CHAPTER – V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

PRELIMINARIES

A research study cannot be considered complete till the research findings have been propagated among concerned fraternity and other significant people. The present chapter deals with a brief summary of the study, discussion, conclusion implications, limitations and recommendations as per the findings of the research.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Language is an integral part of human life and it facilitates communication, thought and also enables human beings to express their beliefs and opinions.

In this scenario of globalization, a need is felt for a global language, and undoubtedly, English has acquired the position of global language on account of several reasons, both social and political. Today, English is considered to be an international language. English has gained prominence over the last few decades. Moreover, the vast treasure of knowledge is stored in English which makes it imperative to learn English.

English is a living language because it grows and enriches itself as the time passes. It possesses capacity to assimilate words from other languages. Therefore, it has become a very flexible vehicle of thought. It provides greater capacity of reason, judgment, critical balance and equity. In India, English is thus made compulsory at all levels and as it is a foreign language student find it difficult to learn English. However, English occupies the position of L2 or third language in the school curriculum.

English is one of the richest languages of the world. It has become the language of science, commerce, trade and international negotiations. It cannot be ignored for higher scientific technological studies. Hence we must benefit ourselves by this language. Almost 60% of the world's advanced research is done in English and the rest is quickly translated into English. There are a number of problems related to teaching English in the state of Maharashtra like lack of proper objectives, crowded classrooms, incompetent teachers, absence of adequate teaching materials and aids. Hence, research and efforts are necessary to solve these problems.
English plays an important role in trade and commerce. National and international trade is carried on through English. Maintaining accounts, business correspondence, efficiency and success in industry, all depend on adequate knowledge of English. In Nehru’s words, English is ‘our major window to the outside world’. English is understood all over the world.

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the four basic language skills. Listening and reading are receptive skills, while speaking and writing are productive skills. In comparison, the productive skills are more difficult to master than the receptive skills. The four skills are developed in the same order that is, listening, followed by speaking, then reading and at the end comes writing. Thus, writing takes for granted the learning of the remaining three skills. One cannot speak without being a good listener. Listening is the base for speaking. Similarly, one cannot write without first learning to read. Hence, reading serves as the base for writing. Reading cannot be developed unless one knows how to speak because it involves pronunciation, stress and intonation patterns. Reading also requires the knowledge of identifying the various alphabets, identifying words as groups of letters and sentences as groups of words. For writing, the same system has to be followed. Writing begins with learning to write the script of the language, writing capital and small case letters and also writing separate words, beginning sentences with capital letters, ending them with appropriate punctuation marks etc. It is the last in the hierarchical order and the most advanced language skill. This does not however mean that listening and reading can be ignored. In fact, language acquisition involves the learning of all four skills.

Writing is important in a child’s life for several reasons. Daily responsibilities as an adult can consist of writing notes, directions and lists for ourselves and for others. Regardless of field or career choice, most occupations will require writing in any form including letters, memos, reports, etc. Now more than ever, social relationships also utilize the skill of writing to a great extent. This can include everything from cordial greeting cards, thank you notes and greetings to extensive e-mail contact and letters to friends and family.

The benefits from writing for a student go beyond the daily routine and necessities. It is important that they feel comfortable and confident in their ability to write, as it will assist them in expressing themselves in terms of their feelings that sometimes
cannot be used verbally as well. This can also be used to help to organize thoughts and ideas. Writing different ideas and expressions on paper can help a student visualize and come to better conclusions.

Today’s students cannot manage writing skill in such things as persuasive writing etc. through the school system alone. This can be due to a number of different factors. Some teachers simply are not trained to teach writing at the level where students need to be at different phases in their education. In addition, it can often be difficult to grade skills in writing simply because sometimes it is a matter of opinion or perspective depending on the type of writing involved.

Research shows that many students struggle with writing skills that show clear and concise ideas and thoughts that are written in a strong and coherent manner. Business writing such as cover letters, sales reports and business letters are an example where many lack these skills.

Writing skill has two different aspects. The first aspect is graphics. This refers to the ability to scribe letters with a pen/pencil on paper. The skill begins from holding the pen/pencil in the hand properly and writing the symbols that represent the letters of the alphabet clearly, correctly and neatly. One must be able to write capital letters, small letters, know which letters or parts of them are written above or below the line, what should be the size and proportion of the letters etc. This also includes the mechanics of writing like leaving sufficient space between two words, leaving margins, writing from left to right and top to bottom of a page, paragraph indentations and correct use of punctuation marks.

The next step is managing the content. Content is of different types. It can be a descriptive or narrative passage, a dialogue, a formal report, an informal message, a letter, an official notice or circular, a journalistic article, a reflective essay or a creative literary piece like a short story or poem. Each type of poem requires the selection of suitable words and style of writing. The spellings must be correct, sentences must be grammatically correct and arranged in a logical order, organizing thoughts or information systematically for effective expression.

If writing is untidy and illegible, readers find it difficult to follow. If there are many spelling and grammatical errors and thoughts are unconnected, comprehension is impossible. Hence, development of writing skill is a serious affair which needs
monitoring at every stage. Careful attention should be paid, so that incorrect habits will not be formed. Students find it tedious and uninteresting. It requires greater effort on their part compared to the other skills. For all these reasons, the researcher decided to develop an ABP, directed towards neat, clear, proportionate, unambiguous writing as well as towards effective and creative writing. Writing is the productive skill in the written mode. It is more complicated than it seems at first, and often seems to be the hardest of skills, even for the native speakers of a language since it involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way. With this view the research aims at making the acquisition of writing interesting to sixth standard students by introducing an ABP which helps to reduce monotony and chiefly, ensures complete involvement on the part of students.

This chapter gives a summary of the research in brief. It also reports the major findings and includes the suggestions by the researcher. The researcher has noted the implications of the study and recommended topics for further study in this chapter.

5.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To Prepare and to test the effectiveness of an Activity Based Program on writing skill in English for the students of Std. VI.

5.3 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Effectiveness –

Conceptual - Producing a result that is wanted or intended producing successful result (Online Dictionary, Retrieved on 7th April 2012).

Operational - In this study, the word ‘effectiveness’ is used to see a desired result of ABP on the basis of the difference between mean scores of pre-test and post-test.

Activity:

Conceptual - State of doing, an energetic action or movement, an educational process or procedure to stimulate learning through actual experience. It is a purposeful and planned action (Webster’s Dictionary, Retrieved on 15th November, 2012).
Operational - In this research, activities include the written actions to be performed by teachers and students. All activities are oriented towards developing the writing skill of students.

E.g. (Cognitive theory)

- Making meaningful sentences by using the given words.
- Writing words that have similar meanings or which are opposite in meaning.
- Constructing a story with the help of given outline.

E.g. (Theory of constructivism)

- Writing small pieces of conversations.
- Procedure writing and describing the pictures

**Activity Based Program:**

Operational - It includes a set of purposeful pre-planned activities prepared by the researcher for students of Std. VI, for improving their writing skills.

**Writing skill:**

Conceptual - Writing is an ability to express feelings and emotions in written form in English. It includes all the objectives of writing skill like developing good writing habits, writing in a straight line, using appropriate punctuation marks, writing dialogues, complete sentences and creative writing.

Operational - In this research, writing skill includes ability of students to express emotions and thoughts through written medium, by using appropriate vocabulary, correct grammatical constructions and punctuation marks.

**Students of Standard VI:**

The students who have studied English as a compulsory subject as a third language from, Std, I to VI, who are in the age group 11 to 12 years.

**5.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

1. To identify the existing strategies used by teachers for improving writing skill of students.

2. To investigate the problems faced by students while writing in English.
3. To develop an Activity Based Program for developing the writing skill of students.

4. To test the effectiveness of an Activity Based Program on writing skill for Std. VI students.

5.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS (For Objectives No. 1 and 2)

- What are the existing strategies used by teachers for teaching writing skills to students?
- What problems do students face while writing in English?

5.5.1 HYPOTHESIS

Research Hypothesis (H₁) (For Objective No. 4)

The implementation of the ABP will show positive results in improving writing skill of students.

Null Hypothesis (H₀)

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of pre-test and post-test in development of writing skill before and after the implementation of ABP.

5.6 ASSUMPTIONS

1. There are individual variations in acquisition of language skills (Noam Chomsky, 1965).

2. Engaging students in activities brings about incidental learning (Nunan, 2004).

3. Students show the same stages in development of grammatical knowledge (Hunt Kellogg W., 1965).

4. Errors cannot be avoided without a sound knowledge of grammar (M.M.Gandhi, 1885).

5. Students are aware of graphics and mechanics of writing (Scores in pre-test).

6. Students come from different socio-economic background.

5.7 SCOPE, LIMITATIONS AND DE-LIMITATIONS

Scope

- All Marathi medium schools having Std.VI.
Limitations

- The effectiveness of ABP in developing writing skill of English was based on the responses given by the students to pre-test and post-test.

De-limitations

- The Activity Based Program is prepared only to develop writing skill.
- The study is carried out only for the students of Std. VI in ZP Marathi medium schools located in Alandi - Markal cluster, Pune.
- The study is limited to the structural aspect of sentences and word formation and not to all aspects of writing.
- Findings and conclusions are applicable only to the students of Std. VI from Marathi medium schools.

5.8 TOOLS

5.8.1 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Data collection tools are instruments used to collect information for performance assessments, self-evaluations, and external evaluations. The data collection tools need to be strong enough to support what the evaluations find during research.

The tools mentioned below are constructed and used in this study:

1. A Questionnaire-To find out the existing situation regarding writing skill of students and to understand the difficulties faced by teachers and the special efforts taken by them to improve the writing skill of students. The test was administered to teachers who teaching English to students of standard six.

2. Pre-test-To test the proficiency of the students in writing skill before implementing the ABP. The test was administered to students who were selected as sample for the research study. It consisted of 8 questions like naming pictures, writing related words. Rhyming words, synonyms, antonyms and comprehension passages.

3. Post-test-To test the effectiveness of an ABP after its implementation and to assess the level of improvement in writing skill of the students. The post-test was the same as pre-test in every respect. The same questions with the same weightage of marks were given for post-test.
5.8.2 STATISTICAL TOOLS

Execution of research study produces raw data. The statistical method serves the fundamental purpose of descriptive analysis. It helps to arrive at a reliable conclusion regarding the hypothesis. The researcher used the following statistical tools for this study:

- Mean – To determine significant difference between the means of samples.
- Standard Deviation – To calculate the critical ratio of collected data.
- ‘t’ test – To test the effectiveness of the ABP.

5.9 DEVELOPMENT OF THE ABP

The researcher used the Experimental Method for the actual study.

“...The experimental method is the only method of research that can truly test hypotheses concerning cause-and-effect relationships - it represents the most valid approach to the solution of educational problems, both practical and theoretical and to the advancement of education as a science” (Gay L. R., 1992).

The researcher conducted a survey in order to get an idea of the existing situation, to know the methods used by teachers for teaching writing skill and the problems and difficulties faced by teachers.

The activities were similar to those given in the text book prescribed by the government of Maharashtra. Some parallel and graded activities were also included.

The program consisted of various activities like riddles, completion of sentences, synonyms, antonyms, describing pictures, letter writing, comprehension etc. The students were also asked to arrange words in alphabetical order, make meaningful sentences from given words, write conversations, essays and answer simple questions in single sentences. Every teaching program is based on one or other of language learning theories. The researcher has based the program on Cognitive theory of language learning and consequently, all activities included in the program are in accordance with this theory.

The program aims at preparing students to write grammatically correct sentences and understand the special use of language. It helps the students to express themselves in a logical and chronological order. Other aims of the program were
writing related words, rhyming words, describing pictures and writing essays letters and solving passages for comprehension.

Cognitive and Constructive theories were used in the program. ABP was prepared by the researcher which included various writing activities. They were similar to the activities given in the text-book published by Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research, Pune. Some parallel and graded extension activities were also included in the program. The researcher identified the problems faced by students while writing, during his visit to the schools. The activities in the program were planned in such a way as to enable the students to overcome their problems related to writing skills.

5.9.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE ABP

- To enable the students to write grammatically correct sentences.
- To develop the vocabulary of students and to apply it in writing.
- To make acquisition of writing skill meaningful and interesting.
- To provide writing opportunities and practice for students.
- To enable students to communicate through the written mode.
- To enable the students to express themselves effectively through writing.
- To develop creativity and imaginative faculty of students.
- To provide practice and drilling activities.

5.9.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ABP

The ABP was implemented in the selected schools. The program covered a span of 120 days. It consisted of practice and drilling activities. The students were provided with plenty of writing opportunities.

The program included a variety of activities which kept the students engaged and concentrated. The aims were not underlined in the program but learning different aspects of writing skill were incidental on the part of the students.

A couple of extended activities were also included in the program. The program was not too lengthy or hectic that would create any kind of boredom in the students. However, sufficient number of activities was included to provide exposure and practice to the students.
5.10 MAJOR FINDINGS

- After implementation of the program, writing skill of students improved significantly.
- The students did not find it dull on account of the variety provided in the activities.
- Rigorous and regular practice helped fixation of various aspects of writing skill.
- Sufficient practice given to the students enriched their power of expression and creativity.
- Specifically designed activities also led to development of imagination, logical thinking and cognitive abilities like reasoning power, analytical power and synthetic abilities of students.
- The number of errors in writing was reduced to a great extent.
- Transferring the student’s attention from linguistic aspects to fun activities leads to unconscious acquisition of language skills on the part of the students.
- The Process approach is useful for essay writing while Product approach suits rigid forms like letter-writing tasks.

Findings related to aims and objectives of writing skills of Std.VI

- To write with ease and confidence – Students were able to write with more ease and confidence in the post test.
- To use different forms of writing like letters, stories, and reports – Students engaged in different forms of writing and understood the structure of each.
- To learn to write independently – Students were able to carry out the given writing activities independently.
- To develop an implicit understanding of English syntax and grammar – Students made less grammatical mistakes in the post test.
- To complete the sentence meaningfully – Students became experts in this activity and enjoyed it particularly.
- To enjoy writing various words related to the given topic – Students enriched their vocabulary during the programme.
To complete the dialogue and instructions – Students were able to complete given dialogues.

To write answers based on a passage and frame paragraphs – Reading comprehension of students improved significantly.

5.11 DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

Thangaswamy, S. and Mary, T. Aiyaroo (2005) – Teaching English through Action and Orals in Primary schools – Findings showed that the students taught through action and oral practice were better in their oral comprehension compared to the students who were taught by conventional methods.

It can be concluded that there is a need to use non-conventional methods of teaching language skills. The researcher has also used non-conventional method by involving the students in activities.

Raghwan, P. (2003) - A study of Spelling Errors in English among Elementary School, Kannada Medium Students – It was observed that there was much heterogeneity in the group of children with respect to their ability to spell. Most of the elements in the second list of words had not been mastered by a majority of the students, even those studying in class VII. All the children showed a tendency to spell words with correct initial phoneme followed by a random letter string. The type of common error observed was spelling words with more consonants and the vowels left out.

It can be said on the basis of this study that the researcher was right in including three activities totally devoted to spelling words and enrichment of vocabulary.

Pandian, S. (2007) commented in his paper on changing paradigms in English language teaching that language teaching is indeed a difficult job. Teaching English language and covering the syllabus may be very difficult. The teacher should yield to change. Language teachers should carry on their studies which will make them self-confident, self-reliant and ever-changing to be up-to-date in all activities.

The researcher shares the view of Pandian S. that language teaching, especially in second language, is a difficult job, particularly when teachers have to complete a given syllabus within a given time limit. The researcher also shares the view that
language teachers need to change their attitude towards new methodologies and also accept new methods.

Kadam Pornima (2011) had prepared a language skill development program in English for B.Ed students, using an experimental method. The program was prepared for development of 4 language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. The result of the study showed that students had performed well in listening, speaking and reading but writing skill program still needed improvement.

On the basis of this study the researcher was convinced that the writing skill needs to be addressed most among all language skills.

Ram, S.K. (1989) had made an attempt to understand the methods and techniques of teaching English used by teachers at class VI level. He came to the conclusion that teachers used the traditional technique of teaching though they were trained to use new techniques. Teachers were found to be unaware of structural and situational approach.

This research was also carried out on students of Std. VI and the researcher found that teachers preferred to continue using traditional methods. The researcher observed a similar situation in Maharashtra, in Marathi medium schools.

David Nunan (1991) presented his views on influence of the communicative task on curriculum development. Language teaching methodology and an overview of the research base for Task Based Language Teaching are discussed in the study. The communicative task has evolved as an important component within curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation. Task based language teaching, characterized by various communicative principles and features are supported by a healthy research agenda which emerged from the process oriented second language acquisition.

The researcher has emphasized the process oriented approach in this study. According to Nunan, task based language teaching has emerged from this approach. Hence, the researcher has rightly chosen a task based approach to prepare a program for development of writing skills of students.

Rajendra, M. (1992) made an attempt to develop activity centered teaching of English. It was an experimental study. The findings indicated that activity centered approach of teaching English gave an improvement in reading skill. He observed
that learners prefer activity based teaching. He used an ABP successfully to develop the reading skill of students. The researcher concluded that different language skills can also be taught successfully using activities in the classroom. If reading skill is successfully developed it is proved in this research that attempts to improve writing skill of students has also been successful.

Nunan David (1996) believed that teachers must find out what students want to learn and how they want to learn.

What students want to learn is decided by the curriculum designers and even teachers have little voice in this matter. However, students can give their preferences as to how they would like to learn. It has been observed that students prefer non-conventional methods like activity based program for learning language skills.

Bada and Okan (2000) believed that teachers should be aware of learner’s preferences to conduct classroom activities.

The researcher also reviewed a large number of books to find out what kind of activities middle school children like to engage in. Selected activities were included in the ABP.

Williams and Burden (1997) affirm that teachers’ beliefs play an important role in language learning.

The researcher is of the opinion that it is high time the teachers change their beliefs and begin to trust non-conventional teaching methods for language acquisition.

Harakara Karuna (1996) tried to improve English writing skill of Std.VIII. Students through training program based on synectics model designed by William Gordon. This package proved effective for improving writing skill.

The researcher has tried a slightly different strategy by using task based approach instead of synectic model.

Hayes D. (1997) wrote one practical book on helping teachers to cope with large classes. The writer suggested that when teachers deal with large classes, training methodology must be primarily task-based and inductive. He further added activities used in coping with large classes such as – 1. Video- clips 2. Training in ERICs (a collaborative process) where trainees collaborate with teachers and get an opportunity to share ideas and experiences. In addition to suggesting problems of
large classes which are divided into 5 areas – discomfort, control, individual attention, evaluation and learning effectiveness, Hayes also discusses training activities to overcome problems in the classroom.

Large classroom is also a problem in most Z.P schools in Maharashtra. The above research also conforms to this study, in which an ABP is successfully used in large classes to improve the writing skill of students.

Prasad, K.(2000) used drawing as a medium to teach Telugu, English, Environmental Studies and Mathematics in his research, titled “English through Drawing”. The objective was to develop creativity, self-confidence and understanding of the students. Alphabets were presented through pictures and students had to identify them.

Drawing is one of the activities that can be included in an ABP. It has been made clear that the researcher could not include many of the activities due to time constraint and limitations of scope of the study. However, like drawing several other activities can be assigned which are directly related to improvement of other sub-skills of writing. Drawing as an activity is more suitable for very small children but since the researcher is dealing with students of Std. VI, language items cannot be presented through drawing at this stage.

Conclusions – Researcher observed several deficiencies regarding the teaching of writing skills of students in primary schools, which are described in brief below –

- Error analysis studies carried out by different researchers helped to get an idea about the kinds of errors that children make while writing in English.
- It is also observed that errors can be classified as grammatical or functional.
- Errors in the areas of spellings, punctuation marks and errors of omission and replacement are also common among students.
- Students do not practice enough.
- Teachers cannot pay individual attention because of large number of students in a class.
- Students do not get proper guidance so they develop a fear for English writing.
- It was observed that all students show a more or less similar sequence of development of the various aspects of grammar.
- The mistakes committed by most of the students were also almost similar.
The above study also addresses the issue of large classes. It confirms the view of several other researchers that it is not possible to pay individual attention to students in large classrooms.

The researcher used the findings from the above researches to support the ABP and arrange the activities in a proper way. The researcher noted that errors are of two types – grammatical and functional and took both these into consideration while preparing the program.

5.12 CONCLUSIONS

- It is necessary to use ABP for teaching writing skills in primary level classrooms.
- Students develop confidence in writing skills when ABP is implemented systematically in the classroom.
- ABP adds liveliness to teaching writing skills and makes it meaningful, interesting and fruitful.
- The students are required to use all faculties like thinking, reasoning and imagination while they are engaged in an activity.
- Writing skills are developed naturally, unconsciously and indirectly through various activities.

5.13 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

A) For Teachers

The study has relevance for teachers of English who teach ESL and who are directly involved with the students and teaching in classes. The study points out the importance of using non-conventional teaching methods in a classroom. The study also suggests a strategy for handling large classes and managing the syllabus at the same time helping students to acquire language skills.

B) For Trainers

From the research study, the trainers can get a clue to train teachers in non-conventional language teaching methods. Training institutions must acquaint student teachers with different kinds of activities for teaching language skills especially English language skill to students whose mother tongue is not English. Preparation of ABP including a wide range of activities must be included in the language teaching syllabus.
C) For Researchers

Researchers should carry out research on various new methods of teaching language taking into consideration the kinds of difficulties faced by students as well as language teachers in the classroom.

5.14 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Remedial program must be carried out in case the students who are below average.
- Similar study can be carried out for development of writing skill for all other standards.