

CHAPTER 5

A REPORT ON THE FINAL STUDY CONDUCTED AT VALLIAMMAI ENGINEERING COLLEGE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research study aimed to benefit the language learning process. Second language teachers, with the awareness the study hopes to create in them, can do much for the slow learners in their class. The study deals with the relationship between the trio – the language, the teacher and the learner. The study which the researcher conducted with a group of first year engineering students was built on the premise that second language learners can be taught to use the strategies (strategies identified in the preliminary study) effectively and successfully.

The chapter reports the design, the procedure and the findings of the final study.

5.2 REPORT ON THE FINAL STUDY

As it was nearing the end of the academic year the students chosen for the preliminary study were busy with the year-end examinations. The researcher was not able to give strategy training to these students. So it was decided to offer strategy instruction to the next batch of students.

Twenty engineering students of the first year were chosen for the final study from the next batch of Valliammai Engineering College, affiliated

to Anna University, Chennai. However, one student from the Electronics and Communication branch committed suicide even before he could be trained on the strategies. As a rank holder in school he was not able to face failure in the University examinations of the previous semester.

5.3 RATIONALE OF THE FINAL STUDY

The final study was conducted to determine whether the students could be trained to use the combination of strategies chosen (strategy of planning and strategy of paraphrasing) for the language tasks and facilitate learning.

5.4 DESIGN OF THE FINAL STUDY

The design of the final study was formulated on the basis of the design of the preliminary study. The study was planned for twenty five classes. The researcher met the students for two classes per week in the evening after college hours, i.e., after 4 0' clock in the evening. The duration of each class was sixty minutes. The study was planned for three months. Three hours were allotted for building a rapport with the students and for administering the questionnaire. Strategy instruction for planning was allotted ten hours. Strategy instruction for paraphrasing was allotted eleven hours. One hour was allotted to collect feedback from the students. In total the final study was designed for twenty five hours.

Other arrangements like selecting the days to conduct the classes and making the students attend the classes without fail were done similar to the preliminary study.

5.5 PROFILE OF THE STUDENTS CHOSEN FOR THE FINAL STUDY

The students chosen for the study were given a bio-data sheet to complete. This was similar to the one given to the students of the preliminary study. This sheet elicited information from the students regarding their family background, educational background, medium of instruction in their schools, their attitude towards learning English, the value of English according to them and their aspirations for the future. The information collected from the students is tabulated in Table A9.2 for easy reference and the table is given in Appendix 9.

5.5.1 Information from Table A 9.2

Table A9.2 gives biographical information about the students chosen for the final study. This information was collected from the responses of the students to the questions in the bio-data sheet. The information is consolidated and given below.

The students are from two branches of engineering viz Electrical and Instrumentation Engineering and Electronics and Communication Engineering. The students chosen as the subjects for the study did their schooling through the mother-tongue medium. Their motives for and interests in learning the language are given in the table. They were first generation learners from rural backgrounds. The occupation of most of the students' parents was agriculture. They had to do their schooling in Government schools because of their financial background. They had dreamed to make it big in their life and so they wanted to become engineers. As a result of their merit they are into engineering now. The only obstacle to achieve this is in their life is their Limited Proficiency in English.

The names of the students chosen for the final study have been given in the table. In the paragraphs that follow the students would be referred to by the serial number according to which their names have been arranged in the table with the prefix 'L'. For example the first student in the table will be referred to as learner 1, in short, L1. This was done by the researcher to avoid the confusion with the students in the preliminary study.

5.6 STRATEGY TRAINING

Before discussing the different phases in which the final study was carried out, the model and the procedure adopted to conduct the training are outlined below.

The Strategy training for the students was given in accordance with Oxford's (1990) eight step model for strategy training. This model has already been referred to in the chapter on literature survey. The model includes the following steps.

Step 1 Determine the learners' needs and the time available.

With the preliminary study an insight into what strategies the good language learners are using was obtained. The strategies needed for effective writing were inferred. Accordingly the researcher decided to teach the strategies of planning and paraphrasing to the students. The other academic work of the students was taken into consideration before planning the training sessions. The training sessions to teach these strategies were planned within the time available.

Step 2 Select strategies well

The preliminary study helped the researcher to identify the strategies the students were using. The sample scripts gave an idea of the

elements of a good writing that were lacking in the students' writing. Keeping in mind the importance of writing for the students at the tertiary level two strategies viz metacognitive (strategy of planning) and cognitive (strategy of paraphrasing) were identified to teach the students.

Step 3 Consider integration of Strategy Training

The benefits of integrated instruction are already discussed in the literature survey. As meaningfulness of learning makes it easier for the learner to remember what he learnt, it was decided to integrate the strategies with the language tasks. Integrated instruction provides the students an opportunity to practice learning strategies with authentic language learning tasks. This would help the student remember the strategies.

Step 4 Consider motivational issues

Though grades were not given for attainment of new strategies, it was explained to the students how using appropriate strategies can make language learning easier. As the learners were already aware of the importance of learning English for their jobs and higher studies, motivating them to learn the strategies was not a problem. They were told how the use of strategies could make them become effective learners.

Step 5 Prepare materials and activities

The modified version of Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was chosen to administer to the students to create an awareness of language learning strategies. A feedback form was designed to get the comments of the students on the strategy training. A flowchart model was designed to teach the study of planning. Language tasks were designed to teach this strategy and make them use it in their writing. The paraphrased

equivalents of the difficult words were given to the students. Exercises to test their skill in paraphrasing were designed and used in the research study.

Step 6 Conduct “completely informed training”

After answering the questionnaire the students were aware of language learning strategies and after a discussion of the graphs plotted with the data collected from the questionnaire they were aware of the strategies they have been using hitherto. It also made them aware of the strategies which they need to make use of. The importance of strategies and the usefulness of strategy training were discussed with the students. Opportunities were given to the students to evaluate their success, when they use strategies.

Step 7 Evaluate the Strategy Training

These students were given an opportunity for self-assessment and self-evaluation by comparing the language task performed by them before and after the strategy instruction.

Step 8 Revise the Strategy Instruction

Based on the learners' pace of learning and evaluation of the strategy training, strategy instruction was revised. If the student is a slow learner without displaying any effective changes then the researcher would want to revise the training again from step 1. However, even after revising the strategy training one student did not show any improvement in the writing task.

5.7 THE PROCEDURE

At first, the students were asked to try a writing task without any training in the target strategy. Then they were asked prompting students to

comment on the strategies they used to arrive at the answer. Secondly, the new strategy was explained to the students, they were taught how to use the strategy and they were shown how to improve their writing by building upon their current strategies. After the strategy training the students were asked to do a writing task. The researcher analysed the writing task, written by the students, before and after the training.

5.8 PHASES OF THE FINAL STUDY

The strategy training in the final study was conducted in four different phases. Each phase is explained in detail.

5.8.1 Phase One of the Final Study

In the phase one of the final study, which went on for three hours, the researcher understood the nature of the students through the biodata sheet that they were asked to complete. The same questionnaire used in the preliminary study was administered to the students in the final study. The students were told to mark the number of their response on the worksheet that followed the questionnaire (Oxford, 1990). The researcher calculated the part average and the overall average for every student. The data was plotted in graphs. This was done by the researcher to make the students aware of the strategies they use.

5.8.2 Phase Two of the Final Study

In phase two of the final study the researcher conducted the training on the strategy of planning. The researcher planned to allot ten hours to train the students on this strategy. Three hours were allotted for the students to write essays before and after the training. Four hours were allotted for correcting the essays and giving them feedback. The correction and the

discussion of the errors were done by the researcher on a one to one basis with the students. The reasons for adopting this approach were the same as discussed in the preliminary study. Three hours were allotted for teaching the strategy of planning to the students.

The need for planning was told to the students. An action plan is required for any work we accomplish in our life. When we plan our ideas before putting them down, definitely, our work will be perfected. Planning, in writing, helps us to organize our ideas in a logical sequence.

During the instruction on the use of planning students were led by the teacher through an analysis of the purposes language serves in a written report. In teaching the strategy of planning students were first taught to analyze the functional requirements of the task, for example, the students must know what must be accomplished. Then they were asked to examine their capability to provide specific language fulfilling those requirements and identify the needed language elements. After retrieving the language that is needed students must be able to accomplish the language task

The students were asked to write an essay on the topic 'My Family'. A flowchart model was designed to teach 'planning' to the students. They were taught (when an essay writing task is given) to write an essay, ask 'wh' questions or 'yes' or 'no' questions to themselves regarding the topic. They were told to write the answers to these questions in boxes. The boxes are connected logically and a flowchart is designed. Every point in the box is expanded in the same sequence and they are put down in the form of an essay. This helps them to organize ideas logically in their writing.

Then they were told to construct sentences from these points and connect them logically. After teaching how to plan and organize the ideas in the essay, the students were given topics to write. There was a movement

from control to freedom with the students. The researcher gave the students the required space to think and write.

The students were given the same topic 'My Family'. This was done because the researcher felt that this would help her to compare the essays (on the same topic) written before and after the training. The written work was corrected and reviewed with these students. Then they were given the topic 'My Hometown' to write an essay in not more than two hundred words.

When these students wrote essays using the strategy of planning their essays were more organized. The following samples from students' essays show that there is a difference in the following areas in the essays written after the training. This means that learning has actually taken place.

- 1) Sufficient material relevant to the topic.
- 2) A flowchart pattern in the student's paper.
- 3) The essays were divided into paragraphs.
- 4) Each paragraph elaborated on a particular point.
- 5) The essays had an introduction and conclusion.

5.8.2.1 Samples of students' performance

The samples of students' performance were given and at the end of each sample the researcher has analyzed the improvement shown in writing in the above said criteria. The original of the samples are scanned and given in appendix 11 (before training) and appendix12 (after training) for reference. In the essays written after training the students either attached the flowchart pattern after the essays or before the essays.

L2 My Family (before training)

My family is a poor family. My family member is 5. My father is a farmer. My mother is housewife. I am first educated only in family. Two sister for me. My family is beautiful family. When family is very happy. My goal is engineering. I am very lucky in the collage. My study is very hardwork. Early I studied dictionary and many books. So I like in the college, because good teachers and good friends.

L2 My Family (after training)

My native place is Varagur. My family members are father, mother and two elder sisters. My father is a farmer. My mother is housewife. My family is a middle class family. My pet animals are cat and dog. I like their friendly character. I love my parents because my parents gave freedom to enjoy. They congratulate and appreciate my studies.

My aim is to become an engineer. Due to god's grace I got it. My hobby is reading books. My neighbour is my friend. I love my friend. I share my troubles with her. My relations are my uncle, aunt, and my cousin. My uncle is a teacher. My aunt is housewife. My cousin is a teacher. I love my relations.

L2 There was a flowchart pattern in the essay written after the training. The essays were divided into paragraphs. Though the essay did not have two hundred words, more information was given than the essay written before the training. The essay ended on a note of conclusion. L2 has corrected 'My goal is engineering' to 'My aim is to become an engineer', after the training.

L5 My Family (before training)

My family member is four. My family is a small family. My father name is K.Kumaraguru. My father is a businessman. My mother name is

K.Shanthi. My mother is a housewife. My brother name is K.Rajkumar. He is studying B.E second year. My name is K.Sindhumathi. I am studying in Valliammai Engineering College. I am studied 10th standard in Fatima Hr Sec Schooll. My family is very happy family.

L5 My Family (after training)

My father name is K.Kumaraguru. He is a businessman. My father likes his work. My mother name is K.Shanthi. She is a homemaker. My mother likes watching T.V. There are four members in my family. My brother name is K.Rajkumar. He is studying B.E. My mother behaves friendly with me. My father behaves strictly with me. My name is K.Sindhumathi. I am studying in Valliammai Engineering College.

Whenever I have free time I like to play, sing and read novels. I am interested in watching movies. I love my brother. I miss my parents. I stay in the hostel. I am missing my school friend.

L5 More information was given by L5 regarding his parents. Some personal information is given by L5 in the second paragraph. Though the essay was not written for two hundred words, enough material was added by the learner when comparing with the essay written before the training. A flowchart model was given in the essay.

L7 My Family (before training)

I am S.Yogaraj. My father name is R.V.Sivadoss. He is a farmer. My mother name is S.Amutha. She is a house wife. I have only one elder sister. Her name is Kalpana. She is studying in BBA II year. I am a only son in my parent's.

I have only own uncle. His name is A.Selvakumar. He is a engineer. My aunty name is S.Sumathy. She is a housewife. They have two childs. First S.Bharath kumar. He studying in II standard in St.Joseph primary and nursery school. Another boy is 3 years child. So he did not go to school.

I have only one cousin brother. His name is T.Karthikeyan. He is completed MSc Computer Science. And he tried to job.

L7 My Family (after training)

My family is living near Mannargudi, Thirumakkotai village, Thiruvarur district. My family is very nice and small family. There are four members in my family. My father name is R.V.Sivadoss. He is a farmer. My mother name is S.Amutha. She is a house wife. I have only one elder sister. Her name is Kalpana. She is studying in BBA II year.

I am the only son in my family. So my mother loved me and I also love my mother. My father is very strict. Sometimes his behavior is very good. Sometimes he scolds me.

I have only one uncle. His name is A.Selvakumar. He is a engineer. My aunty name is S.Sumathy. She is a housewife. They have two children. Only two boys.First is S.Bharath kumar. He is studying in II standard in St.Joseph primary and nursery school. Another boy is 3 years old. So he did not go to school. He is a cute and very naughty boy.

Recently my sister's engagement is fixed. Her future husband is a business man. His family is a very good family. His name is Vijaya kumar.

My grandfather and grandmother died. My grandfather died before 10 years. My grandmother died before 2 years. I miss my grand mother. I like

her very much. She loves me a lot. Her death is an unfortunate incident. I cannot forget her. I miss my family, friends and relations in the hostel.

L7 My Hometown (after training)

My hometown is near Mannargudi, Thirumakkotai village, Thiruvarur district. Its name is Samuthayam. It is a very small and beautiful village. My village is very calm. Middleclass families are living there.

There are more than 400 families in my village. But some people are graduates. Many are uneducated. But they are hardworking people. My village is a greenish village. There is river in my village. There are three ponds and one lake in my village. There is a Shiva temple and a Vinayagar temple. The temple festival is very famous.

Agriculture is the main occupation in my village. The crops grown are paddy, sugarcane and groundnut. Yearly three times cultivating paddy. They use nature fertilizers and export to other states. We have only bus facility. No train facility. 5 buses running in my village. We have no bikes and cars.

One Government hospital is there. The hospital is very old hospital. There is a Government Higher Secondary School in our village and one Arts college near our town. There is an Engineering college. We go to school by cycle. City Union Bank is there. It is working for the past 15 years. It is very useful to education loan and more facilities. Only one bank in my village. My village people are my relations. My near town is Mannargudi. We go there for purchasing. It is very famous for Rajagopalaswami temple.

I miss my home town, nature places, family and my pet dog. Cities are very polluted compared to my home town.

L7 L7 has planned the essay with the help of a flowchart. Sufficient material relevant to the topic was seen in the essays written after the training. 'I am a only son in my parents' was rewritten by L7 as 'I am the only son in my family'. There is a logical coherence linking ideas in the essays written after the training. The writer has shared personal information with the reader. The writer was able to bring out his love for his family and hometown through his writing. He was able to describe his town beautifully.

L13 My Family (before training)

My family have five members. My father name is Mr.M.Perumal. he is working as a warden in Govt. high school hostel. He is a nice person. And my mother name is P.Radhika. She keep our family. I have one brother. His name is P.Surendar. He is studying in seventh standard in JCK Higher Secondary School. I have one sister. Her name is Monisha. I am the first son of my father. I am completed my 12th standard in Laurel Higher Secondary School.

L13 My Family (after training)

My family is a separate family. My family has five members. My father name is Mr.M.Perumal. He is working as a warden in Govt. high school hostel. My mother name is P.Radhika. She maintains our family. I have one brother. His name is P.Surendar. He is studying in seventh standard in JCK Higher Secondary School. I have one sister. Her name is Monisha. I am the first son of my father. I am completed my 12th standard in Laurel Higher Secondary School. My family stays at Peravurani.

My father is a nice person. He takes decision after thinking twicw. He is my role model. My mother is a jolly type. My brother is a naughty

person. During summer we go to some tourist places like Meenakshi Amman temple, Thanjavur Brakatheeswarar temple etc.

L13 L13 has managed to rewrite ‘She keep our family’ as ‘She maintains our family’. There is a flowchart drawn to plan the ideas. More information, in relation to the topic, on the family is presented in the essay, written after the training. The writer was able to put down a very good quality of his father (thinks twice before taking decisions) in his writing.

L14 My Family (before training)

My father name is K.Kuppusamy and my mother name is K.Santhi. My name is K.Ravikumar. I have a one brother. My father is a farmer and my mother is a house wife. Brother is studing in B.Tech chemical third year. My family stage is very poor. I am studying in Valliammai Engineering College in ECE branch. My brother name is K.Sathish kumar. I like very much. I am love in my family.

L14 My Family (after training)

My family is in Attur. It is a small village. I am Ravi kumar. I am studying B.E (ECE). My ambition is to become an engineer. My father name is K.Kuppusamy. He has studied upto +2. He is 45 years old. He is a farmer. My mother is a house wife. My mother name is K.Santhi. She has studied upto +2. she has got two sons. My brother’s name is Sathish kumar. He is studying in B.Tech chemical third year in Arunai Engineering College.

My father and mother pay a lot of affection on me and my brother. I like them very much. They advise me in my life. My brother and myself are very good friends. He advises in my studies. I love my family and our relations. My parents take risk and earn money for our studies.

L14 There is a flow chart pattern drawn to arrange the ideas in a sequence. L14 has shared more information on the family, though it is not for two hundred words. This was done after the training. The content was divided into paragraphs.

L16 My Family (before training)

In my family I am the elder child. I have two sister and one brother. My family is a middle class family. My father is a business man. He is running a hotel. My mother is a homemaker. My two sisters and a brother are studying in a school. My first sister is studying +2 and my second sister is studying +1. my brother is studying VIII. I studied in matriculation school till IV after that I changed into tamil medium because of poor economic status.

L16 My Family (after training)

My family is a small family. In my family there are six members. My father is very friendly to us. Tuticorin is our nativity. I like Tuticorin very much. My father is doing business in Tuticorin. My mother is a homemaker. I am the eldest child in my family. I have two sisters and one brother. My brother is very naughty in my family. My mother has more affection in my brother because he is the last child in my family. My family is a middle class family. My family is expecting more from me to get a good status in society. I will satisfy their expectations.

L16 My Hometown (after training)

My hometown is Tuticorin. It is near Tirunelveli. In my home town there is no problem about bus facilities. Many buses are going and coming in my town. There are thousands family living in my hometown. It is a developed town. So no problem in medical and school facilities. There are

many schools and hospitals. Matriculation as well as CBSE schools are there in my hometown.

Big industries are there in my town and through it thousands of people are employed in my town. Our town has very good water facilities. In my town now sethu samudra project is going on. After the completion of this project our town will develop rapidly. Depends on this our town will rank into a corporation status from municipal status.

L16 L16 has given more information in the essays written after training. He was able to describe every aspect of his town in detail. A flowchart pattern was seen in the essays after the training. The writer was able to verbalize his emotions in the essay. He talked about very serious issues in the essays written after the training, reflecting his awareness.

L19 My Family (before training)

My family is small with me. My father was in Madurai and he was doing cycle work. My mother is maid servant. I have one youngest sister who studied 10th standard in Chennai. My mom, my sister and I all was stay in Chennai. By hardwork and love of mom, Now, I am doing Engineering in this college. I am proud of mom. I had studied my 10th in Avvai Corporation G.H.S.S. in Madurai. After that I had passed my 11th, 12th standard in Lady Sivasami G.H.S.S. in Mylapore at Chennai. My sister is also studied in same school. Now I am stays in grandmom house. My goal is to became engineer and enjoy my life with my mom and sister.

L19 My Family (after training)

My family is too small family. My father name is Rajendran. My mom name is Latha. My name is Uma and my sister name is Manimala. My

mom and father have lot of affection for me and my sister. We all live in Chennai, which is my native place. My father is a business man. My mom is a good homemaker and lover for me and my sister. I am doing my first year engineering in Valliammai Engineering College. My sister studied 10th standard in Lady Sivasami G.H.S.S., in Mylapore, at Chennai. She is a happy girl with many friends.

My family is good to surroundings. We are living a happy life. Especially, holidays is a great gift to my family because we are enjoying their life in home or some places. My mom is a good cook, tailor and friend for me and my younger sister. She is a good daughter for her mom and father. At any function my mom and my aunt discuss about the function. My father encourages me and my sister. He is sincere in his work and responsible person. My sister is a cute and beautiful girl. She participates in cultural and competitions. She is a brilliant girl.

I am a happy girl when I saw success. When I fail I lose my hopes and joy. At that time my dad and sister encourage me. I am interested in reading books and collecting wild information. At any festivals, all my relatives including my family meet at my grandparents' house. We are my mom's gifts. Every night my mom advices us for our bright future.

L19 'My family is small with me' was changed to 'My family is too small family'. A flowchart pattern was seen in the essays written after training. L19 has written sufficient material related to the topic. The essay reflects the love for the family. She has also managed to give more information about herself.

However, one student's performance needs to be made a special reference. Even after the training, L11 did not show any improvement. Anyhow he had divided his essays into paragraphs.

L11 My Family (before training)

My name is K.Perumal. My father name is P.Kannan. My mother name is K.Valli. My family is a farmer. My family is very poor. My family two sister's and two brother's. Two sister's for marraged. My brother working. My village name is Pallavalli. My father is a very peaceful man. One sister for child dlivery. My brother is so sweet. I am studying in G.Hr.S.School. VI – XII std. My family is good family. My family is good family. My father is very attractive. I am a Tamilmidum school.

L11 My Family (after training)

My family village is Kurusilapattu. going to my village is only bus travels. every city for going to Thirupatture. Thirupatture from fifteen kilometer for my village.

My village is first house is my house. My family is six members. One father, one mother, two sister's and one brother. Two sister's for in married. One sister is child for one boy and one girl. This is small family.

My family is no for the condition, your enjoy. family is good family. my father take for your own inters sports, enjoy.

Friends, my family friends very nice. This help for me. Mani, work and etc. so sweet for my family friends. One supaniya time for going to toure. Toure is ooty for very beautiful place.

Since these tasks showed that the training was effective, the researcher decided not to have another language task with the students. Moreover the students were becoming busier with their end semester practical examinations.

5.8.2.2 An analysis of the essays after the training

Except for few students every student showed improvement after the training. This may be due to the fact that these few students were burdened with their regular classes and did not take the training seriously. It may be due to the fact that these students need a revision in strategy training. However L11 did not show any improvement even after giving revised strategy training. His sentence constructions were very bad even after the training.

Some samples of the students' essays were discussed earlier to show that students used the strategy of planning to write their essays. The researcher would like to cull the changes in the essays the students wrote before the training and the essays they wrote after the training.

The essays that were written after the training were divided into paragraphs. The sentences were more meaningful and logically connected. The word 'homemaker' was used instead of 'housewife' by L5. The students were able to share and say more about their family with the reader. The emotions and feelings in their mind are verbalized in the language task. There was a logical flow of ideas in their essays. However, few students had spelt words wrongly.

Sufficient material relevant to the topic was given. The family members and the hometown were discussed in great detail (L7). The correct use of capital letters, and the use of connector 'and' was seen in the essay (L13). This means careful planning has gone into the language task. There was organization and coherence in their ideas. Few students had shown improvement in both the tasks given after the training (L16 and L19).

5.8.3 Phase Three of the Final Study

In phase three of the final study the researcher conducted the training on the strategy of paraphrasing. The researcher planned to allot eleven hours to train the students on this strategy. Seven hours were allotted for the different tasks with the students. Four hours were allotted for correcting the written work and giving them a feedback. The correction and the discussion of the errors were done by the researcher on a one to one basis with the students. The reasons for adopting this methodology is the same as discussed in the preliminary study. Instructions on how to use the strategy was given along with the tasks undertaken by the students.

The students were first explained the need for paraphrasing. When mother-tongue medium students are given a writing task they usually are unable to discuss a particular point fluently because they cannot convey the information in English. They try to reword the message without altering the meaning. This is the strategy of paraphrasing which is used by most of us our writing.

5.8.3.1 Writing Tasks

For the training on the strategy of paraphrasing the researcher designed a vocabulary list, multiple choice questions and fill in the blank exercises.

The students were first asked to write an essay on 'My Semester Holidays'. Most students wrote fairly well developed essays, when compared to the essay which they wrote on 'My Family' in the beginning of the study. The researcher wants to make a special reference to the fact that a student S.Umamaheswari (L19) remembered to use the scaffold of 'flowchart' to

write this essay. Her work is scanned and given in the Appendix 13 of the thesis.

If a student does not know the English equivalent for a particular word he was told to use the mother-tongue in its place. The essays were read by the researcher and all such words were marked. The English equivalent of these words was given to the students to learn. Out of these, 20 words were chosen by the researcher. To teach these words to the students multiple choice exercises (Appendix 5) were designed by the researcher. The words were used in sentences and three options were given to choose the meaning of the word.

The three options were designed in such a way that out of the three, one option gives the correct meaning of the word, the other gives the paraphrase of the meaning of the word, and the other is just the opposite of the given word.

For example,

Choose the correct option that would mean the underlined word.

- 1) I went home as the colleges were closed indefinitely.
 - a) for a long period of time
 - b) for a short period of time
 - c) for an unlimited period of time

The researcher went around monitoring the students' performance. For students who do not know the meanings of the three options, their meanings were given. For example in the following sentence the word is beautiful. The three options are i) attractive, ii) good-looking and iii) pretty.

The hint given was good-looking and pretty is used to refer to persons and attractive is used to refer to non-living things.

5) I saw a beautiful scenery.

- a) attractive
- b) good looking
- c) pretty

The students were told to complete this exercise. By this way they learnt the meaning of the words or the English equivalent of the words which they did not know.

After some days, to find out if they remember paraphrasing, a cloze passage exercise (Appendix 6) was given. The students need to fill in the blanks with the words that they were taught. In case they do not know the correct word they used the paraphrased meaning of the word to fill in the blank, though they did not modify the sentence. For example, (2) When I entered the auditorium it was _____. I could not find a seat for myself. Instead of filling the blank with 'crowded' many had written 'many people'.

5.8.4 Phase Four of the Final Study

At the end of the training, a student feedback questionnaire (Appendix 7) was given to the students to answer. One hour was allotted by the researcher to collect feedback from the students. This was done because the researcher was interested in finding out the impact of the strategy training on the students.

70% of the students reported that they were not aware of these strategies before the training. 30% of the students reported that they were

aware of these strategies before the training. The researcher would like to make an interesting remark here that looks at the study in a different perspective.

L3 had said that though he know how to plan, he did not plan because he was told at school to rely on memory and learn by memorizing.

30% of the students talked about presenting effectively, after learning the strategy of planning. They had spoken about organizing and revising their ideas. 50% of the students have made an attempt to use the strategies taught in writing assignments in other subjects also.

They have made an attempt to express a new idea with the words they are familiar with (paraphrasing). Two students have remarked how planning has helped to relate to the topic and come out with ideas. Their words are quoted by the researcher.

L6- “Now this training is useful. Instead of a new word I write known words to give the same meaning”.

L19- “After training, I try to express my ideas without mistakes. And this training is used for planning my writing and increases my capability in English”.

Almost 70% of the students felt that the strategy training made them approach language classes with an interest and they became more conscious of their learning. They are able to face English examinations, after the training, with confidence. L15 remarked he will try to practice the training in English classes and he will succeed in learning the language. All the students said that they could write essays on their own without memorizing,

after training. The training had helped them to become better learners of English.

Expression of ideas without mistakes was not difficult for them after the training. All the students have made a reference to how their confidence has improved after the training.

5.9 DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher analyzed the data collected in the final study (Table A10.2).

The data collected from the students, using the questionnaire, was used to find the average of every part (Part A to Part F) in the questionnaire. The method to find this value is discussed earlier under the section 4.10.2.4. Each part of the questionnaire represents a group of learning strategies.

After calculating the average of each part of the questionnaire the researcher plotted a graph to find out which part of the strategy the students use the most and in which part they need to improve. The graph of every student is not shown in the research study. With the average of each part the overall average was found and is shown in Table A 10.2 (Appendix 10).

Each part in the table represents a group of strategies as described below. The last column (in the Table A 10.2) 'O.A' refers to the overall average of every student.

Part A) Remembering more effectively

Part B) Using all your mental processes

Part C) Compensating for missing knowledge

Part D) Organizing and evaluating your learning

Part E) Managing your emotions

Part F) Learning with others

Part A and Part B represent memory strategies. Part C represents compensation strategies. Part D represents metacognitive strategies. Part E and Part F represent affective and social strategies. Strategies representing Part C and Part D could mean a lot for the researcher, as they are used to improve writing skills.

Key to understand averages

| | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| High | Always or almost always used | 4.5 – 5.0 |
| | Usually used | 3.5 – 4.4 |
| Medium | Sometimes used | 2.5 – 3.4 |
| Low | Generally not used | 1.5 – 2.4 |
| | Never or almost never used | 1.0 – 1.4 |

5.9.1 A Study on the Part Averages

The averages of each part of the questionnaire show which group of strategies the student reports using the most for effective learning of English. If a student has a low average on one or more parts of the questionnaire, it means that there are new strategies in these parts that the student needs to use.

A pictorial representation (final study)

Graphs showing the frequency of strategy use of a very good strategy user, and a middle level strategy user of the final study are given

below. In the final study there was no student who reported a very low use of strategy. So the graph of a student who has a very low frequency of strategy use is not given.

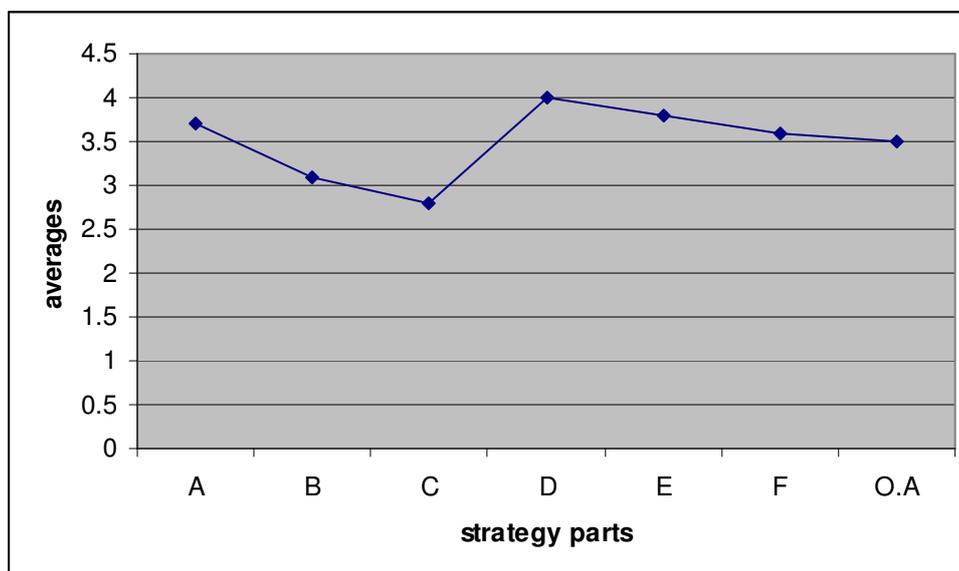


Figure 5.1 Graph showing the frequency of strategy use of a middle level strategy user- L8

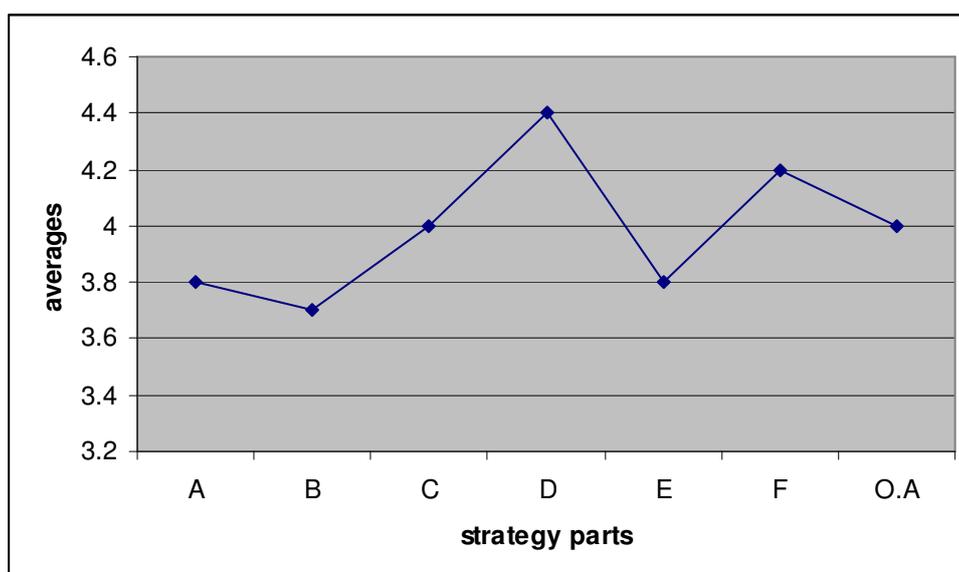


Figure 5.2 Graph showing the frequency of strategy use of a good strategy user- L1

The graphs represent the averages of every strategy part and the overall average of a middle level strategy user and a good strategy user. In spite of the fact that the frequency of their overall strategy use is good their writing does not show any significant use of strategy. This is especially true in the case of L1. The reason that could be attributed to this fact is that maybe the students use wrong strategies without any relation to the task or they could have reported using strategies without actually using them.

L8 could work more on the strategies representing Part B and Part C. L1 could work more on the strategies representing Part A and Part B.

5.9.2 A Study on the Overall Averages

With the average of the parts the overall average was calculated. This was done by adding the part averages and dividing it by the number of parts. The overall average of each student tells shows the frequency in which he/she uses strategies for learning English. This is pictorially represented in Figure 5.3.

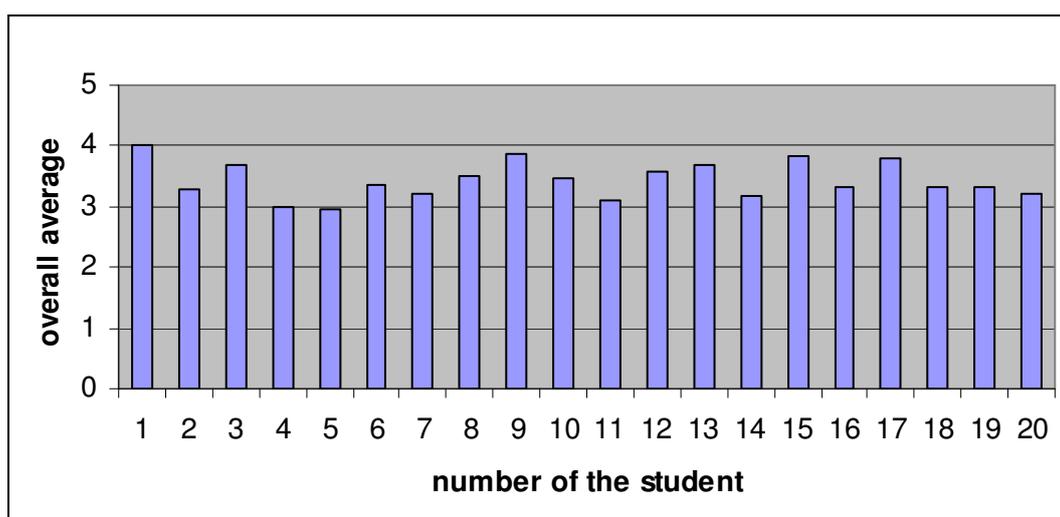


Figure 5.3 Graph showing the frequency of strategy use of final study students

5.9.3 A Study on the Group Averages for Every Part of the Strategy

To find out the maximum used strategy part by the students of the final study the researcher decided to find the group average of the part averages. This was done by adding all the averages of Part A of every student and dividing it by the number of students. The same calculation was followed for finding out the group average for every strategy part. The number of students for the final study is twenty.

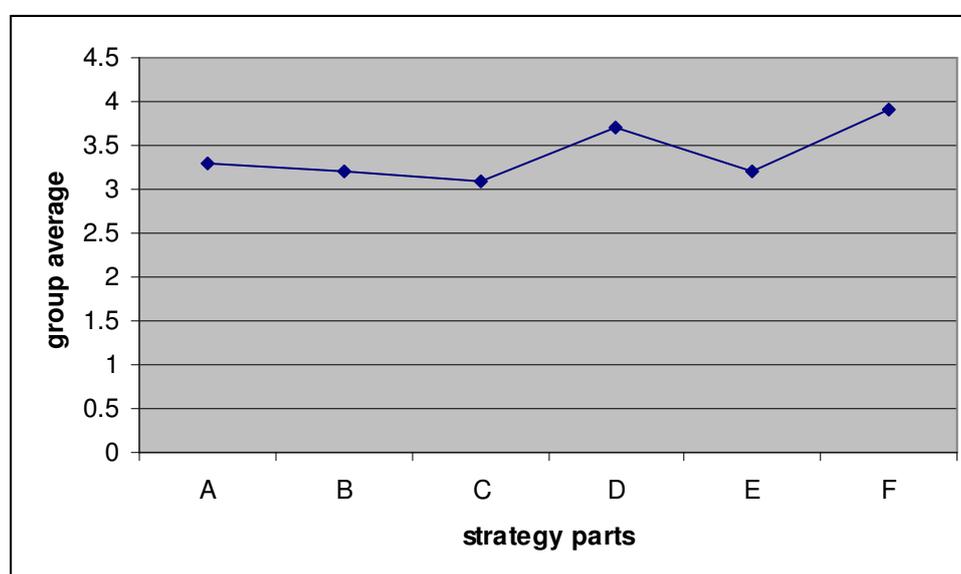


Figure 5.4 Graph showing the group averages of the strategies in the final study

Figure 5.4 is a pictorial representation of the information that the maximum number of students of the final study use the strategies represented by Part F and the minimum number of students use the strategies represented by Part C.

5.10 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING THE RESEARCH

The next section discusses the problems encountered by the researcher during the course of the research study.

The students need to be convinced about the study itself, before starting the study. To teach these students the chosen strategies, a special class was arranged for the students. The students were reluctant to attend the classes as they felt that they have to study English as a subject only in the first year. They were more concerned with and burdened by the other technical subjects. So, initially they did not take the training classes seriously.

Though the students willingly attended the training, sometimes they had to be coaxed to stay back after the college hours. As these students stayed in the hostel, they preferred going to their native places, instead of attending the training.

They had to be convinced, at first, about the importance of writing in English. Good writing skills, in turn, will also help them to perform better in their technical subjects. Only after this did they realize the importance of the training. Gradually when they understood what was happening they were ready to attend the training even on Saturdays.

The students were only worried about the university examinations. Marks matter the most for them. The training session did not count for the attendance or for the marks. The teachers handling the technical subjects had to be explained about the study. They were not only curious to know what was happening but also only after getting the information they permitted the students to attend it.

The researcher had to construct instructional materials for the strategy training. The students could be familiarized with the learning strategies only if the strategies are used along with the language tasks. Only then the strategies would become a part of their learning.

The researcher had to ask the sweeper and the ayah to keep the class rooms opened even after college hours. They did not like this, as it means asking them to stay back late in the college. After the training classes the students had to find their own modes of transport to reach home. On the other hand, if the students leave by the regular time they could commute by the college bus.

However, the samples from the students' writing show us that, in spite of the above discussed problems, learning has taken place.

5.11 OUTCOME OF THE STUDY

The outcome of the study helped the researcher gain an insight into the following.

1) Students can be trained in strategies

The results of the research study have shown that students can be trained and will benefit by strategy instruction. The analysis of the writing tasks with the students, after the training, has tested the hypothesis of the study.

2) Awareness raising is very important in the process

The researcher has spent a considerable time to administer the questionnaire to the students. The students were happy to find out they were actually using strategies. The frequency of the strategy use varied from student to student. The students were also explained about the importance of the strategies for effective writing and taught to use it.

3) Practice is required, before any strategy is to be inbuilt in the learning process

The researcher devised many language tasks and made the students attempt them to get a practice on the use of strategies. However, the strategy training could have been more effective if the research study was carried out over a lengthy period of time.

4) Focus on the process is necessary. So far as language teachers we have been focusing only on the product

The research study has greater insights for the language teachers. It shifts the focus of the teacher. It suggests that the language teachers can get the input for teaching from their students if they spend more time to find out how the students learn.

5) The research has led to the offshoot of a question, Do students use wrong strategies or are some of them not aware of strategies at all?

Graphs were plotted from the data. The graphs enabled the researcher to find out the student who used the learning strategies frequently and those who did not use it frequently. Naturally, the student who used the language learning strategies more frequently should write better. But this was not the case with the students in the research study. This made the researcher raise a question, Are the students using wrong strategies? i.e., Do the students know to match the learning strategy with the language task?

5.12 FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

5.12.1 Major Findings

The research study conducted helped the researcher arrive at two major findings.

- 1) The strategies used by learners of English as a second language, for effective writing of English, are identified.
- 2) These strategies were taught to the students in the study and found that students have learnt to use them in their writing and thereby improved their writing.

Each of these findings is discussed below.

1. In the study that was conducted, the learners reported to use certain strategies. Students were interviewed to find out the strategies used by them, as mere observation was not helpful in getting the required information from the students. The identified strategies were narrowed down to two and classified as metacognitive strategy (strategy of planning) and cognitive strategy (strategy of paraphrasing).

The research study revealed that most of the strategies used by students seem to emerge only when the researcher followed an interactive methodology with the students. The researcher gave the students enough time to respond to her questions. This methodology was largely responsible for students reporting strategies they used for the language tasks. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, they were not met in their regular class along with their batch mates. This made them open up and participate in the discussion.

2. The researcher decided to base the strategy training on Oxford's eight step model of strategy training. Students were trained on two main

strategies that would help them in their writing. Written tasks by the students were analyzed before and after the training and reported in the study. The impact of the strategy use was seen in the essays written after the training.

5.12.2 Other Findings

- 1) Students from mother-tongue medium do use strategies of some sort though not consistently. Strategy instruction will help them learn the importance of using strategies to effectively communicate in English.
- 2) Students can be taught to use strategies to develop their skills in English. Strategy instruction can be done in class especially to help students from mother-tongue medium schools. Sadly, however this aspect of teaching English to LEP students has not been given due attention. It is high time that English Language Teaching practitioners in India realize the potential of strategy instruction to students from mother-tongue medium schools.

Successful communication in a language means successful use of strategies. If ESL teachers are genuine in their care and concern in helping the large number of students coming from the mother-tongue medium institutions, then strategy instruction will have to be made central to any remedial course for the students.

5.13 SUMMARY

Learning strategy instruction would be most valuable for students who are not successful learners. Yet these may be the very students who are the least motivated to try new strategies. They may not have the confidence to

try new strategies and think it is not worthwhile to make an effort to improve their own language learning. Once this initial hurdle of learning to use strategies is got over strategy training programs could benefit students. Once they experience success in using strategies their attitude about their own abilities may change. They may understand that their failures can be attributed to the lack of effective strategies rather than to the lack of ability or laziness.

The research study has identified many issues related to actual implementation of learning strategy instruction. The most important issue is developing in teachers the understanding and techniques for delivering effective learning strategy instruction to students. A second and related issue is the development and adaptation of instructional materials that provide learning strategy instruction.