

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1965 The English Review Committee observed; "In many of the states now the 'Structural Approach' to the teaching of English has been adopted. This involves the teaching of a certain number (about 240) of sentence patterns and other linguistic material carefully graded, and a vocabulary of 2000-3000 words scientifically selected on the basis of frequency".¹ Thus the students are expected to achieve certain specific goals. And, therefore, their achievement can be measured with a fair degree of approximation. If these goals are achieved it was thought that the student would be able to express himself with ease in simple English. But the Committee's observation of the students' actual achievement revealed that "the active vocabulary of the average college entrant is about 1000-1500 words, and his mastery of the structure is woefully inadequate".²

From this study it may be summarised that the language ability of the College entrants is not even fifty percent of their expected language ability in English. It must also be added that this pertains to their receptive skills and no comprehensive work seems to have been done on

1. The English Review Committee, Report, UGC, 1965. P. 9

2. Ibid.

productive skills. It is also clear that these students are to be given much practice in various skills. To improve their comprehension in English they are to be provided with simple and interesting reading materials. They are to be given a lot of practice in doing the exercises which will improve their ability to comprehend unseen passages. Keeping all these points in view, this study makes an attempt to produce some teaching materials, which would help the students to improve their skill in reading comprehension.

1.1 Justification for choosing the topic :

Reading is an interactive and interpretive process. There must be successful interaction between the reader and the discourse to be processed. The degree to which the meaning and structure of a text are made apparent to the reader depends largely on the texts chosen. It is therefore necessary to consider-

- a) the readers own strategies;
- b) cultural frame of reference; and
- c) rhetorical organization of the reading material.

The passages selected in this study are specially meant for the undergraduate level. They have been chosen from various sources and are simplified and graded. The passages have been selected keeping in mind the level of students and their experience of the language. The content of the passages is also interest sustaining and it would

motivate the students to do further reading.

1.2 Scope and Limitations

In all 15 passages have been selected. They are simplified and graded by applying Flesch's 'Reading Ease' formula. No try-out was given, consequently it is not possible to test whether the passages selected are appropriate for a certain level or not. This part of the study is left out due to the limitations of time.

1.3 Chapterwise Summary :

Chapter II

This chapter takes a historical review of the teaching of English in India. This chapter also comments on the teaching of English after the attainment of independence. The objectives and language skills are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter III

This chapter deals with the reading process, it's nature, types of reading and reading comprehension.

This Chapter also discusses the importance of reading in English with special reference to India.

Chapter IV

It is about selection, gradation and simplification criteria applied to the passages selected for this study. Flesch's 'Reading Ease' formula is applied to the passages and 'Reading Ease' scores of all the passages have been

calculated to grade the passages.

Chapter V

This chapter deals with theoretical discussion of the exercises prepared in this study.

Chapter VI

In this chapter the passages selected are reproduced and actual exercises are given.

Chapter VII

It is a concluding chapter giving a few suggestions for further research.