

Chapter III

Conclusions and pedagogical implications

In Chapter II, we have presented a detailed analysis of the textbook under investigation, that is, An English Miscellany under two different heads— linguistic and non-linguistic considerations. The Section on the linguistic aspect was subdivided into the vocabulary aspect and the syntactic aspect of the text. The second Section was devoted to the consideration of the content aspect. Now, we shall summarize the results of our analysis and see what pedagogical implications they might have.

Vocabulary :

The passage-wise analysis of the vocabulary items in the text revealed that seven out of ten passages had difficulty indices around 20. Therefore a majority of the passages may be said to be difficult from the point of view of vocabulary. We also found that nearly one thousand difficult words have been introduced in the textbook. Again the overall difficulty index remains around 23.85. A learning load of one thousand new words in the course of one academic year introduced in texts with high density is likely to prove very difficult. It is doubtful whether a thousand new words can be taught and learnt in one year even under very favourable conditions. So one of the major difficulties of the textbook is its vocabulary content.

Syntax :

We analysed the complexity of the different passages and found that except for one passage, that is, passage no. 9, all the

other passages have some kind of syntactic complexity or the other. In several lessons there is high proportion of finite subordinate clauses and in some there is a high proportion of non-finite subordinate clauses. If it is true that syntactic complexity makes for difficulty in learning then we may say that the text is difficult from the point of view of syntax.

Content :

Our analysis of the content of the passages mainly in terms of the background knowledge required to tackle them revealed that most passages are within the student's experience. However, four out of ten passages seem to need some special background. One of Ved Mehta's passages concerning American life style, James Thurber's story also set in American background, Nirad C. Chaudhuri's passage on 'Public Transport in London and Delhi', Bertrand Russell's essay on 'The happy man' which is abstract and philosophical are likely to present special difficulties.

It must be said that most passages are written in a light, and sometimes humorous vein and so the book is likely to prove attractive both to the teacher and to the students.

Pedagogical implications :

As the book has maximum difficulty in respect of vocabulary, the teachers and the students will have to make very special efforts in teaching and learning vocabulary. Since the vocabulary density is very high it may be useful to supplement the textbook with teaching materials for expanding student's vocabulary. May be future compilers of textbooks for this level will find passages with less vocabulary density for this level.

The syntactic complexity and the background knowledge requirements will have to be supplied by the teacher. The passage-wise syntactic analysis and the detailed analysis of selected sentences from the text may be helpful to remember the taxonomy of passage types and use the information in teaching. Also the identification of the theme, the treatment, style, type of prose etc.; will, it is hoped, help in dealing with the elementary aspects of literature as such.