CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims at constructing a conceptual framework, objectives and methodology upon which the research study centres. It helps the researcher to understand his line of thinking and working. It enables the investigator to review different perspectives of a given topic and select suitable direction for the research programme.

3.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

Persuasion is abstract and it’s embedded in language. A careful study of the business promotion writing reveal appropriate that they get concretized through the use of business vocabulary, structures, cohesive devices and function sequence etc. The engineering students’ career needs include expression of scientific and technological facts in precise and clear terms. Further, writing effective business communication using persuasive skills/genre is also the responsibility of the engineering professionals. Naturally, the students need adequate training in this area to be a successful engineer in future. So an experimental study is attempted to improve the functional efficiency of the students in using persuasive skills/ genre in sales promotion writing. Having finalized the conceptual framework, the researcher embarks upon designing the methodology of research.
3.2.1 Genre Approach to Teaching Persuasive Paragraph Writing

Genre approach may be regarded as an extension of product approach as these are some strong similarities between the two. Like product approach, Genre approach regards writing as predominantly linguistic. It focuses on end products. But, Genre approach emphasises that there are different text types that depend on their social context in which they are produced.

Swales (1990) proposed an approach to the teaching and analysis of professional and academic discourse. He observes, ‘A Genre comprises a class of communicating events the members of which share some set of communication purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert numbers of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structures of the discourse and influence and constrains choice of content and style’ (Swales 1990). Swales introduces ‘move structures’ which are constituent parts of the text representing the writers communicative purpose. The participants of the community (lawyers, journalists, researchers, scientists, engineers, doctors) decide and shape the communicative purpose. Hence, a variety of text types such as business letters, journalistic, articles, legal essays, scientific reports and research articles are produced. The learners have a choice to opt for a suitable text type. It has implication on syllabus design based on the needs of the learner.

Genre approach consists of the relationship between the writer and the audience for whom they are writing. Hedge an advocate of process approach insists on the focus on audience. Thus, a link can be established between process approach and genre approach in this aspects.
As in the product approach, Genre approach implies three stages in the development of writing. Cope & Kalantzis (1993) suggest a wheel model of Genre literacy. There are three stages for the wheel-models of the text types are exposed to the learners and is shown in Figure 3.1. The teachers and learners involve in the production of text. At the final phase, the learners produce their own texts. This cycle may be repeated as and when the necessity arises.

A systematic linguist Martin (1985) associates Genre to verbal strategies used to accomplish social purpose of many kinds. These strategies refer to “Stages through which one moves in order to realise a genre”. The variables used in a communicative event by a given culture such as ‘field’, ‘tenor’ and ;mode; are determined by a particular Genre or discourse type. Field of discourse refers to ‘what is going on’ ‘tenor’ points out ‘who is taking part’ and ‘mode’ implies the ‘role’ assigned to language.

Figure 3.1 Cope & Kalantzis (1993) wheel model of Genre literacy

Definition - Genre

“Genre as verbal strategies, then is a dynamic system, a process, a decision tree in short a locus of interaction, a point at which interpersonal negotiations may take place at which changes in the context of situation may be observed” (Melrose 1996).
In Genre approach, the learners are trained to combine content, style and structure. Genre provides a writer a pre-prepared and labelled package of constrains. Thus, writing is not problem solving activity but a pattern matching one. “A writer summons up an appropriate Genre to cover the topic and then carries out a process of fitting the content into its text structure, expressing this in an appropriate style” (Sharple p.99).

Genre approach undervalues the skills needed to produce a text and learners play a passive role. Acknowledging the social purpose of writing, believing that interest learning is an outcome of imitation, analysis and conscious application of rules are the positive aspects in Genre approach.

3.2.2 Persuasive Writing Skills / Genre

The following is the task given to ECE students in the first English class after they joined the course. They were asked to write a paragraph within 40 minutes using 300 words. The students were not permitted to interact. The teacher role was passive observation.

3.2.3 Identification of Linguistic Components of Persuasive Genre/Skill

The researcher perusing through the books and researches had hardly come across any material which could identify and analyses the linguistic elements of persuasive skills in detail. So, the researcher could not get any conceptual model which would serve as a basis to improve upon.

Naturally, he has resorted to deductive method to identify the linguistic components of persuasive skills. After giving suitable tasks which would help the students express the desired persuasive skills in sales promotion writing, 57 samples business promotion writing on persuasive
writing were collected from Electronics and Communication Engineering students of K.S. Rangasamy College of Technology, Tiruchegode. As these students are selected on the basis of the state level rank in total marks, their level of proficiency in English language would be higher than that of other branch students.

The Persuasive paragraphs thus collected as samples were grouped under three categories.

- Paragraphs in which the persuasive skills/genre emerging in full.
- Paragraphs in which the persuasive skills/genre emerges but partially.
- Paragraphs in which persuasive skills/genre have not all emerged.

Then, the response of students grouped under category I, were analysed to find out how the persuasive genre/skills had emerged. The responses of the students grouped under category II & III were also analysed to find out the persuasive genre had not emerged. The observations have given necessary guidance to the researcher to identify the component of persuasive skills/genre. In each of the following section, the method, the researcher had adopted to identify the components which concretise persuasive skills/genre consolidated list of the components revalidation of the task are presented.

3.2.4 Persuasive Skills/Genre

Persuasive genre/skills factors is abstract and they are implicit in language. They are expressed through sentence structure, cohesive devices
and sentences sequence. One could feel the tone of the writer. Only those who have proficiency in language can feel and employ them in writing. The writers and researchers have hardly made any attempt to explain them in concrete terms. The writer who deals with letters make a distraction between personal and impersonal narration.

Due to lack of research work, teaching them were also difficult in the classroom. In the present study, an attempt is made to find out appropriate answers to the following questions so as to concretise persuasive genre/skills.

a. Wherein lies the persuasive genre / skills in business promotion writing related to Engineering profession?

b. How does persuasive genre/skills emerge?

c. Is it possible to capture exactly the persuasive skills from business promotion writing?

d. Is it possible to analysis persuasive skills threadbare and identify the minimum linguistics unit of each factors component of the persuasive skills?

e. Is it possible to teach each component factor separately and collectively?

   If so, how is to be done? Or what are the required elements or functions of language?

f. Is it possible to evolve a teaching strategy to teach the persuasive skills?
3.3  **RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

English Language Teaching (ELT) in the last two decades has made a significant contribution both to content and methodology of English teaching. The need-based syllabus design focuses on specific area of language. For example, EAP (English for academic purpose), ESP (English for Specific Purpose) concentrate on specific structures (usage) relation to expression of facts. Allen & Widdowson (1974) and Herbert (1978) have distinguished ESP from other academic courses through structures expressing facts rather than opinion. But, the English language needs of engineering students include not only expression of facts, process, cause effect, purpose-function etc. but also business communication especially business promotion writing. Given the rapid pace of technology and innovation, persuasive writing skills is the life blood of business today. Adequate training in this area would enable the engineering students respond to purchase, sales, complaint letters etc better in their professional career.

As mentioned in chapter 2, the literary resources on business communication writing deal properly with format and content. But, the changing business scenario in India and abroad demands the use of language which would reveal the writers’ attitude and the consciousness of whom the letters are addressed to. So, the communicative ability of the engineering students using appropriate persuasive strategy in business promotion writing should be enhanced. Needless to say, persuasive skills enhance career prospects and prepares students for the work place. Work place communication is persuasive. Once they master this important life skill, students will enjoy increased self confidence, better performance in college and healthier social relationships. Persuasive communication serve as catalytic agents of global business prosperity and mutually beneficial partnership. An attempt is made in this study to identify the components of
persuasive genre/skills and apply them in meaningful communicative contexts through tasks such as brainstorming, group discussion and team work for writing business communication can be helpful. This will teach them how to manage relationship with customer, negotiate, solve problems and resolve conflict peacefully and foster natural persuader qualities.

3.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is often stated that a problem well defined is half solved. This chapter entitled “Improving the persuasive writing skills of undergraduate students of Engineering with special reference to sales contexts” –An experimental study defines the problems to be investigated in valid terms. It delineates the objectives and assumptions. In addition, this chapter states the research hypothesis which provides direction to the current investigation. Finally it charts out the scope, need and importance and delimitations of the study.

In Tamilnadu, the U.G students of engineering study English language for technical communication. Since it is a universal language, it would be helpful for them to communicate with the people living in any part of the world wherever they are employed. After completing their course, the Engineering graduates will find placement in different positions such as sales engineer, production engineer, area sales manager, quality control engineer, purchase manager etc., Thus, they play different roles in different situations. Sometimes the company at its discretion can transfer an engineer holding a position to some other position. For instance the production manager can be transferred as area sales engineer. Hence, an engineer is expected to perform different roles in a company. In business, there would be either gain or loss. The engineer employed in a company are expected to make gain for the company. The success of the company depends on how the engineer makes a
gain and create good impression about the company. In order to gain, engineers should learn to write effective business communication.

The business communication may be between company (Engineer) to a customer, customer to company, company official to another official of the same company etc. As an engineer holding a position in a company, he/she has to be conscious of his/her position, the addressee’s position and the situation in which he/she writes a business correspondence. He would be able to achieve his goal of writing business communication only if he uses persuasive/skills genre to achieve positive results from his addressee/buyer. The purpose of teaching English would be served only when students of engineering learn to use persuasive skills/genre in business communication. There is an imperative need to improve the persuasive writing skills of undergraduate students in engineering with special reference to sale contexts. Hence, the problem is stated and tested as shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Details of coding used in three phased test design of pre test, progressive tests and post test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O1</th>
<th>P1-P4</th>
<th>O2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>B1-B4</td>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A1 - Pre test   B1-B4 - Progressive tests   C1 - Post Test

O1 - Level of efficiency attained in pretest
P1-P4 - Level of efficiency attained in progressive tests
O2 - Level of Efficiency attained in post test
3.5 METHODOLOGY

The research process is based on the teaching and evaluation. In phase I, the investigator applied a pre test (A1) to measure and identify the level of the persuasive writing skill of students in using persuasive language in sales contexts (O1)

In phase II, the progressive tests (B1-B4) were administrated in four stages to assess the improvement in functional efficiency (P1-P4) of using the exponents. In the first stage business vocabulary, cohesive devices, were focused. Sentence structures to enhance persuasive genre. For each task ranging from were administered and the students responses were collected. Each test highlighted the independent variables of the exponents of persuasive genre Each task B1.B2.B3andB4 were administered only after the teacher facilitated learning through oral exercises. In phase III, the post (C1) was administered to measure the functional efficiency in using persuasive writing skills in business promotion writing.

If the post test score (02) are higher than the pre test scores (01). It could be concluded that there is improvement in functional efficiency of students due to the experimental treatment as shown in Figure 3.2.

3.6 TITLE

“Improving the Persuasive Writing Skills of Undergraduate Students of Engineering with Special Reference to Sales Contexts” -An Experimental Study.
3.7 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Major Objectives

- Improving the persuasive writing skills of undergraduate students of Engineering with special references to sales contexts. An experimental study

General Objectives

1. To improve the skill of writing a continuous persuasive paragraph in sales contexts.

2. To improve the ability of using appropriate words in different business contexts.

3. To improve the skill in using functional words (Verbs), preposition, articles and logical connectors.

4. To identity whether the students are familiar with the format of sale promotion writings/messages

5. To identity constituents of business promotion writing with special reference to persuasive language

6. To find out the students’ level of attainment on business promotion message in using persuasive language.

7. To design, validate and apply the tasks to improve the persuasive writing skills of students in sales promotion message in using persuasive language.

Specific Objectives

1. Selection and use of business vocabulary
2. Framing sentences effectively to convince the buyer/officer etc

3. Linking context and content

4. Using preposition/ article/ adjectives cohesive devices and logical connectors to suit the context.

5. Learning the different components stages in introducing persuasive genre/skills

6. Applying the component stages to write persuasive paragraph in sale contexts.

Persuasion is basically a literary concept rooted in the craft of fiction especially narrative fiction. From Aristotle to present day scholars, the teachers have centered their attention on the requisite skills and abilities to change attitude and behaviours and to take specific action. Critics and researchers apply this retinues only to analyse fiction. But, letters have a traditionally established identify in language to prior to fiction (Rene Wellack & Austin Warren 1949). Hence, it would be reasonable to conclude that persuasion embedded in the language of fiction would have their origin in letters. The present study specifically focuses on this concept in business letters/writing.

3.8 ASSUMPTION OF THE STUDY

- The students of Engineering are familiar with the format of business letters writings.

- The students’ functional efficiency in using persuasive skills/tone is low at the entry level.

- The students could not differentiate between tones and they lack the competence to assume different roles and write
business communication from different point of view (i.e) as a customer, manager, officer etc.

- The students competence in identifying the factors of persuasive skills tone is low.

- The students level for attainment of writing function sequence in business promotion is below the expected level.

- Tasks can be designed suitably which would demand the application of the constituents of persuasive writing skill to emerge business persuasion.

- Tasks could be applied to the students in a phased manner in the classroom.

- The functional efficiently of the students could be improved by application of tasks.

- The enhancement of functional efficiency in using persuasive Writing skills could be assessed

- The effect of the implementation of the task could be assessed.

3.9 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

- The experimental study is conducted only in K.S. Rangasamy College of Technology, Tiruchengode, Namakkal District.

- The investigation is confined only to the students of Electronics and Communication Engineering Branch (B.E I1 semester) admitted during the academic year 2009-2010.
• All the 57 students admitted in Electronics and Communication Engineering branch are selected for investigation.

• The study was conducted in 50 periods each of 40 minutes duration

• The tests were conducted successively on working days as and when the students have free periods/library hours/or when the teachers were on leave.

• The factors such as socio-economic background, educational, professional background of the parents, exposures of English language at home, mother tongue, rural-urban background and medium of instruction at school level which are important in deciding the competence and performance of the students lie beyond the scope of the study.

3.10 DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERMS

The title includes the key terms-‘improving’ ‘persuasive writing skills’ ‘sales contexts’.

Improving means enhancing the ability to write according to the learning situations contexts such as writing business letters, email and sales promotion writings.

Persuasive Writing

The persuasive skills/ genre factors are the strategies which intervene/emerge in the mind of learners in the process of writing and effective tool (aid) in understanding (or) comprehending the writing process to take specific action.
Skill

Skills means ability to do an activity well. Regarding persuasive skills is a persist sub conscious abstract knowledge of the rules governing formation of speech and writing.

Sales

‘Sales’ connotes transaction relating to money/material/resources.

Based on the problem cited above, the following final model was evolved to improve the communicative competence of engineering students in sales promotion writing using persuasive skills.

The following model evolved to improve persuasive writing skills of Engineering Students

Motivation: Any Learning Needs Motivation

To create interest among the learners at first simple and easy learning activities are selected, (i.e the tasks were graded). The completion of tasks successfully creates interest among learners to take up the learning activity with interest.

Self Confidence: Double the Strength

Self Competence is specially identified as an important aspect affective filter’s in language learning that it enables the learner to encourage intake or useful point (Krashen 1983) poor language learners lack self confidence Naiman 1978, Beebe 1983, Brown 1977). Two or three simple tasks are given to learners so that they can feel confidence to take up the learning process (Nunan et al. 2001)
**Conceptualisation**

Learners have to understand many concepts like grammar, syntax, vocabulary etc. while they learn a language. They have to master new concept in their day-to-day language learning activities. Hence, conceptualisation of new idea helps them to learn the language.

**Rule learning**

Language learning is rule governed behaviour. The forms and rules of language should be internalised. Once they understand the rules behind the formation sentence, language learning process will become easy (McCormick & Schiefelbusch 1990).

**Performance: The Greatest of All**

The level of language learning depends upon how one performs in various occasion. Performance is the actual use of the language by the learners in a variety of situation. The degree of performance depends upon the mastery of language (Gonzi et al. 1993)

**Competence**

Performance leads to competence, which is the final stage of the language learning (Rivers 1973).

Thus, the model evolved for improving persuasive writing skills of Engineering students consists of all the important principles of language learning.

**3.11 HYPOTHESES**

The following hypotheses have been formulated as research objectives by the researcher:
1. The level of attainment of engineering students in continuous business promotion paragraph writing using persuasive language with special reference to sales contexts at the entry level is low.

2. There will be significant mean difference between the pretest (A1) and the post test (C1) scores on persuasive writing skills/genre used in sales communication contexts.

3. There will be significant interrelationship between function sequence and exponents of the functions such as sentence structure, factors, logical connectors (transitional device) and choice of appropriate business vocabulary.

4. The predictive efficiency of each of the exponents of persuasive language differ significantly in identifying the functional efficiency of the students.

3.12 EXPERIMENTATION IN PHASES

The experiment was conducted in three phases. In the first phase the task which could be completed in 40 minutes was given to the student in the classroom. The task was given on using persuasive language to sell a product. The task would reveal the students initial level of efficiency in persuasive skills/genre in sales context.

In the second phase of experiment, progressive tests totally 27 tasks were administered to the students. In the first stage of the experimental phase II, the task (B1) students efficiency in using the appropriate business adjectives, discourse markers, cause and effect expression, functional verbs sentence completion, collocation, pamphlet writing were tested. Seven tasks focusing in each independent variable on persuasive skills were administered.
The independent variables concretizes the persuasive skills in sales promotion writing.

In the second stage of the experimental the task (B2) students efficiency in using comparative adjectives, persuasive vocabulary, compound words, Discourse markers and cohesive devices persuasive paragraph writing picture narration and advertisement were tested. Six tasks on persuasive skills were administered the independent variables concretize the persuasive skills/factors.

In the third stage of the experimental phase II, the task (B3) students efficiency using business compound words, close test, preposition conditional clauses, intensifiers, slogan writing identifying persuasive words in advertisement (picture) were tested. Ten tasks focusing in each independent variables on persuasive skills were administered. The independent variables concretize the persuasive skills in sales writing.

In the fourth stage of the experimental phase II, the task (B4) students efficiency in using business adjunct, sentence completion, dialogue, and choose options were tested. Four tasks focusing in each independent variables on persuasive skills were administered. The independent variables concretize the persuasive skills in sales promotion writings.

In the third phase, the same task given in the pretest was repeated in the post test with a view to assessing the improvement in performance in using persuasive skills. In continuous discourse, there are possibilities to employ persuasive skills/genre. In the assessment of the task, marks were awarded only if the students highlighted the persuasive skills to emerge.

3.13 EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Among the research methods, experimental method is considered to be a scientific method of research. It provides a systematic and logical way
for answering the research questions. It is the best way of establishing cause and effect relationship between variables. It helps to test hypothesis of causal relationships between variables.

This method is considered to be the one of the best methods because it provides for a high degree of control over extraneous variables and multiplication of variables. It reduces bias and increases reliability. It also permits drawing inferences above causality. The researcher can manipulate the independent variables. Since, they decide the nature of treatment of whom it is to be applied and to what extent.

**Single Group Experimental Design**

The investigator has employed experimental single group pretest-progressive tests- post test. The researcher selected this design for the following reasons:

1. Being teacher of English for this group of students, this group is readily available.

2. The researcher has linked this research with regular class room teaching so that there is no hindrance to the academic activity.

**3.14 DATA COLLECTION STUDENTS’ RESPONSE TO THE TASK**

The responses received from 57 students were grouped under three categories from the first category of persuasive paragraph writing in which the persuasive skills /genre emerges in full is given below as sample
Sample: 1

Thank you for enquiry over phone for purchase of Star wet grinder. We are the largest producer of all type of Wet Grinder. Star Wet Grinder has always set the standard in the market. The pamphlet is enclosed for more details herewith. Star XL models. This is for supervisor performance 2 litres capacity latest model and high quality available in all colours. Plastic body electrical parts are thoroughly insulated to prevent leakage of power and short circuit. The light weight, easy handling. The grinder with unique unipressure 3 stone system for superior grinding performance. Advanced grinding technology. Perfect wet grinder for quick and easy grinding that gives for fluffy batter in a jiffy. The table-top titling, grinding and pouring so effortless. The value for money that works like a dream. We offer 5% discount. Free door delivery. Our team is ready for demo at your convenient if you give a call over phone. 2 year warranty on grinder and 5 year warranty on motor Free optional attachments: Atta Kneader and coconut scraper.

We are ready to provide any other detail if you require please. Customer satisfaction is our motto, we offer you the best service. If you place order before 30th of this month, we offer a special discount of 5% on bill. We will be very happy to honour your valuable order immediately. Thank you.

The following responses of students to the task grouped under category II& III are given below as sample:

Sample: 2

I received you letter from you regarding the enquiry for the supply of wet grinder. I wish to make it clear that you need not worry about the quality. You need not worry about the payment. You pay money at the time of
delivery of the item. Any problems will be immediately attended to I assure you a discount of 5% on the total bill. Expect your order soon.

**Sample: 3**

Your letter has been received from you with regard for the supply of wet grinder 1 no. Our company items known for quality. You need not worry about the quality. You can purchase with your eyes closed. I give you a discount of 5% on the total bill. You pay money at the time of delivery of wet grinder. You need not worry about anything. Send your order.

### 3.15 ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES ON PERSUASIVE SKILLS

On analysing the II & III category of persuasive paragraphs the researcher observed the following points which obstruct persuasive skills from emerging.

1. The function sequence is not planned carefully.

2. The writer failed to thank the customer while acknowledging the receipt of the letter/phone call.

3. As the appropriate logical connector devices are not used, sentences stand unconnected and break the totality of the persuasive skills. Grammatical errors are hurdles which affect the persuasive tone.

4. Emphasis on variety and quality of the (salient features) product is not given.

5. Suitable adjectives (business adjectives) are not used to arouse the interest of the customer.
6. Use of negatives ‘need not’ reduce the effect of the persuasive tone (positive statements would be more effective.)

7. Specific details about price, warranty period, taxes, packaging and forwarding charges etc, are not mentioned. They are not simply details but very important persuasive factors.

8. Statements such as ‘Don’t worry about quality, payment and can purchase with your eyes closed are very vague. The customers would not be persuaded by these statements. They require specific details in writing with the concept of business persuasion.

3.16 FUNCTION SEQUENCE OF PERSUASIVE SKILLS/GENRE

Considering the above points the following function sequence and exponents are identified as the components of persuasive writing skills

1. Salutation (using Dear Mr, Dear Sir, Madam) and statement of Acknowledgement (with thanks)

2. Statement of features of the product

3. Statement of concession, warranty

4. Statement of customer-friendly (sales service/customer contact/meet) and

5. Statement of Requests for order.

To express each function, different possibilities of sentence structure are given below. These statements gradually develop the persuasive skills/ tone. Further, the creativity of the student is also an important factor in persuasive skills tone. Every student has his own idea of how to convince the
customer. Naturally, the words and sentence structures reveal the creativity of the students as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Analysis of the possible exponents of the functions of persuasive writing skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | Salutation (using Dear Mr, Dear Sir, Madam) and statement of salutation and Acknowledgement (with thanks) | Dear Customer/ dear madam  
We received Your Letter/ phone call….thank you….very much |
| 2 | Statement of features of the product                                      | This the latest available Model Manufactured by Company  
There is a provision to switch off the power supply.  
In case of excessive heat/ short circuits/ fluctuation in power supply.  
The machine is covered with fibre sheet which will not melt even in 300³c. |
| 3 | Warranty /rebate/ statement of concession                                | We give three years warranty for the products. And 3% rebate/discount credit facility at 0%               |
| 4 | Statement of after customer – friendly sales service/customer contact/meet | We give immediate attention in case of repair/default.  
Our service personnel will meet you once in 3 months regularly and check the functioning free of cost.  
Free door delivery interest  
Can call us over 24x7 toll free phone no |
| 5 | Statement of request for order                                          | Your valuable orders is awaited we will be happy to honour your order immediately. We assure you the best service and cooperation. |
So, persuasive skills/ genre could be taught in the classroom by focusing on certain specific structures, cohesive devices in addition to function sequences.

### 3.17 ORGANIZATION OF PERSUASIVE PARAGRAPH WRITING

One of the basic requirements of a persuasive writing is the proper use of discourse coherence. The persuasive paragraph should be designed that each sentence should have some link or tie with the next sentence. In other words, sentences should be closely related and there should be a logical relationship among them and this provides coherence to the paragraph. There are four devices by which coherence can be achieved.

1. **Pronouns** - Substitute for nouns
2. **Synonyms** - Substitute for word already used
3. **Hyponym (species)** - Substitute for super ordinates (genus) already used

   - Snake - Python
   - Computer - System, Laptop, tablet

4. **Logical connectors** – The main functions is to bring out the logical connection between ideas / sentences / paragraphs. They indicate specific relationship such as contrast, comparison, cause and effect and so on as given in Table 3.2
Table 3.2 Organization of persuasive paragraph using discourse markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Logical connectors / Connectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linking – connection between what is to be said / was said</td>
<td>Talking about, with reference to etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on what we’re going to say</td>
<td>Regarding, as far as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structuring, division or sequence / enumeration</td>
<td>Firstly, secondly, finally, first fo all, to begin with, moreover, in addition to, let’s start with, let’s move / go on to, now we come to, that brings us to, let’s leave that, let’s go back to etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>At this sometime, but, yet, still, on the other hand, however, although, nevertheless, despite, otherwise, on the contrary, etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give reasons / cause &amp; effect</td>
<td>So, this, hence, therefore, because, since, due to, as a result of, as, consequently, in consequence, etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td>If, unless, or, in case of, suppose, in the event of, etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>In order to, so that, for etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlight / exemplify</td>
<td>For eg: for instance, such as, including, in particular, except from, son on … so forth,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalizing</td>
<td>On the whole, in general, in most / many cases, mostly broadly speaking, as a rule etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarifying</td>
<td>I mean, that is to say, in other words, etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparing</td>
<td>Similarly, in the same way, like, etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissal of previous discourse as un important</td>
<td>At any rate, any way, any how, etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digressing – change of subject</td>
<td>By the way, incidentally, I Say, in passing from, coming to etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>Honestly, frankly, after all, no doubt, I’m afraid, etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing personal opinion</td>
<td>I think, I feel, I reckon,, In my view, In my opinion, etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contradicting</td>
<td>Actually, in fact, as a matter of fact, to tell the truth, etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional</td>
<td>And, besides, as well as, in addition, moreover, further more, again / time and again, etc.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary and Conclusion</td>
<td>To conclude, in conclusion, in a word, in short, here after, etc.,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A paragraph is constructed around a topic sentence, which occurs either at the beginning, or at the end of it. The sentences in the paragraph should be interlinked with appropriate cohesive devices such as pronoun, synonyms, hyponym and logical connectors / connectives providing coherence to paragraph.

As Hinds (1987) states, A dichotomy is often drawn between writing that is organized in an inductive manner and writing that is organized deductively. Inductive writing is characterized as having the thesis statement in the final position whereas deductive writing has the thesis statement in the initial position. It is arguably the case that any society with a literary tradition is capable of producing expository texts that contain either inductive or deductive reasoning or some combination of the two. English, for example, allows either type of development, although the model that expository writers apparently aim for and that students are consistently taught tends to be deductive rather than inductive.

So, persuasive writing skills could be taught in the classroom by focusing on certain specific structures, cohesive devices in addition to function sequences as shown in Figure 3.3.

![Diagram of Persuasive Writing Structures](image-url)  

**Figure 3.3 Exponents of persuasive skills /genre**
3.18 SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY

All the 57 students admitted in U.G course in Electronics and Communication Engineering during the academic year 2009-2010 in K.S Rangasamy College of Technology, Tiruchengode, were selected as samples. These 57 students were taken as a single group for experiment. The samples include 27 boys 30girls. They were selected for the course based on their marks scored in Higher Secondary Examination.

3.19 VALIDATION OF THE TASK

The task responses of students function sequence and possible exponents were sent to 5 engineering teachers, 12 electronics and communication engineers, 2 electrical engineers and one computer engineer. Further, they were sent to 3 ELT experts and 3 successful graduate business men. They were given the following questionnaire to write their response (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Questionnaire

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you think that for the task given, only the persuasive tone/skills would be suitable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you think that in all response paragraph to enquiries for the supply of items persuasive tone/skills would be suitable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Will highlighting the advantages of the item be enough to express persuasive skills?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>In Indian context will ‘rebate’/’discount’ and other such announcements serve as persuasive techniques?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do you think that the following sequence would reveal the persuasive tone in paragraphs? salutation (using Dear, Mr./Dear Customer) Concessional statements Price of the item Advantages/facilities in the item</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgement of the letter with thanks
Offer to help after sales –service
If you answer is ‘no’ please rearrange the above sequence using a,b,c,d,e,f in the margin.

6. Do you think that the task provides opportunity to the students for creativity in selecting the concession advantages of the item etc?.

Yes/No

7. Do you agree that in persuasive skills/ tone two aspects are very significant viz (a). use of objectives (in language) and (b) the concessions/advantages. other extra benefits-statements

Yes/No

Suggestions if any………………………………………………………………

Out of eleven experts whom the questionnaires were sent nine have given similar views on the above questions. The ELT experts have suggested that more focus should be given in the classroom on the two stages mentioned in question No.7 of the questionnaire. Thus, the task is validated and the components are fixed so as to apply them in the classroom.

To sum up a diligent study of the responses of 57 students to the given tasks on persuasive genre skills reveal the following implications which are presented as findings:

1. It is very difficult to express at the surface level. But the study revealed that they level themselves to scientific analysis. Hence persuasive genre skills/ tone which is abstract and embedded in language can be easily concretized through functions and language.

2. The persuasive skills emerge slowly and gradually if the function sequence and exponent of each function are meticulously followed.
3. If the writer leave out any function and moves to the next or alters the sequences of functions the persuasive skills /tone emerges partially. The deficiency in the total effect of tone could be identified by the reader.

4. There is room for emergence of persuasive tone/skills only when the positive aspects of a product are mentioned and appropriate language components are used. But the highlighting the special salient features of the product the way to persuasive tone will prove to be difficult

5. The use of sentence structures and function sequence which is more functional and persuasive language from which concept of business persuasion emerges. There is room of emergence of persuasive skills/tone only when the factor which provides positive suggestions power of you “view point and focus on reader/buyer which are main criteria for effective business promotion writing.

6. The abstract term persuasive tone/skills are concretized under tow section namely functions and exponents.

7. Thus, the rhetorical pattern are employed based on strategies rather than linguistic features.

In phase I the researcher applied a pre test (A1) to measure the functional efficiency of students in using persuasive genre/skills in sales promotion paragraph writing (O1)

In phase II the progressive tests (B1-B4) were given in four stages. In the first stage persuasive factors focused. For each of the sub skills task ranging from 1-10 were administered and the students responses were
collected. Each test highlighted the independent variables of the exponents of persuasive skills B1-B4 was administered only after the teacher facilitated learning through oral exercises.

The progressive tests (B1-B4) were given to assess the improvement in functional efficiency of using persuasive skills in sales promotion contexts.

If the post test scores (C1) are higher than the pretest scores (A1) it would be concluded that there is improvement in functional efficiency of students due to the experimental treatment given.

This design has more advantages than the one shot case study because the improvement of functional efficiency could be documented before and after the treatment. Further, the treatment could be planned focusing on the specific area of deficiency as observed from the pretest scores. Hence, this chapter is followed by data analysis of the results and discussion.