

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 PREPARATION FOR CONDUCTING THE STUDY AND VIDEO RECORDING

Since the schools were identified approximately six months earlier, it was only proper to approach the teachers concerned in order to gauge their response to the proposed study, observations and the video recordings. When the headmistresses of both the schools were briefed on the nature of the study, they gradually relented and allowed me to meet the respective teachers. At S. M. Taman Petaling, the English Literature teacher was very cooperative and willing to allow me to observe her classroom teaching.

At Assunta too, the teacher was rather helpful and willing to permit me to observe her teaching. However, she had some reservations about the video recordings since she claimed to be "camera shy". She even suggested that I observe the other more experienced teacher, a missionary nun, who was formerly a teacher in that school, before her vocation in missionary life dedicated to education.

Once the initial groundwork had been laid and the necessary rapport-building secured, a sample questionnaire was administered to the first batch of students in both the schools offering the elective in the 1993 SPM Literature in English. This questionnaire was primarily to gauge how the first batch of students were coping and preparing for the first Malaysian "Literature in English" examination paper set by the local pool of literature teachers. The questionnaire was administered also partly to gain some practice and experience in the realm of research which was indeed a new venture. It was also to gauge

and examine whether the questions formulated were readily understood with the language and vocabulary used. Finally, the exercise of administering the questionnaire was to analyse and gauge whether the students would provide sincere and frank opinions and comments on the Literature genres (Novels, Short Stories, Poetry and Drama), the lessons taught by their teachers and the problems encountered with the genres and in their preparation for the final examination.

With the two schools prepared for the observation and video recording , it was necessary that the Mara Institute of Technology Language Centre technicians be arranged to assist me with the video recording equipment and their expertise. Thus, permission was sought from the then Head of the Language Centre to allow two technicians to accompany me to both the schools. In addition, my application to the Director of Educational Planning and Research (Pengarah Perancangan dan Penyelidikan Pendidikan), Minister of Education , was successful as permission was granted for conducting the study in the two selected schools. With all the necessary official approvals and blessings, the research student proceeded with the study, observations and video recordings from 16 December 1993 till 3 January 1994.

With the respective teachers' timetables in hand, arrangements were made with our technicians to be ready with the necessary equipment to handle the recordings. However, at S. M. Assunta, the teacher in-charge, had her Literature classes scheduled rather early in the morning, while the other teacher, had classes later in the morning. Hence, immediate arrangements were made to observe and record the latter teacher's class lessons, since our technicians could not be available before 8.00 a.m. to record the first and second lessons at 7.30 a.m. and 8.10 a.m. which were on the former teacher's schedule. Besides, it was too inconvenient to make it to S. M. Assunta for the two early lessons, since the research student had to ferry the technicians and the equipment to and fro covering a distance of

approximately seventy kilometres and coping with the stifling traffic congestion. Obviously, the last minute alteration of plans to observe and record the latter teacher's lessons was indeed a welcome blessing for the success of the study.

3.2 INSTRUMENTATION - VIDEO RECORDINGS, OBSERVATIONS, INTERVIEWS AND QUESTIONNAIRE

The choice of the use of video recording was indeed a very challenging one, since it was considered a more formidable one compared to perhaps, the use of a cassette recorder, which was the conventional mode of obtaining authentic information for a study. Besides, video recordings would provide concrete and unique "slices of classroom life" (Cullen, 1991, ELT). However, it was virtually an interesting proposition confronting the selected teachers facing the video camera; it was considerably more difficult finding reasons to convince them for my need to utilise such formidable equipment with the glare of stage lights. It was virtually giving them some semblance of the phobia, akin to stage-fright. However, they relented to the use of the video equipment, after my convincing them that a video recording would provide the most reliable and authentic resource material for the study of the teaching techniques and strategies in the classroom. Thus, a total of twelve video recordings were conducted with six consecutive forty-minute lessons recorded in each school.

Prior to the video recordings, it was essential for me to conduct informal interviews with both the teachers in order to obtain certain pointers and tips from them since they were the practitioners in the field. With their experience in teaching and exposure to other researchers and observers, they had provided me with some groundwork and some background information from which I could prepare my study. The informal interviews

were also part of the process of rapport-building which was vital in gaining their confidence and friendship before any study could be done in their classrooms.

After the observations and video recordings, a questionnaire was administered to the students and teachers in order to allow them to provide me further information and comments on their study or teaching of *Julius Caesar*, the students' preparation, reading difficulties, language problems and others. The students were asked ten questions on their study of *Julius Caesar*, while the teachers had a questionnaire of fifteen items in order to examine their techniques, strategies, roles and contributions in the teaching and preparation of the students. The students' questionnaire was also to gauge whether they could respond intelligibly and coherently to the items asked. From their responses, we could also examine their language weaknesses, the lack of competence in English or whether they were articulate and proficient.

3.3 SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE SUBJECTS

This research report attempts to examine and identify primarily the various techniques and strategies employed by the two teachers in teaching Drama - *Julius Caesar*, as part of the elective - Literature in English as was taught in the two sample girls' schools in Petaling Jaya (S. M. Assunta and S. M. Taman Petaling) and the sample size was sixteen and nineteen girls respectively. These students were in Form Five and they had registered and committed themselves to the study of Literature in English according to the new 1990 "Kesusastraan Dalam Bahasa Inggeris". Also these candidates were the second batch registered to attempt the 1994 Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) "Literature in English" paper. It was also my belief that the students who had registered for the elective, would be more committed to the study of the elective literature paper.

The two schools in Petaling Jaya were selected based on the number of students offering the Literature paper in the 1994 SPM examination. Both these schools had the highest and the second highest number of candidates - S.M. Taman Petaling had 47 students, while Assunta had 39 students respectively. While in 1993, S.M. Taman Petaling had 113 Literature students, while Assunta had 34 students). Therefore, it was considered suitable for the study. Besides, both the schools are conveniently accessible and located. In both schools, the students were divided into two classes and thus, the literature classes were considered rather small and manageable. In S.M. Taman Petaling, the same teacher taught both the Literature classes, while in Assunta, two teachers were assigned to take them for the subject. The research study was conducted in one class in each school; hence the number of students in each class was nineteen and sixteen respectively.

3.4 CONDUCTING THE RECORDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

The video recordings and the observations were conducted as scheduled according to the teachers' time-tables, and there was no need for "staging" the lessons to suit my convenience or study. The following were the Literature class times according to the teachers' timetables :

ASSUNTA Class 5 Arts 3		S. M. TAMAN PETALING Class - 5 M	
(16 students)		(19 students)	
Tuesday	- 12.40 - 1.15 p .m.	Monday	- 10.45 - 11.20 a.m.
Wednesday	- 9.55 - 10.35 a.m.	Tuesday	- 9.15 - 9.50 a.m.
Thursday	- 10.55 - 11.30 a.m.	Friday	- 9.30 - 10.10 a.m.

The Drama Class observations and recordings began on 16 December 1993 till 3 January 1994 at the two schools. For every lesson, the research student had to fetch the two

technicians and the video recording equipment to the respective school(s) promptly for the scheduled lesson(s). This entailed careful preparations, commitment from the technicians for the duration of the study and avoidance of the traffic congestions on the Federal Highway, Petaling Jaya. The schedule below clearly indicates the days when the recordings and the observations were conducted.

DATES /TIMES OF RECORDINGS CONDUCTED

S.M. ASSUNTA	S.M. TAMAN PETALING
Thursday, 16 Dec. 1993 (first lesson)	Fri. 17 Dec. 1993 - technical hitch
Tuesday, 21 Dec. (second)	Mon. 20 Dec. (first lesson)
Wed. 22 Dec. (third)	Tues. 21 Dec. (second)
Thurs. 23 Dec. (fourth)	Fri. 24 Dec. (cancelled Brass Band practice)
Tues. 28 Dec. (fifth)	Mon. 27 Dec. (third)
Wed. 29 Dec. (sixth)	Tues. 28 Dec. (fourth)
	Fri. 31 Dec. (fifth)
	Mon.3 Jan.1994 (sixth)

However, some disappointments were recorded as all did not proceed as planned . As can be observed , there were two interruptions to our recordings at S. M . Taman Petaling - on the first day of our recording , the technicians inadvertently forgot to bring along an important cable for the video recorder. I could not express my disgust since I required their services for the following two weeks. However, there was adequate opportunity to concentrate and observe the lesson development, the tasks planned, the students' responses, their participation, and the teacher's classroom management . At S. M. Taman Petaling , there were two occasions when we experienced some trying moments with the

lack of power supply in the classroom. Probably, the plug-points in the classroom were faulty and could not convey any power supply necessary for our recording equipment. The technicians had to connect the plugs at the next classroom in order to harness the power supply and conduct the video recording successfully. Obviously, this entailed some delay in starting the video recordings; however, the teacher rightly proceeded with the lesson and was not perturbed by the technical hitches. In addition, on another occasion, the lesson was cancelled as the Literature teacher had to accompany the brass band to a special function as she was also the teacher in-charge. Thus, we had to contend with certain hitches at this school and therefore, the observations and recordings were extended over another four days.

Fortunately, at Assunta, there were no hitches whatsoever throughout the duration of the recordings of the lessons as there was the vital power supply at hand. All recordings were carried out briskly without any undue delay. The teacher too was requested to proceed with the lesson even if the technicians were not ready with the video equipment. The teacher was usually brisk with her lesson and was not at all perturbed by the presence of the video camera and the spot light.

3.5 ANALYSES OF DATA

3.5.1 VIDEO RECORDINGS

Since this study is based on video recordings of six lessons each in two Literature classes from schools, the primary focus of the analyses of lessons would also be from the evidence obtained through this media. The major areas of focus were -

- (i) the teaching techniques and strategies employed in teaching *Julius Caesar* ;

- (ii) the set induction employed by both teachers;
- (iii) the preparations, tasks and activities carried out in class to enhance learning;
- (iv) the teaching aids employed to supplement the teaching strategies;
- (v) the nature of questions and the use of questioning techniques to teach and promote learning ;
- (vi) the use of other relevant resources and information to enhance learning; and
- (vii) the personality and the role of the teachers in the teaching of *Julius Caesar*.

3.5.2 CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

In order to analyse the findings, the observation notes that were written during the lessons too provided some relevant data and information on the aspects examined. The notes too were a record of the lesson conducted, the questions asked , the students' responses, the class activities and even certain shortcomings faced by the students and the teachers. Some observations that were not caught by the camera lens were duly recorded during the the lessons, for example, certain Prefects were usually entering the drama class late, perhaps due to their duties during the interval. Another observation was the technical problems and the lack of power supply in the classroom in S. M. Taman Petaling.

In addition, the informal questionnaires too were analysed to examine their preparation techniques, their reading skills, the problems encountered during their study of *Julius Caesar* and how the teacher could improve the learning process. The teachers' questionnaires too were examined to note the teaching strategies utilised, the kind of activities planned, the problems they perceived to be confronting the students and how they help the weaker students. Protherough points out that

the preferred mode of assessment is exerting pressure on the way in which students read and on the way in which teachers teach (in Brumfit 1991, p.15).

Here are two vital aspects which form the core of the study - the way in which the learners are motivated to read and study, while on the other hand, we need to examine how the teachers teach Literature with special focus on *Julius Caesar*.