

CHAPTER : 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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Chapter: 4, ‘Research Methodology’, is a detailed account of the proposed study, difference between research methods and methodology, its design, a detailed explanation of the research context, along with a description of the research methods and data collection. The research study includes a checklist-cum-questionnaire for collecting relevant data. The manner of data collection is Pseudo – Experimental and the analysis of the collected data is qualitative, quantitative, and interpretative. The responses on the checklist-cum-questionnaire were collected through Google forms, telephonic conversations, and in-person. 324 samples are taken from the teachers of the state universities of Gujarat who teach in the undergraduate courses in Arts, Commerce, and Science. The research administered the Checklist-cum-Questionnaire (34 items) to a randomly selected group of teachers who teach at UG Level across the state universities of Gujarat.

4.1 Research Plan

“Good research begins with problem selection and research design. The proposed research should address questions, the answers to which will contribute new knowledge, solve challenges, correct errors in

the existing literature, or develop new methods for conducting such research.” *(Good Academic Research Practices, 2020: 08)*

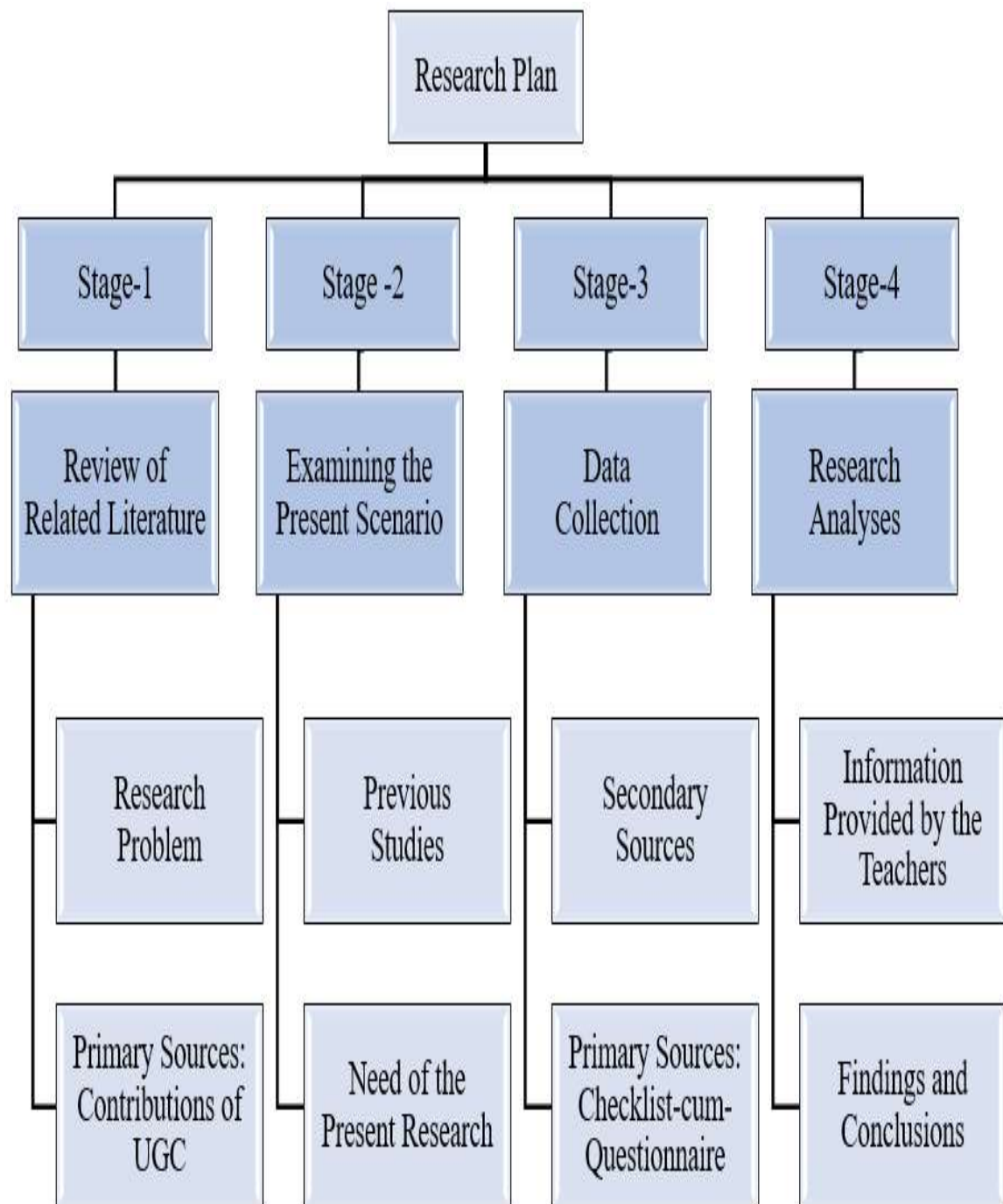


Figure 4.1: Plan of Research

Research design is defined as the overall methodical arrangement of the research process. It is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The research attempts to highlight the importance of Communication Skills in English with a special reference to the recommendations and contributions by University Grants Commission (UGC) in Higher Education in India. It is further narrowed down to the curriculum framework 'Foundation or Compulsory English' in the State Universities of Gujarat. First, the information is gathered from the primary and secondary materials.

4.2 Tools and Techniques for Data Collection

Data collection includes a checklist-cum-questionnaire for the teachers who are or were associated with the state universities of Gujarat. The teachers were asked to complete the checklist-cum-questionnaire and 324 responses were collected at the end of the survey. Along with the responses collected, the syllabi of the Foundation Courses in English / Compulsory English at the undergraduate levels were also accumulated. Following is the list of selected state universities of Gujarat* which provide undergraduate courses in Arts, Commerce and Science / B.A., B.Com. and B.Sc.:

01. Bhakta Kavi Narsinh Mehta University, Junagadh.
02. Gujarat University, Ahmedabad.
03. Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University, Patan.

04. Krantiguru Shyamji Krishna Verma Kachchh University,
Kachchh-Bhuj.
 05. Krishnakumarsinhji Bhavnagar University, Bhavnagar.
 06. Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Anand.
 07. Saurashtra University, Rajkot.
 08. Shree Govind Guru University, Godhra.
 09. The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara.
 10. Veer Narmad South Gujarat University, Surat.
- * *List of the selected state universities of Gujarat are arranged alphabetically.*

The research is partially qualitative. The target population is the teachers teaching or taught at the affiliated institutions or faculties of Arts, Commerce and Science of the selected state universities of Gujarat. The data is collected through Google forms, telephonic conversations, and in-person. The analysis is based on the collected responses and the detailed study of the syllabi collected from the official websites of the universities. The collected data is presented by using data tabulations, tables, charts, and graphs by using Microsoft Excel. Both the sources of data, i.e., primary, and secondary have been collected to review of related studies. Primary sources include the document analyses of the notices, guidelines, recommendations, five-year plans, and e-publications published by the University Grants Commission (UGC). It is, then,

followed by the detailed study of linked research completed hitherto. This defines why there is a need for present research.

4.3 Need for the Present Study

Not only in Gujarat but also in many states of the country, the undergraduate students are not able to communicate in English efficiently. The syllabus used at the Undergraduate Level in Foundation Courses in English in the universities of Gujarat as well as the low performance of the students has been a major subject of apprehension. The Foundation Courses in English or the Compulsory Courses in English for students at the undergraduate levels (B.A., B.Com. and B.Sc.) do not bring the required proficiency and competency among the students by the end of their graduation. It is observed that though students have the knowledge of their specific fields at the completion of their graduation, they are not proficient enough in communication skills in English.

With the implementation of CBCS in Higher Education Institutions, there is a shift in focus from teacher-centric to student-centric education, yet students lack proficiency in communication skills. The syllabus often does not match the curriculum or are not based on LOCF. The objectives are not clearly specified. If specified, then the question arises here is, whether they are designed as per the guidelines of UGC model curriculum. Thus, the research analyses teachers' perceptions of curriculum framework in Foundation Courses English at the undergraduate level in the

universities of Gujarat and how the curriculum is implemented in classroom.

4.4 Checklist-cum-Questionnaire Design

This checklist-cum-questionnaire is designed to evaluate the syllabi of Foundation Courses in English (Compulsory English) at UG Level (B.A., B.Com., B.Sc.) with special reference to UGC's Choice Based Credit System in the selected State Universities of Gujarat. The researcher has used a 35-item Checklist-cum-Questionnaire. In total, 324 responses were collected from the teachers teaching at the various faculties and affiliated institutions of the selected state universities of Gujarat and has been taken into consideration. The checklist-cum-questionnaire for collecting the primary data is divided into three sections. Section I includes profile of the respondents, such as their education qualification, current work profile, years of experience, etc. The questions in Section I are required only for the classification of the data. The section carrying their personal information has been removed after being given a coded number.

Section II and Section III are based on curriculum framework and testing practices at UG levels. Section II is a checklist-cum-questionnaire based on the curriculum framework recommended by UGC and especially focuses on the syllabus designing of Foundation Courses in English at UG

Levels. Section III is a checklist-cum-questionnaire based on the testing practices recommended by UGC for Foundation Courses in English at UG Levels. The questions in the checklist-cum-questionnaire are based on the recommendations and guidelines provided by the University Grants Commission on curriculum framework and evaluation reforms. The present study through the syllabi of the state universities and the checklist-cum-questionnaire, mainly focuses on the reforms that are made after the implementation of the Choice Based Credit System.

The pilot study was conducted to receive the expert opinion and required modification, if any. We requested them to go through the checklist-cum-questionnaire for their experienced view regarding any modifications or adjustments in any crucial topics: option-wise, content-wise, etc. which might have been missed out or should be added. Their observations and propositions have helped us to make this checklist-cum-questionnaire more reliable. We have incorporated the feasible changes in the final version of the checklist-cum-questionnaire and circulated it for the data collection.

Following is the list of experts, to whom the Checklist-cum-Questionnaire was disclosed for pilot study:

01. Prof. Ami Upadhyay Vice Chancellor, Director and Professor,
School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University,
Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
02. Prof. Chetan Trivedi Vice Chancellor, Professor and Head,
Department of English,
Bhakta Kavi Narsinh Mehta University,
Junagadh, Gujarat.
03. Prof. Asha Choubey Professor and Head, Dept. of Humanities,
MJP Rohilkhand University,
Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh.
04. Prof. Aprachita Hazra Former Professor and Head of English,
Sidho Kanho Birsa University, W.B.
Professor, Department of English,
Diamond Harbour Women's University,
Greater Kolkata, West Bengal.

05. Prof. Jagdish Joshi Professor and Head, Dept. of Linguistics,
Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
06. Prof. Nivedita Maitra Professor and Head, Department of English
and Other European Languages,
Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya,
Sagar, Madhya Pradesh.
07. Prof. Kamal Mehta Professor at Department of English & CLS,
Saurashtra University, Rajkot, Gujarat.
08. Prof. Paresh Joshi Professor, Department of English,
Veer Narmad South Gujarat University,
Surat, Gujarat.
09. Dr. Charul Jain Associate Professor, Department of English,
Faculty of Arts,
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda,
Vadodara, Gujarat.
10. Dr. Sunil Shah Associate Professor, Department of English,
Veer Narmad South Gujarat University,
Surat, Gujarat.

11. Dr. Anshu Surve Assistant Professor, Department of English,
Faculty of Commerce,
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda,
Vadodara, Gujarat.

Although, we could reach out to around three hundred and fifty teachers teaching Foundation or Compulsory English, in total 324 responses were collected. Some of the teachers were engaging their sessions in more than one stream and thus they were requested to fill the checklist-cum-questionnaire, stream-wise.

The first question in Section II is based on the numbers of papers that are provided by the universities in Foundation Courses in English at UG level. As, in many of the affiliated institutions, English is also provided as a Generic Elective / Optional from the Second Year of UG course, the researcher has included the same for collecting relevant information. Three possible answers are revealed: compulsory, optional, not applicable.

In continuation with the previous question, how many credits are allotted per semester for the Foundation Courses in English. The credits vary from zero to four and not applicable. The teachers are then asked about their opinion on the components which they think should be consider while designing the syllabus such as, competency of the students

and the teachers, recommendations provided by the UGC, teaching methods and materials, digital literacy, employability skills, gender, culture and the need of the present society, moral values, etc. Subsequently, which are the components they like to prescribe and are actually prescribe the the syllabus they teach.

Moreover, the educators are also enquired about their current acquaintance with UGC guidelines and recommendations, like learning outcomes, whether the syllabus they teach includes the outcomes in the beginnings, whether the students are able to know what they are going to learn in a selected course, etc. the possible options are provided to the teachers to choose multiple options from the mentioned learning outcomes. They are developing higher level of language competence, knowledge about the literature, ability to teach language and literature, communicate effective and efficiently, the learners become proficient in writing skills, speaking skills, and their ability to get required jobs.

The UGC has recommended to mention ‘Learning Outcomes’ in the beginning of the Programme (PLO) and the Course (CLO). The teachers are asked what they wish learning outcomes should include. Besides achieving the 21st Century Skills like communication skills, proficient skills, digital literacy skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, negotiation skills, etc., “LOCF works towards a more holistic experience for the students”. The UGC has listed fifteen Graduate Attributes (GA) that the learners should possess by the end of their graduation.

Employability and job-ready skills, communication skills, critical thinking, negotiation skills, research related skills, self-directed learning, moral and ethical awareness, multicultural competence, leadership, coordination with team, digital literacy, information literacy, problem-solving, analytical thinking and reasoning, disciplinary knowledge, etc., are the graduate attributes which are expected from the learners to know by the end of their graduation.

Furthermore, the questions in the checklist-cum-questionnaire are based on teaching and testing practices. Which mode of knowledge delivery methods are used by the teachers during their sessions. Lectures, discussions, simulations, case study, field study, educational trips, internship, teamwork, and role plays are the types of Knowledge Delivery Methods. They also asked about the assessment they carry out, in which form and how the evaluation is executed in their universities, such as internal, external or both; and are asked about the distribution of the marks in each assessment. The teachers are inquired about the which mode of assessment they prefer, written, oral, both or practical mode. Essay-type examinations, class tests, open book exams, self-test, note writing, essay, article writing, MCQ or objective type questions, assignments, portfolios, dissertations, etc., are the types of written mode for assessment. Group discussions, viva, role play, authentic problem solving, WSQ, end of the class quiz, think-pair-share, rapid fire questions are the types of oral mode for assessment. Most of the teachers prefer both to

check the performance and competency of their students, such as presentations, SWOT analysis, field assignments, etc. Co-cocurricular, internships or work experience can be included in practical mode.

“The examination pattern that currently exists in universities structure, test memory learning. In most cases, the examination system is affiliating in nature with external final University-conducted examination at the end of every semester or year; this solely, serves the purpose of assessment,” (*Evaluation Reforms* 2019: 11). It is observed that the curriculum is heavily loaded towards testing memory rather than equipping the learners with effective communication skills. Thus, at last, the teachers are asked about the designing of the question papers and question paper pattern.

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