  Your beauty is first in women race. No one lady as you I have seen.

-  King should be given money to her to buy nice cloth at shoes. So she should begone to market and to buy cloth and shoes. Because she was beautiful but she was not cloth or shoes (No. 67).

Task 4  Here they compared the answers with the partners. This generated a lot of discussion, a lot of vie and take and lots of laughter.

Task 5  Here they had to find two comparisons used for describing the beauty of the beggarmaid.
Response — She is more beautiful than a day.
As shines the moon in clouded skies.
— She was more fair than words can say.
She is more beautiful than day.

Wrong responses
- Her arms across she was more fair than words.
  She was more beautiful than
- She was more beautiful than sun (he was able to give one)
- The point compares her moon .... angels, grace,
- The poet compares her with the moon.
The poet compares her with the angels grace.

Task 6 In this task they had to give their opinion about the king’s decision. The question was:

The king decided to marry the beggarmaid. In your opinion, was it a wise decision? Why?

Responses
- It was wise decided because the beggar was very beautiful!
- No, it was not a wise decision because the king must select a girl for his status.
- Yes, because she was so beautiful and he wants to become a princess.
- Yes taking decision is right because all people attract with beauty.

These responses show that they are capable of thinking and giving their opinion. They are able to express in a fairly understandable language. This can be further refined if such opportunities are given to them.

This again does not mean that they are all able to do so. There are always a few who are not able to do so, or who do not give the response that is acceptable.
Poem No. B  A funny Man  -  Natalie Joan

Task 1  Complete this. Once again this task was to lead them to the main idea of the poem. Most of the students were able to do this.

Response  We put our caps on our heads. We put the shoes on our feet.

Task 2  In this task they had to read the poem and list the funny things done by the man. They also had to supply the two words that were missing. The two missing words were: bun and head. The students were able to get the second word easily, but they had difficulty in getting the first word.

Task 3  They had to compare their answer with the answer given.

Task 4  Here they had to draw a picture of the funny man walking on his head (Roll No. 40 B).

They had to compare the picture and find out which was more funny.

Response  My picture is more funny than my partner's.

My partner's picture is very funny.

Most of them did not write the response, but the investigator was able to see and hear their responses. This activity, helped them see the humour of the poem.
Poem No. 9  In The Night – Sarojini Naidu

Task 1  In this task they had to find out the meaning of the word 'lullaby' in the dictionary and write it.

Response  – A nursery song
- It's a song to make child sleep
- A song sung for child to sleep
- Soothing song sung to put a child to sleep

Task 2  Write any one line from a lullaby in Gujarati.

The following are the responses.

This task proved to be a little difficult. They had never dreamt that any one would ask them to write a line from a lullaby. They found it difficult to recall any line from a lullaby. It's after a lot of discussion they were able to get the line. Most of them wrote this line (refer appendix).

This is what they had learnt in Gujarati.

Task 3  Here they were familiarised with the quality of sounds.

They had to underline the words with /s/ /l/ and /r/ sounds

They underlined the following words:
sleep sow sickles sorrow little long reap rich.

Question number 4 and 5 were comprehension questions.
Q-4. Who is singing this song and to whom?

As.
- The poetess singing this song for her little boy.
- Mother is singing in the song the children.
- Mother is singing this song to the children.
- The parents singing this song to their child.

Q-5. Why are the parents working hard?

As.
- The parents are working hard to make the children golden tomorrow.
- The parents are working hard to make the children tomorrow golden.
- The parents working hard for remove their sorrow and for better tomorrow.

Q-6. This question was meant to draw their attention to the choice of words, and the meaning they carry.

Can anyone sow a ‘dream’? What does it mean?

As.
- Yes, one can sow a tree, it means to hope.
- Yes, one can sow a dram.
- Yes, parents can sow a dream for their children.
  It means to treat well.
  There was one out of the way answer.
- Yes, it can be seen at night, but it is not facts.

Q-7. What do you think are your parents feelings for you?
As.
- My parents love me very much.
- They are every ready to look our happiness and try their best for us.
- They have feelings for me.

Q-8. What do you like most in this poem?
- Yours is the golden tomorrow.
- The mother's wish for her child.
- I like parents hopes, and their dream of their child.

Q-9. This task was pair work activity. They had to find out what the partner likes, and then complete the lines.
- I like the golden tomorrow.
  My partner likes the golden tomorrow because future is bright.
- I like because I think I am also the golden tomorrow for my parents.
  My partner likes your's is the golden tomorrow because __________________.
Poem No. 10  Be with the poets

Here the purpose was to familiarise them with the other forms of poems like the limerick and shape poems (visual).

It was also a kind of revision of all that was done previously.

No.1 This was an introduction of the limerick. The rhyme scheme was given. They had to read the limerick and fill in the words. The clues were given for doing this task. Most of them were able to do the task.

No.2 Some famous lines from different poems were given. They had to read understand the context, and then fill in the gaps. The clues were provided.

a. Response
- All the world's a stage,
  And all the men and women are merely actors.
- All the world's a stage,
  And all the men and women are merely nuts. (it is a L-1 equivalent)
- This word again was spelt in various ways:
  - nuts
  - nats
  - nets
The investigator feels that this was very original answer. It showed that they were familiar with the word associated with the stage in L-1, but not in L-2.

b. In small proportion we just beauties see
And in measure life may perfect be.
The clue was given to do this task.
The response for this task was divided between little and big.
c. What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and

- The clue for this was: find a word 'look fixedly'.

Response
- watch
- stear
- stair
- stara
- stare.

The answer 'watch' shows that some of the students do have some language with them. The students who wrote the word 'stare' got it by referring the dictionary. Those who wrote 'stear', 'stair', and 'stara' wrote it by asking the partners or by hearing it.
No. 3 Lines from a poem were given, with the end word missing. It told them that the poet has used many words having the /s/ and /z/ sounds. It also told them what the poem was about.

**Response**

None comes, none ______________

None reaps or ______________

No friends turn ______________

No hedge bears ______________

And no cocks ______________

But the wind ______________

They filled the gaps with the following words:

blows, goes, comes/cames, animies, grass, close / clocks / crose, blows / blews, comes/goes, saws/shows, aimies/anymis / foes, grass / brass / leaves / roses / flowers, cocks / crose /

close, blews / blows.

The investigator helped them get the words by giving them clues. For the word 'foes', they were told to find out another word for animies. They were able to guess the word animies.

No. 4 That he signs and he ______________

And love my ______________

And my love ______________ me.
Response The response in one school was like this:

dulls/dauce
 sings
 beloved
 favours

The response in the other school was like this:
sings
 sings
 love
 loves.

No.5 This was a visual poem titled Life.
Refer the appendice.
This poem was in the shape of an apple with a gap in the centre.
They had to supply the missing word.

Response The following word/phrases were supplied.

- sorrow
- joy
- sorrow and love
- happy
- love
- sweet
- sweet and sour
- black and white
- colorless
- seeds / beans
- This is how they visualised life.

After the try-out of the material and techniques a post test was administered to them. This was to make a comparative study of scores obtained in the pre-test and post-test. The investigator made a detailed study of the scores. These are presented in the following chapter, "Analysis and Interpretation".