CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This study is situated at the crossroads of literature and Sociolinguistics as it applies a sociolinguistic approach to literary works. It acknowledges the widely accepted fact that both disciplines have a great deal to offer to each other. The present study examines the interrelation between certain social attributes (e.g. class, education, gender, age) and certain language varieties or patterns of use. It is an attempt to understand how social structures influence the way people use language. The situations of communication between language and society are the scope of any sociolinguistic analysis. This research investigates the manner in which society influences the language through the autobiographies of two minority languages that is languages of Indian Dalits and African Americans. The present research is aimed at a sociolinguistic analysis of the selected Indian Dalit and African American writers’ autobiographies.

6.2 Major Findings

The major findings of the present research are as follows:

1. It is observed that there is a strong relationship between language and society is observed in both the forms of literature as they are products of social situations.

2. It is observed that the social background of the characters plays an important role in defining the form of language they use. The characters from selected autobiographies belong to the Dalit and African American communities which are very poor and dominated by social and religious beliefs. Their language is greatly affected by the social conditions. The speech habits of the characters
expose their poor linguistic skills which give them dejected position in the society.

3. It is observed that characters of different age groups use different variety of language. Age is one of the major independent variables that differs the language of the characters. Old characters’ language is different from the young ones. These differences can also be found at the levels of syntax, phonology and morphology.

4. It is observed that education is another factor that influences the language of the characters in the autobiographies. It is also found that the major characters belong to the downtrodden or suppressed class. The educated characters speak a standard variety of English while the uneducated class speaks substandard form of English.

5. It is discovered that gender influences the language of the characters. The linguistic forms used by women and men characters contrast to some extent in both the Dalit and Negro communities. Male characters are generally sharp in their tone and a little more commanding. The female characters, on the contrary, are tender and affectionate and have low tone. Gender distinguishes the dialect of women from men.

6. The researcher studied the characters from the selected autobiographies against their sociological backgrounds. They come from various social backgrounds. Most of them belong to lower stratum of the society. Major characters from these autobiographies are straightforward and honest in their expressions whereas minor characters are calculative and reserve in their expressions.

7. The code-mixed words in Indian English speech are the integral part of the Indian socio-cultural and linguistic setting. The unavailability of equivalent English words causes code mixing in the selected Indian Dalit autobiographies. Some of the code-mixed words are – ‘vannis and bammans’, ‘five tolas’, ‘chutney-bhakari’ and ‘mamledar sahib’. In African American
autobiographies, the writers use some words such as ‘Lak dat’, ‘betcha’, ‘tole’ and ‘okey-dokey’ which reveals community specific ways of communicating.

8. It is observed that the principles of power and solidarity are operative in the memoirs under consideration. The characters belonging to dominant social class make use of blessings and curses, whereas the characters from lower castes make use of polite forms of expressions and are co-operative in their linguistic behaviour.

9. Language is a very unique feature of Indian Dalit and African American autobiography. The writers of the selected autobiographies rebel on linguistic fronts. They prefer to use their day-to-day spoken languages to those of the standard languages used by the writers of the mainstream autobiographies.

10. It is observed that the writers take freedom with the language because the standard language lacks the required vocabulary to present the experiences of Indian Dalit and African American. At the levels of phonology, morphology and syntactic, the writers of African American autobiographies are largely deviant with a number of instances of deviation.

11. The thesis has provided a general overview of the linguistic features of the Dalits and the Blacks. It is observed that the language used by the characters in the autobiographies is neither all deviant nor all variant. Both the communities have different linguistic patterns.

12. The analysis of address terms and greetings in Indian Dalit autobiographies reveals that all expressions are peculiar to certain Indian social register. The upper caste characters address the lower castes by using diminutive derived from their first names. e.g. Lakshya for Laxman. The greetings are typical expressions in Indian context.

13. It is observed that abusive expression is a remarkable feature of the language used by the characters from Indian Dalit autobiographies. The characters use some common abusive expressions like bastard, son of a bitch and
motherfucker. The excessive use of these terms really loses the original meaning of the terms.

14. The analysis of honorific terms in Indian Dalit autobiographies reveals that the lower caste characters have to address the upper castes with terms of respect like saheb, karbhar and ji dhani. All these honorifics are language specific and culture specific.

15. The kinship terms used in Indian Dalit autobiographies are mostly Marathi terms of reference or address. They are either difficult to translate or do not have proper equivalents in English. Aai, Mama, Bhau, Vahini and Tai are some kinship terms that reflect the relationships.

16. It is observed that Indian Dalit and African American autobiographies are crammed with diminutive expressions and unusual spellings. Some diminutives frequently used by Indian Dalit writers are Smt., Prof. and Etc. whereas African American writers use Rev., St. and Sis. Similarly, generous use of non-standard or unusual spellings is more observed in African American autobiographies than in Indian Dalit autobiographies. Gal, gimme, dat and lawd are some examples.

17. The observations under other sociolinguistic features of Indian Dalit autobiographies comprise caste related words, original Marathi words, Indian location names, animal names and transliteration.

18. The observations under other sociolinguistic features of African American autobiographies comprise non-standard use of punctuation marks, run-on sentence and Pig Latin language.
6.3 Pedagogical Implications

The main purpose of the study was to analyze the selected Indian Dalit and African American autobiographies on sociolinguistic level and reveal some aspects of communicative practices found between the two groups. From the pedagogical point of view, literature teaching can be made much more enjoyable if teachers inform the students about the importance of the Sociolinguistics. The concepts and terms in Sociolinguistics like idiolect, dialect, sociolect and CM and CS are very fruitful in the analysis of literary text. These concepts can reveal to the teachers as well as the students, sociological background of the characters and their interpersonal relationships. These theories can also teach them to deduce the real meaning of texts in socio-cultural context and play an important role in eliminating the cultural barriers.

Teachers of language, particularly those of Indian English and African American English, can make the students to understand the communicative intentions of the characters in the context of the autobiographies. They can enrich their experience by using and applying the principles of Sociolinguistics in reading works of art in general and autobiographies in particular.

Applying the theories and concepts of Sociolinguistics is a better way to provide the readers with the latest meanings and hence attempt to break the gap between what is said and what is meant. Here, students, teachers and literature readers at the same time will appreciate the linguistic value of literature and they can rationalize their view to the philosophy of life.

6.4 Scope for Further Research

Analysing literary texts with sociolinguistic approach is useful for exploring not only the linguistic properties of literary texts but also linguistic patterns of the characters. Sociolinguistic analysis helps in getting the meaning which is created in the text through the writer’s linguistic choices and through the interpretation of linguistic structures that are used by the characters.
In the light of this study, many horizons in the field of language call for further research as outlined below:

Since there are certain limitations to this research, the researcher suggests that further research may be conducted in other works of Indian Dalit and African American literature. The researcher also suggests that the concept of register and the study of language variation according to situation is another important area for the study. Further study may also be possible on a comparative basis, such as comparing various Indian Dalit and African American writers. Studies into social dialectology can be conducted at micro level or exhaustively.