CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

'Language Teaching' (hereafter LT) is an art as well as science of imparting the knowledge of language aspects to learners by making use of various methods, strategies, instruments, etc. English Language Teaching (hereafter ELT) has multifaceted dimensions especially when it is taught as a second or third language or as a foreign language in countries other than the English speaking ones. In India, English has been considered as second language.

ELT in India has come across many stages of development to achieve better results in English language learning. It cannot be denied that it is still in need of fresher strategies and techniques to cope up with the emerging needs of the learners. In general LT is not a recent and novel activity: there has always been a search and quest for innovating newer methods to optimize the learning activity of various sections of people.

1.2 First language

The language acquired by a child from the members of its family and from its surroundings is called as 'first language' (hereafter L1) to that child. As far as the first language learning is concerned, the child spends relatively less labor compared to the amount of labor to be spent for the activity of learning a 'second language' (hereafter SL). Every normal child acquires its first language in its first
few years of life and language acquisition is intimately connected with the child's cognitive and social developments.

1.3 Foreign and second language

Several terminological distinctions are drawn in the field of LT. A person's mother tongue L1 is distinguished from any more language that may be acquired by him [((L2). (L3)) , etc.]

The phrase 'foreign language' is popularly used to refer to any language that is not the native language in a country, and the phrase 'second language' is also commonly used in this way. But many linguists distinguish between 'foreign' and second language recognizing major differences in terms of the learning aims, teaching methods and achievement levels etc.

'Foreign language' (hereafter FL), in a more restricted sense is a non-native language taught in schools and it has no status as a routine medium of communication in that country. An SL is a non-native language that is widely used for purposes of communication, usually as a medium of education, and as a means of communication in governments and/or in business. English, for example, has the status of FL in Japan, but SL status in Nigeria and India (the 'Cambridge Encyclopedia of language', 1984.p: 368).

1.4. Language Acquisition and Language Learning

Language acquisition is an unconscious process and it starts from the childhood. Mother tongue or L1 is not taught but caught (acquired). Acquisition is different from learning. Learning process requires a proper medium, teaching and involvement.
Language acquisition is mainly acquisition of language sub-consciously from childhood, and from a particular language environment (Krashan, 1997:p.157) and learning is a conscious process that results from formal study. (Krashan, Ibid).

Language acquisition means that a language is acquired as a result of natural and largely random exposure to a particular language user. The term 'language learning' is used where the exposure is structured through language teaching (Wilkins: 1974, p.260).

Acquisition is a subconscious process by which linguistic competence is developed as a result of using language for real communication. Learning is the conscious process by which knowledge of a language is developed through study (Krashan, 1981).

1.5. Language skills

Generally four basic skills of language come under language learning. They are, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW). Listening and speaking (oracy) in the first language are acquired through natural processes, and reading and writing skills are acquired deliberately. That is, when a child goes to school he or she may be taught how to read and write in a language (literacy).

The use of language as a tool for communication for different purposes and in different domains requires all the four skills. The sender of a message uses the spoken or written mode in order to communicate ideas and the receiver of the message utilizes the listening and reading skills in order to interpret the
message. The skills used by the sender are productive and active, and the skills used by the receiver are receptive or interpretative and passive.

We utilize the four language skills in different contexts. The use of each skill depends upon the use of various components of language. Each skill involves a specific mode of application. The listening skill, for example, requires sound discrimination; speaking skill requires the techniques of sound production; reading skill requires the mechanics of reading and writing skill requires the mechanics of writing' (Fraider, 1988, p: 51).

1.6. Language skills in societal context

Language is by and large a universal behavioral phenomenon. It is used as a vehicle through which information can be passed from one place to another and from one person to the other. The comprehension aspect related to listening and reading and the production related to speaking and writing are the decisive factors behind one's communicative ability. In modern social context, each skill of language has certain specific roles to play. Certain skills are context specific, certain skills are not so. But, each skill benefits certain fruits in certain environments. A developed society avails all the four skills. In fact, only a developed language exploits all the four skills of language in order to perform the social activities, while the underdeveloped languages exploit only two skills.

1.7. The role of language skills in the pedagogy

The present Indian system of language education adopts so many innovative measures to teach language skills in an effective manner. The present ELT in India has not followed a uniform method of teaching/learning/testing
all the four basic skills. Language proficiency of a student is determined by the four basic skills. So the learning/teaching methods should adopt a particular system that will really facilitate language learning.

The present ELT curriculum is not framed in a balanced way. The language exercises and teaching materials were not prepared with a view to assist the learners to develop all the language skills. It is very much essential in LT to design methods in such a way that one-language skill influences another skill during learning stage. This is found missing in the present LT methods. The following points will show the interrelationship among the language skills in performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.no.</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Input</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Asking questions (oral)</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Speaking/writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Reading a text</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading aloud/speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Writing from texts/copying</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Dictation</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Taking notes from lectures</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These above five tasks are commonly used in ELT methods. Most of the exercises given in the language-learning situation are not based on all the skills or they do not facilitate the learning of some other skills of language. If language is learnt for communication, the total achievement of all the basic skills is important.
Almost all the language exercises are prepared with the main focus on writing skill and hence the other three skills are also tested through the writing skill only. The present pedagogy does not provide a balanced base for learning the skills like listening, speaking and reading. The entire syllabus framed in the LT is based on writing skill.

The syllabus has not included the items for practices in language skills like listening, reading and speaking. Testing and evaluation procedures take up writing skills as an authentic and ultimate source. So all the other three skills are tested through writing only. Writing skill alone is made use of in all types of teaching and testing procedures. LT requires the inclusion of other skills of language in the curriculum.

1.8. Language teaching through language skills (LSRW)

It is believed that, if the awareness of the basic intricacies of a language skill is given to the students and if the relationship among different skills is pointed out to the students, the learning outcome will be more and efficient. The LT methods, which help the learners to achieve high level of language competence and language use, are:

1. Audio-visual methods.
2. Audio-lingual methods
3. Language teaching through computers
4. Language teaching through games
5. Role play method
6. Conversation methods
7. Creative methods (providing opportunities to exhibit the verbal talents in all the ways).

1.8.1 Writing
Writing is a literacy skill meant for communication. It is used for recording all the lore of humanities. It is a productive skill. Historically this skill is acquired at a later phase of language development and of language learning. In pedagogy, writing is considered as an important skill for teaching/testing procedures.

1.8.2 Reading
Reading is also a literacy skill. It is a passive and receptive skill and it helps to acquire knowledge and experience transmitted through writing. In social context, reading is considered as a highly elegant skill. In most of the communicative activities, the role of reading skill is inevitable.

1.8.3 Listening
Listening is a passive and receptive skill. It includes perception and decoding of the audible signals, which come to the ear. Listening skill is applied for capturing the meaning from the speech. It is the first and foremost skill acquired by every normal human being.

1.8.4 Speaking
Speaking is an active and productive oral skill. It is an effective mode of communication. It plays a very major role in the day to-day activities of human beings.

These four language skills of language are the bases for communication and hence they form the base for the language proficiency of the learners.
A learner’s proficiency in using a language is determined by his/her effective handling on the four basic skills. A language user is expected to master these four skills. At the beginning the learners achieve the oracy skills viz, listening and speaking, with which they engage in communication and at a later stage, they learn the literacy skills viz, reading and writing. Making use of these literacy skills, they perform some of the social activities; which cannot be done through oracy skills.

In acquiring the L1, a learner acquires oracy first and then goes for literacy. But, in the case of second or foreign language learning, the learner does not necessarily go in the same fashion. They may either, start with literacy and end up with oracy or vice-versa.

1.9. Statement of the problem

Learning English in a non-native context involves encountering many problems especially when it is domain based or curriculum based. The methods and procedures of LT have their own shortcomings and merits. Several deficiencies are found in the learners especially in the aspects of language use and in the application of the four basic skills. It is commonly found that most of the English language learners, who study English as L2, could not use all the four skills in a proper way. For example they could not make use of the speaking skill in English in an efficient manner. As far as language learning is concerned, the aim or purpose of teaching/learning is to enable the learners to use language in all varieties of communicative situations. But in most cases, learners fail to make
use of language skills, in accordance with the warrants of communication. The reason behind the lack of using the language skills may differ according to the socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the learners. At the same time, it is believed that a properly designed material and methods of LT may assist to augment the level of learning on the part of students.

Language skills (LSRW) are the only resources that a learner possesses and through which he can express, explore, understand, and identify the things in and around him. In the societal scenario a man is recognized by means of his communicative behavior, that is, by means of his verbal usage and perception. It has been widely accepted that right use of words in the right context and a sense of better understanding of words will definitely pave the way for one to do things better linguistically. Studies on language testing and evaluation will provide the needful suggestions for adopting remedial measures to develop the language skills of the learners. It is important at this juncture to take up such types of studies to find out the problems, which second language learners face. With this view this study has been taken up.

Language is a societal wear. Its style differs according to the domain in which it is used. The present curriculum has provided many strategic views in framing the syllabus according to the faculty to which students belong. In language studies the language syllabus has been framed according to the subject. For instance, engineering faculty has engineering English; commerce faculty has business English and arts faculty has communicative English. Language
teaching has now a days a need based curriculum. The language syllabus is prepared with a view to fulfill the needs of the language learners. The language learning/teaching methods meant for the graduate level should be effective and reliable, because the language studies come to an end at the graduate level. The students have rare chance to study language subjects in their Post Graduate studies. So, there is a need to present the students better course materials and methods from school curriculum to the graduate level. The present research is concerned with the assessment and evaluation of the skills of students in English. The present research concentrates on testing all the four skills of the graduate students, especially Tamil native speakers learning English as L2. Through this study, the probable reasons behind the errors committed by the learners are identified. Remedial measures to overcome those errors are also given for all the four language skills.

1.10. REVIEW OF LITERATURE


Listeners participation in conversation, different levels in listening, various distracters like the speech sounds of others which intervene in conversation, and reduce the amount of listening comprehension, the listeners mood, performance, while listening etc are all given in detail.

Opens with the meaning and act of reading process, theories and practices. All the major collections of Goodman related to the reading are given in this volume. Goodman's notable theory on 'Reading as a Psycholinguistic Guessing Game' is presented in part one and part two has the theory and practice of miscue patterns in reading. Miscues in reading, its models are given with samples. Part three concentrates on the research topics in reading, Goodman's reading models and his taxonomy of miscues.

Provides ideas and suggestions for learners in comprehending essays. Part A concentrates on the writing models like descriptive writing, practical writing, and argumentative writing. Part B deals with the evaluation of written essays particularly the aspects like concepts and writing mechanics. Spelling and pronunciation are given due importance in the testing of writing.

4. Robert Hamilton Moore 1971 'Effective Writing'
A detailed description on writing, the models, process, and types of writing is given. The arts and science of writing with the linguistic units and forms are also given in respective headings. Maintenance of coherence, diction and readability in writing is exposed under separate chapters.

5. Lawrence Shafer 2000 'Skills in Writing'
Provides all type of writing models, with appropriate samples. Provides clues for writing essays. Writing styles are also discussed with models and illustrations. Later chapters give different approaches explaining the activity of critical writing,
précis writing and summary writing. It also gives the information regarding the importance of logicality and thought in writing.

6. Spearritt, Donald. ‘Listening Comprehension-Factorial Analysis’.
This project reports the details of an investigation about the factors involved in the skill of understanding spoken language with reference to the mother tongue. The project has used a battery of 34 tests administered to a sample of school children. It makes and attempts to determine the relationship of various factors that are identified.

7. V.K.Gokak 1965, 'English in India its Present and Future',
Discusses the state of English language teaching in India and its past and present standard. The position, importance, aim and objectives of ELT in India are given with due focus on the background information with some suggestions for the future course of action to be taken. It also reveals the role of English in translation, journalism and creative writing.

Various internal as well as external activities of the listener are discussed. The listeners' mood, intentions and familiarity with the matter being heard are given in detail with the pauses that affect them in hearing. A detailed study on the activity of hearing has been given with seven points.

Provides the knowledge about the syllabus on pronunciation, grammar, and functional analysis in language teaching. Dimensional activities in language
teaching like intra-lingual cross lingual teaching activities and strategies are vividly discussed with suitable illustrations.

Explores all the grammatical notions, relatives and categories of English with due classifications. Each grammatical aspect carries definition, description and illustrative examples.

Different approaches exposing comprehension and understanding of information are given in detail. The basic intricacies that are related to the act of understanding, the meaning of understanding, and understanding through manipulation of thoughts etc., are given with models.

Opens with the basic introduction to literature, its distinction in language, the relationship between the reader and text. It suggests the useful approaches based on linguistic aspects to teach literature.

Displays the ideology and complexities involved in English spelling. It analyses the form and function of spoken and written languages. Issues related to the use and usage of language in historical perspective was discussed.

Opens with the discussion on 'use' and 'usage'. Notions like meaning of sentences, cohesion and illocution are presented in the second chapter. The third chapter provides information regarding the four basic skills in terms of articulation and perception. Reading and writing process, techniques for good writing, framing of sentences, etc. are given with suitable illustrations.

15. Cherry Campbell 1990 'writing with other's words: using background reading text in academic compositions' paper published in 'Second Language Writing'.

Speaks about academic writing particularly the modes of interpreting the writings of others and making use of them in one's writing. It also gives the summary of few researches made on writing and reading along with some interpretations given by scholars.


Coulthard explains the interactive significance of intonation in interaction. He assumed that many functional features of language use such as feedback, acknowledging, agreeing, supporting, etc. play a role in communication and discourse. He has also discussed the range of target language discourse functions provided by the model/teacher.


Gerhard Nickel's findings are concerned with the role of error analysis and error evaluation. Error evaluation is required for Remedial teaching or error therapy,
construction of drills, catering awareness among communicability and acceptability in language use.

18. Ober, Richard, L. et al. (1971). Systematic Observation of Teaching. Ober and others developed a reciprocal category system to explain student teacher behavior. This system gives equal weightage to student behavior. This model studies teaching-learning behavior in terms of contrasts such as warm-cool, accept-correct. Elicit-initiate, direct response-divergent response. Teacher centered-student centered which reflect shades of behavior. In their study a single digit code (1-9) is used to specify teacher behavior and a two-digit code (11 to 19) is used to study the student behavior.

19. Hough, John B., and James K Duncan (1970) 'Teaching Description and Analysis Reading'

Hough and Duncan's provide an observational system for interaction analysis and it is meant for observing the verbal and non-verbal behavior of teachers and pupils. There are 17 categories of teachers' behaviors and 17 for student behavior. The types of behavior include: substantiate, appraisal, managerial silence and others.


Provides the role of evaluation in English language teaching. Various methods and testing procedures along with supportive models were given. Learning and testing strategies related to education were vividly discussed in it.


15
Provides information regarding English language testing and testing the English used for specific purpose (ESP). Testing items, materials, tools, test validity are discussed with various models. Development of IELT (International English Language Testing) is presented with one major research done on that like.

22. Brendan J Carroll 1980 'testing Communicative Performance'
Testing models for communicative competence as well as literature were given along with the design of communicative tests. Testing procedures and correlation materials are given. Testing materials for communicative performance are provided with reliable test batteries.

23. Mary, Neville 1988 'Assessing and Teaching Language Literacy and Oracy in Schools'
Topics related to the purpose of testing and testing all the four basic skills are discussed. Testing models pertaining to all the skills occupy four content chapters. One chapter discusses the interrelationship between the skills. This book is appended with a detailed description of language tests with its admiration, reliability and validity.

Error analysis and error evaluation in all their different aspects constitute one of the several important factors in classroom teaching/learning.

24. Frank Costin (1971), 'Experiment Test of the 'Teacher Centered' versus 'student-centered' Dichotomy'.
Frank Costin's test on teacher-centered vs. student centered behavior variation consists of 30 statements of various kinds of teaching/learning behavior. This research found four factors from the responses of the students, which have
some, learning on Teaching and learning of language. a. Student involvement b. Teacher support c. Negative effect and d. Teacher control.

25. Henning, Grant. 'A guide to language testing: development evaluation research'.

Provides a synthesis of class notes of an introductory course in testing offered to graduate students learning English as an L2/L3. The text consists of ten sections and is designed to meet the needs of teachers and in-training teachers who are preparing themselves to develop tests, maintain testing programs or conduct research in the field of language pedagogy.


It aims at providing guidance to the language teachers in India to organize and carry out scientific language teaching and testing programs under various situations. It is a practical approach that emphasizes on the actual preparation of test items in four basic skills of language viz., reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Also it provides a brief note on the 'course objectives' of language teaching and testing, besides presenting the modalities for developing language tests.


Offers some wider criteria for assessing the development in written language of the children of age range 7-14 years. Four compositions-narrative, autobiographical, explanatory, and argumentative-were obtained from groups of...
children at seven, ten, and thirteen respectively, in the curricular context and they
were analyzed in order to assess language development.

28. Ahuja, G.C., and Pramila Ahuja. 'Reading Comprehension Tests'
Speaks about the construction and standardization of reading comprehension
tests based on the cloze procedure. Various steps involved in this process have
been explained through chapters two to six with examples. A set of reading tests
based on cloze procedure and another set of tests with multiple-choice questions
are provided the model answer sheets and scoring keys which could be used are
provided in the appendix.

Proficiency'
This book is of a collection of papers presented by specialists in language testing
from different academic institutions, research centers and government agencies.
Papers on 'testing speaking proficiency', 'testing listening comprehension', and
on 'testing reading comprehension' are found in this collection. The specialty of
these papers is that each one of them is provided with a gist of the discussions
held among the experts like Lado, Clark, Randoll, Alan Davies, Spolsky, Oller
and many others. It also provides a clear picture of the state of testing the
language proficiency of learners.

30. Clark, John L.D. 'Foreign language testing: Theory and Practice'.
Discusses the theories of foreign language testing. It is believed that any of the
foreign langue testing activity can be placed under any one of the two broad
categories of evaluation viz. prognosis or attainment. The basic concepts behind
the tests are discussed with illustrative samples in the first four chapters, and the
testing programs followed in the western countries are given in chapter five.

Language Tests’

Presents a general survey of the techniques used for testing specific skills, and
testing cross-cultural understanding and so on. With a discussion of language
and language learning, as introduction, this book proceeds to consider the
modality of testing of various language skills. The primary emphasis is placed on
testing vocabulary and grammar.

32. Thorndike, Robert L., and Elizabeth Hegen. ‘Perspectives in measurement
and evaluation: a study guide’.

It provides guidance for an introductory educational measurement course in
order to help the instructor for organizing the course, and the students for
studying the course materials. There are three major units in it. The first one is
devoted to discuss the principles of measurement and basic concepts in testing.
The second one deals primarily with the construction and evaluation of
classroom tests. The third includes the study of standardized tests, which test
the intelligence, aptitude, achievement, interest and personality of the learners.

33. Bachman, Lyle F., and Palmer Adrian S. ‘The Construct Validation of Some

Examines the construct validity of some tests having components of
communicative competence and also hypothesized model. Three distinct traits-
linguistic competence, pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence-
were conceived as components of communicative competence. Tests were conducted in four methods; an oral interview, a writing sample, a multiple-choice test and self-rating. Their results indicate that the model which best fits the data includes a general and two specific trait factors – grammatical/pragmatic competence and sociolinguistic competence.


Reviews briefly the basic types of test validity: face validity (the appearance of validity); content validity (the extent to which the selection of tasks is representative of the larger set); criterion-referenced validity and construct validity. It also describes the types of construct validation studies. Confirmation factor analysis has been used to evaluate the compatibility of the casual models and the body of data.

1.11. Aim of this Study

The present study tries to evaluate the four linguistic skills achieved by the graduate students in English language and suggests certain remedial measures to overcome the difficulties encountered by them or at least to minimize the severity of those problems experienced during learning.

1.12. Objectives of this study

1. To identify the proficiency of the second language learners in learning the four basic skills in English.
2. To identify how far the students use the English language for purposes other than educational ones.

3. To identify the proficiency of the second language learners in the comprehension skills.

4. To test the language learners' knowledge in the recognition and use of the interrelationship in the basic skills.

5. To identify the major linguistic aspects which affect the use of the language skills in the context of using second language.

6. To study mother tongue influence on speaking and writing skills of students.

7. To identify the linguistic and pragmatic knowledge on the illocutions found in the cultural and educational levels.

8. To identify the vocabulary power of the students.

9. To identify the students' ability in identification, inference, reorganization, and recreation of information given in the words, sentences and passages.

10. To unearth the process of converting the text forms from one level to another.

11. To understand the students' knowledge in replacing the same meaningful vocabulary items for the given vocabulary items.

12. To identify the students' knowledge in transformation, modification and organization skills in the texts.

13. To identify students' 'recall' and 'retention' power of the previously heard words, sentences, and passages.
14. To identify students presumption in the selection of vocabularies to fill the gape in the passages.

15. To identify type of sentence patterns they prefer in writing and speaking

16. To identify ‘stress’, ‘pronunciation’ and ‘intonation’ of the students’ voice in articulation.

17. To identify the students’ speech patterns and other behavioral attitudes while producing words, and

18. To identify the numeric ability of the students in reading.

1.13. Limitation of the study

This study is aimed at testing the language skills of the graduate students, who identify study English as L2. As testing the communicative competence of the learners is impossible, this study mainly focuses on testing the language skills of the learners in the four skills. Testing the ability of SL learners in all the four language skills is really difficult and time consuming. Considering certain constraints, this study attaches due emphasis on the comprehension based testing methods by using objective type questions.

1.14. Selection of informants

This study has been conducted in Tamil Nadu, India. The southern districts of Tamil Nadu viz. Coimbatore, Erode and Dindigul were selected as areas for selection of informants/learners and in each district one college was selected for data collection. They are: -

Coimbatore district- Government Law College, Coimbatore
Dindigul district—Arulmigu Palani Andavar College of Arts and Culture, Palani.
Erode district—Gobi Arts and Science College, Gobichettipalayam.
All the three colleges are situated in urban areas of Tamil Nadu. All the informants are native speakers of Tamil and are studying English as SL. The teachers of the informants are also non-native English speakers. This study aims to test and evaluate the language skills of graduate students, who are studying English as second language.

1. In particular these students study English in the first and second year of their graduate course.

2. One hundred and fifty informants were selected for this study.

3. Of the total 150 students 75 were boys and 75 were girls.

4. Random selection method was adopted to select informants in classes.

1.15. Data collection.
The questionnaire, which was finalized after pilot study, was administered to the informants and the testing procedures were carried out in two phases. In the first phase the first two tests for 'writing' and 'reading' were conducted and in the second phase the remaining tests for 'listening' and 'speaking' were conducted. The first test i.e. 'Writing' test required the written information as responses from the students, and for reading test, responses were collected through multiple-choice questions.

The listening test responses were conducted through written mode and in the speaking test, the responses of the student's voices were recorded using a tape.
recorder. The first and second tests were conducted within 10 days interval. The following table shows the testing procedures adopted in the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>test no.</th>
<th>Input sources</th>
<th>Methods of testing</th>
<th>Type of questions</th>
<th>Tasks in answering questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Written texts</td>
<td>Writing comprehension</td>
<td>Objective, multiple choice</td>
<td>Writing (descriptive), selection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Question/answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Writing texts</td>
<td>Reading comprehension</td>
<td>Multiple choice tests</td>
<td>Selection</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Speech, taped voices</td>
<td>Listening comprehension</td>
<td>Multiple choice tests, question/answers, retention tests</td>
<td>Writing, recall, descriptive</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Written texts, dialogues</td>
<td>Speaking comprehension, reading aloud.</td>
<td>Speech tests, conversations.</td>
<td>The speeches of the students were recorded.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.16. Significance of the study

Present study is aimed to identify the second language learner’s skills of using language in the context of communication as well as in educational contexts like the context of examination. Based on the analysis of the skills of SL learners this study tries to identify the problems in learning a language especially in learning English.
A thorough perusal of the earlier studies in this field shows that the problems of the development of second language skills of the students at the graduate level in India required considerable attention. Even after having twelve years of education, students in India find it difficult to master the language skills in English. Most of the sentences produced by the students were found to be ungrammatical and hence unacceptable. Therefore, it was decided to take up this area of study, which analyses the problems faced by the graduate students in language skills (LSRW) while learning English as second language. The results of this study would help in improving the status of teaching English at graduate level.

Thus the present study presents the present state of affairs in achieving the four language skills in English language by the college students of Tamil Nadu and thereby to advocate remedial measures to ameliorate the present scenario of ELT in Tamil Nadu.

1.17. Plan of the study

This study is presented under seven chapters and the main points discussed in each chapter are presented as detailed below.

- Chapter I Introduction
- Chapter II Testing and Evaluation
- Chapter III Writing
- Chapter IV Reading
- Chapter V Listening
- Chapter VI Speaking
- Chapter VII Conclusion
1.17.1 Chapter I: Introduction

The introductory chapter exposes the scenario of ELT in India and its evolution. It presents the aim and objective of the study, review of literature, scope, and limitations of the study, significance of the study, and the scheme of the study.

1.17.2 Chapter II: Testing and Evaluation

This chapter begins with the presentation of the aim, purpose and types of testing and evaluation procedures adopted while teaching English at collegiate level. The methodology adopted for testing the LSRW of the graduate students is also discussed. This chapter projects the insights of testing and evaluation given by the scholars like Freeman, Carroll, and Henning. This chapter also deals with the types and methods of evaluation with reference to language skills. The problems in the preparation of questionnaire for testing the language skills of the students at collegiate level are also given in this chapter. The basic intricacies in selecting the sub-skills are also discussed here.

1.17.3 Chapter III: Writing

The third chapter on writing begins with the general definition of writing and brings in the views and comments of scholars like Bloomfield, Vygotsky, Robert Lado, Peter Gannon, and others. The writing processes, its nature and the production of writing are reviewed. Writing in general has six characteristic features viz. planning, shaping, writing, revising, editing and proof reading. These aspects are reviewed. The conception and production of writing by the language learners, the loss of elements during the encoding and decoding processes of
writing, types of writings, etc. are discussed in detail in this chapter. The theoretical review part of this chapter ends up with providing information about the tests that are used for testing the writing skill.

The analysis part of this chapter exposes the methodology and procedures adopted for testing the writing skill. All the responses collected from the learners through the questionnaire are analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The grammatical aspects like noun, verb, adverb, adjective, concord, etc. are taken for analysis and the errors found in the writing are listed for identifying certain patterns in errors. A detailed summary is also given at the end of this chapter.

1.17.4 Chapter IV: Reading

The fourth chapter entitled 'Reading' deals with the concept of reading, its types, nature, functions, and its role in societal and academic domains. The views of the experts like Goodman, Widdowson, Thorndike, Michael Stubbs, and others are highlighted in the introductory part. The importance of reading and the problems that arise due to the lack of reading efficiency are projected with some illustrations. The art and science of reading, and the inevitability of the reading skill are discussed. Topics like the psycholinguistic and scientific approaches to 'reading' are discussed along with miscue patterns and high-level reading process. Topics like the mechanics of reading, reading comprehension and types of reading occupy the core part of this chapter. The differences between reading and writing, the place of reading in literacy and the role of reading in the development of other skills of language are also explained in detail in this
chapter. Insights into the activity of reading in order to develop the skill of reading in the second language are also taken note of. The reading speed and the knowledge domain involved in prose comprehension are also explained in detail.

The analysis part of this chapter mainly concentrates on the qualitative as well as quantitative measurements achieved by the informants. Units like word and sentence are taken as items of analysis. Sub skills like identification, recognition, reorganization, are also taken for evaluating the reading skill of students. All the questions included in the questionnaire are meant for eliciting responses that are text-based and inference-based. The reader's mental ability and the understanding capacity along with his previous knowledge and linguistic competence help to comprehend the written matter. In order to test the reading skills, 20 objective test items were selected and distributed to the students. This chapter projects a summary of the test results and interpretations along with suggestions for improving reading skills.

1.17.5 Chapter V: Listening

Listening comprehension and the issues related to it are the important points discussed in this chapter. The different kinds of listening comprehension tests and the selection of specific testing procedures adopted are taken into account. The views and suggestions of the language testers, the difference between voice and noise, listening and hearing, the mechanics involved in the act of listening,
the process of listening are also presented. The nature and tasks behind effective listening, the skills and sub-skills that are required for proper listening, the input sources of listening, the factors that affect the listening level, the perception of sounds, are also given due consideration in this chapter.

The listening process, the role of listening in information processing and the recall capacity of the language learners are also given with examples. The factors, which influence the listening activity, are also presented here. This chapter reveals the relationship between listening and reading on the one hand and listening and speaking on the other.

The second part of this chapter deals with the analysis of the errors committed by students during the process of listening. For testing the listening comprehension a questionnaire was prepared with the view to test the sub-skills like recognition and identification. All the information collected through listening comprehension tests are subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Besides these tests, one test was conducted to identify the retention and recall capacity of the students. The omission and misidentified words are taken for analysis so as to assess the familiarity of words, the influence of mother tongue and the difficulties in aural perception. A summary of the discussion based on the results of the analysis is also given at the end of this chapter.
1.17.6. Chapter VI: Speaking

The sixth chapter of the thesis deals with the speaking skill. This chapter begins with a general introduction about the speaking skill, its social and pedagogic aspects. Also the relationship among the four language skills are discussed and with the knowledge of the relationship among the language skills, a chart has been prepared with a view to present the active and passive aspects of language skills in the exercises found in the present curriculum related to collegiate education.

The succeeding part of this chapter deals with the analysis of the speaking skill of students. Recorded conversations of the informants were used as data for analysis. Apart from these, a collection of 40 words and a passage that includes all the sounds of English language were selected as testing materials. The following aspects which have a role in speech and conversation were given due focus while analyzing the students data.

1. Pronunciation
2. Stress
3. Pauses
4. Repetition and omission of words
5. Influence of mother tongue on SL
6. Over generalization
Daniel Jones' model of pronunciation has been referred while for evaluating the pronunciation found in the speech of students'.

1.17.7 Chapter VII: Conclusion

In this chapter, the observations and inferences found on the basis of the analysis carried out in this study are presented. This chapter also provides the future prospects in a research of this nature and suggests the probable course of direction to be followed in the future.