CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Preview

This chapter is divided into three parts. Part I is concerned with the discussion of the respondents investigated in the present research. In the beginning, the students who have been consulted for the collection of data are discussed with respect to the ways they are classified in order to analyze the elicited data. It follows the considerations of the Questionnaire prepared and implemented in order to collect the data for the present research. This is Part II of the chapter. The Questionnaire is divided into three parts. Part I deals with the elicitation of data related to the background of the subjects with specific focus on their faculty, residential location, family educational background, age and their assumptions regarding the uses of English language, their motivation, their perception regarding the similarity or dissimilarity between Marathi, the mother tongue, and English, their views regarding the native speakers of English. It is followed by the discussion of Part II of the Questionnaire. This Part consists of 60 multiple choice questions and is prepared in accordance with the nature of Proficiency Test. The Speech Acts situations used in Part III of the Questionnaire—Request, Complaint, Correction, Suggestion, Refusal, Apology, Compliments and Expressing Gratitude— are discoursed with reference to their linguistic realization and the social expectations in each of the Speech Acts. Part III of the chapter elaborates the general variables employed for the assessment of the responses of the students to the situations in Part III of the Questionnaire. The same Part also includes the discussion of the rationale for the variables formed for the assessment.

3.1 The Subjects

The subjects who are selected for the exploration of the Communicative Competence and the Communicative Performance in the present study are the post-graduate students of Shivaji University. The mother tongue of most of these students is Marathi, the regional language of Maharashtra. These students have learned English as a second compulsory language from their 5th to 12th standard. For the students of Sciences Faculty, English is the medium of instruction at FYJC and SYJC (First and Second Year of Junior College, i.e. 11th and 12th Standards). English is introduced as a compulsory subject at the Undergraduate Level; therefore, from the first year of their
Under-graduation, they have learnt the paper ‘English for Communication’. Besides this paper, for the students of B. Sc., English is the medium of instruction for all their papers and B.A. students who have opted for English as their optional or special subject have varying numbers of papers that are taught in English. That is to say, the subjects have been learning English language in classroom situation for not less than ten years. However, besides the classroom hours and probably the hours spent in preparation of the course, the students hardly get any opportunity to use English language specifically for the concrete social purposes. As a result, the variety of English they are exposed to is most of the time the academic English. No doubt, the media is another source that provides exposure to English. But the sincerity and the zeal with which the students listen to the media or read Newspapers in English is questionable. It seems that they are almost uneasy with English when they start using English for any authentic and natural communication.

As far as the classroom exposure is concerned, consciously or unconsciously, the teachers are more particular about the structural and grammatical aspects of English and emphasize written skills at the cost of oral skills and fluency in the use of language. As compared with the metropolitan cities of India and particularly of Maharashtra, like Mumbai and Pune, the students here come from rural areas where there are limitations to the exposure and practice of English language. Again the motivation to learn English for these students is not ‘integrative’, which is said to be congenial for the successful learning of the language. Most of the time the students do not know why they are learning the additional language, sometimes they say that they are learning it because it is prescribed in the syllabus and only a few have the opinion that they learn the language for getting a good job.

For the present study, in all, one hundred and fifty (150) post-graduate students have been selected. The age of these students range from 20 to 26 and the average age is 22.2067. The students pertaining to all the four faculties—Arts, Sciences, Social Sciences and Commerce—are randomly selected for the purpose from the University Departments. The students of the Arts faculty are further classified into the students of English and students of Hindi and Marathi. The following table shows the Faculty-wise number of the students selected for the study:
Table 3.1: Faculty-wise Distribution of the Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty of the Student</th>
<th>Number of the Students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi &amp; Marathi</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table shows, out of 150 students, 50 students are from the Arts Faculty - 30 of English and 20 of Hindi and Marathi; 25 each are from Social Sciences and Commerce. 50 students are from the Sciences faculty. These students are further classified according to their sex, i.e. as male and female, and also their area of residence. Table 3.2 thus represents the distribution of these students with reference to their Sex, Residential Location and Faculty.

Table 3.2: Faculty, Residential Location and Sex-wise distribution of the Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Location</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Arts: English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts: Hindi &amp; Marathi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Arts: English</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts: Hindi &amp; Marathi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table shows, there are in all 46 students belonging to the urban area; out of them 21 are male and 25 are female. In the rural area, in all 104 students are included, out of them 62 are male and 42 are female. The way these students intersect the variables of Faculty, Sex and Location is evident in the above table. However, it will be apt here to point out that the urban areas here are not essentially different from the rural areas. The general assumption in classifying the students as belonging to either
the Urban or the Rural area is that the urban area should provide more opportunities and exposure to the students with respect to the use of the Target Language. The urban areas consulted here, however, should not be compared with the Urban Maharashtra with the metropolitan cities like Mumbai and Pune. Though living in the urban areas, these students do not get the type of exposure and opportunities to use English as are available in other metropolitan cities.

Another important dimension that can be explored in the context of the competence of the students is their family education background. The researcher has collected data concerning this factor as well. As per the data furnished by the students, the family education background of 109 students is ‘educated’, whereas 41 students’ family background is ‘uneducated’. Out of these 41 students, 33 belong to the rural area, while the remaining 8 belong to the urban area. When asked about their opinion regarding the difficulty or the ease in learning English language, 105 students asserted that English is easy for them to learn. Out of the remaining 45 students, 42 rated it as difficult language to learn and 3 opined that they cannot accurately assert their opinion. The researcher has also tried to know their abilities in the four skills (Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening). The students responded in the following way: Out of 150, 117 maintained that they can perform all the four activities in English; 25 maintained that they can only write in English, 5 asserted they can only understand English, and the remaining 1 student said that he can speak in English. When the students are asked to tell their willingness to study English language further, 141 students said that they wanted to learn English language further, 7 don’t want to study English, whereas one cannot definitely say whether he wants or not to study English further.

The researcher also tried to know the opinions of the students regarding their motivation to learn English, and it is found that 119 students study English because it is useful for getting a good job. 25 students said they study English, because they like the language and the remaining 6 opined that they study it because it is prescribed and compulsory. As the data indicates, for most of these students, the motivation of learning English is Instrumental. However, the realization that English is useful for acquiring a good job occurs only quite later when the students have almost completed their formal education in English. The last important variable which is said to have its bearing upon the Communicative Competence of the students is their self-perceived fluency in the language. Accordingly, the researcher has tried to know the way the students assess themselves in terms of their fluency in English. The responses provided to this question
are quite surprising: It is found that only 26 student rate themselves as fluent in English, 37 directly maintain that they are not fluent, 15 say that they don’t know about their fluency and 72 argue that they cannot definitely judge their fluency. These responses indicate that only 26 students are confident about their fluency in English, whereas the remaining students are not thinking themselves as fluent.

The researcher has tried to collect information regarding all the above discussed variables, because they are generally assumed to influence the quantity and the quality of learning English. Each of these variables, therefore, will be used to evaluate the overall Communicative Competence and Communicative Performance of the students. The researcher thus intends to find out the way these variables are related to the abilities of these students.

3.2 Data Collection:

The data for the present study will be collected through the responses to the Questionnaire prepared for assessing the Communicative Competence and the Communicative Performance of the students. The Questionnaire consists of three parts. The Questionnaire is administered to 150 students in their respective classrooms. For giving answers to Part I and Part III of the Questionnaire, no particular time limit is fixed. On the contrary, the time limit for Part II is 1.30 hours. The students are requested to give correct information to the questions in Part I. With the view of collecting the natural data for the assessment of Communicative Performance, the students are also asked to write the very first response they think as the most appropriate to the situations listed in Part III of the Questionnaire.

3.2.1 The Questionnaire:

The Questionnaire (Appendixes I, II and III) is prepared with the purpose of assessing the Communicative Competence and the Communicative Performance of the students in the use of English language. The Questionnaire consists of three parts. Part I is introduced in order to collect the data related to the general information regarding the students and self-assessment of their fluency in the second language, English. The nature of Part II is similar to that of a Proficiency Test and consists of six sections based on Discrete-Item Test, Cloze Test and Multiple Choice DCT. Since the elicitation of the natural and authentic use of language is important for any type of test, the researcher has tried to collect such a natural use with the help of the written Discourse Completion Test (DCT).
3.2.1.1 Part I

As mentioned earlier, this part of the Questionnaire tries to explore the students’ personal views regarding different variables that are considered to be influential in the acquisition of Communicative Competence. In all, 30 different issues have been raised in this part. They range from Name, Sex, Age, Class, Faculty, Rural/Urban, Family Educational Background, Mother Tongue, Languages Known, the reason for studying and learning English language etc. (see Appendix 1) and also tries to cumulate information regarding their self-assessment of their abilities regarding the use of English language, their motivation for learning the language and the exposure they receive for the same. This part of the Questionnaire is important in the following ways:

1. It will help in classifying the students on different dimensions, like rural/urban, educated/uneducated family background, different streams of their course like Arts/Commerce/Science, etc.
2. It will shed light on the self-perceived fluency in the use of English language which is said to be important for assessing their actual Communicative Competence and Communicative Performance.
3. It will explain the nature and the amount of exposure available for these students.
4. It will provide insights into their views regarding the native speakers of the target language and their wish to join the target language group.

3.2.1.2 Part II

As pointed out earlier, this part is a test prepared to assess the Communicative Competence of the students. This test consists of 60 multiple choice items divided into six sections. First Section uses the Discrete-Item Test and consists of 10 items based on different aspects of the grammatical elements, like tense, preposition, etc. It has been pointed out by different linguists that the Discrete-Item Test cannot assess Performance, though it can be employed to assess Competence. Therefore, the researcher has included this test in Part II of the Questionnaire, which is meant for the assessment of Communicative Competence. The distribution of grammatical elements assessed in this Section is visualized in the following table.
Definitely, the list does not include all the aspects of grammar; nonetheless, the items are used as representatives for the Grammatical Competence.

The Second Section is a Cloze Test, again consisting of 10 items. It is used as a measure to assess learners’ knowledge of different linguistic and discourse elements of target language. The passage selected for preparing the Cloze Test is about Television, a subject with which everybody is acquainted and the difficulty level of the passage seems to be appropriate with the level of the students under consideration. The following is the distribution of the elements assessed in this test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Elements</th>
<th>Distribution in the Test (item number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conditional Sentence</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Adverb</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of NP</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Complex Sentence</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of VP</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of appropriate Word</td>
<td>6, 7, and 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Preposition</td>
<td>9, 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3: Item Distribution in the Discrete-Item Test

In the Third Section, four test items are provided to assess the knowledge of vocabulary of the learners. A word in a sentence is underlined, and the students are asked to identify the appropriate meaning of the word from the given alternatives.

The Fourth Section explores the knowledge of ‘Conversational Implicatures’ and it comprises 12 dialogues embedded in situations followed by a question. The question is about the Illocutionary Force of the Implicature present in the dialogue. Obviously, it tries to assess the competence of the students to identify ‘how more is communicated than is said’ in the process of communication. Conversational Implicature results when the addressee ‘flouts’ one of the Cooperative Principles (Grice,
1975). It is believed that conversation is based on the principle of cooperation between the addressee and the addresser. That is to say, both of them have to follow the principles. However, sometimes, the addresser thinks that the addressee shares the same interpersonal and situation knowledge. Such assumptions lead to the lack of explicitness in conversation. Such lack of explicitness is quite normal for those who are involved in the interaction, since they share the knowledge. However, such inexplicitness may not be comprehensible for those who do not share such knowledge. As Communicative Competence is not restricted to the grammatical knowledge of language, the multiple choice test for the interpretation of Conversational Implicature (MCI) is introduced. Generally, it is believed that Conversational Implicature is governed by the ‘ways of speaking’ of a Speech Community. Thus, this part of the Questionnaire assesses the ability of the students to understand the implied meaning of language. The Implicature Test is based on the research of Naoko Taguchi (2005). In the multiple choice test, the preparation of distracters is a difficult task. In the MCI, to prepare the distracters, the researcher has followed the three principles elaborated by Taguchi:

- **Principle 1**: The option contains a meaning that is the opposite of the implied meaning.
- **Principle 2**: The option contains words taken from the last part of the dialogue.
- **Principle 3**: The option is related to the overall conversation. (2005: 550)

Since the Speech Acts are the basic unit in the assessment of the Communicative Competence, Section V employs the Multiple Choices Discourse Completion Test (MCDCT). A situation is provided and the students are asked to identify the correct and the most appropriate response in the situation. In all, there are 18 items dealing with 9 different Speech Acts. The students are asked to identify the grammatically correct and contextually appropriate response from the four given alternatives. One of the alternatives is both grammatical and contextually appropriate (Here, the appropriateness of a response is considered taking into consideration the Indian norms of interaction.). The remaining three are distracters and are based on the following principles:
Principle 1: The distracter is contextually appropriate but is grammatically incorrect.
Principle 2: The level of ‘politeness’ is inappropriate but the language of the response is grammatical.
Principle 3: The response contains words from the situation given; but it doesn’t express the specified Speech Act; or, sometimes, the indirect ways of using the same Speech Act is employed.

The last Section deals with the conversational routines in English and consists of six items that seek to explore the knowledge of the students of the basic Conversational Patterns in English language. The items are based on the most common instances of the phatic communication in English language, like– What would you say as a response to the question ‘How are you?’, etc. Such questions, among other things, help to assess the knowledge of Discourse of English language. It also fulfills the condition of Communicative Competence that Hymes elaborates: what to say when, where, and how. The items in this Section are based on the Web-based Test of Second Language Pragmatics: Pilot Version 2.

3.2.1.3 Part III

The Part III of the Questionnaire is the Written Discourse Completion Test (Written DCT). In this test, students are provided with the information regarding the situations, speech events, participants and the topic and are asked to prepare the Speech Acts based upon their knowledge of the situations. In all, twenty four situations are given. Eight types of Speech Acts are used in these situations. They are divided into Face-threatening and Face-saving Speech Acts. The Face-threatening Speech Acts are Request, Refusal, Complaint, Correction and Suggestion; and the Face-saving Speech Acts are Apology, Compliments and Expressing Gratitude. While selecting the Speech Acts, care has been taken to select only those Speech Acts that the students would normally use in their day-to-day contexts. The following table shows the types of Speech Acts employed, their distribution in the test and the total number of the items:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Act</th>
<th>Items in the test</th>
<th>Total no of Speech Acts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Request</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal</td>
<td>4, 5, 6</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaint</td>
<td>7, 8, 9</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correction</td>
<td>10, 11, 12</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion</td>
<td>13, 14, 15</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apology</td>
<td>16, 17, 18</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliment</td>
<td>19, 20, 21</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing Gratitude</td>
<td>22, 23, 24</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5: Distribution of Speech Act Situations in Part III

As for the nature of the written DCT, there are different varieties. However, for the present research, considering the background of the students under investigation, the researcher has involved the students in the situation itself, and they have to prepare the response as for what they will say in the situation. The researcher thinks it to be more useful than making the students to imagine someone what they are not and asking them to give response. For instance, in no situation, the student is asked to be a professor and then give response accordingly. Rather, the student is asked to give response considering his/her own identity. Moreover, all the situations employed in the WDCT are related to the college/university background. That is to say, the students are faced with the situation they would normally face in their educational situation, like asking for and giving notes, asking for book, etc. The researcher thinks that such situations will help students to write their responses, because the students are accustomed to such situation. Moreover, the researcher has not specified the gender of the participants. For example, the pronouns ‘he’ or ‘she’ are avoided in the description of the situation. When it is essential to include the pronoun, it is used as ‘s/he’. It is expected that this strategy will restrict the variation in the responses due to gender aspects.

The researcher is concerned with the assessment of the Communicative Performance of the students; that is to say, the researcher will assess both the Linguistic and Pragmatic Performances of these students. The Linguistic Performance is easy to assess, as the rules of language are well established. However, while trying to assess the Pragmatic Performance, certain difficulties emerge. ‘Which response should be called
appropriate, on what grounds? etc.’ are some of the questions that need to be discussed. The notion of appropriateness is closely related, as has been pointed earlier, to the P, D and R variables. P here stands for the Power of the addressee in relation to the addressee, D means the social Distance between the addressee and the addressee, whereas R is the degree of Imposition involved.

In order to provide reliability to the scores of the responses, the researcher has limited the P and D variables only to three social identities of the addressee. In all the situations, as pointed out earlier, the addressee is the student, referred to as ‘you’. The three social identities of the addressee are: a friend, a classmate, and a Professor. This limitation of the social identities of the addressee facilitates the assessment of the appropriateness as well. All the three relations are judged as per the Indian socio-cultural norms: the relation between the student and his/her friend is ‘intimate’ as contrasted with the relation of the student with his/her classmate, which is essentially ‘informal’. On the contrary, the relation of the student with his/her Professor is ‘formal’. On the basis of this nature of relationships, it is easy to construct the acceptable and appropriate variety of language and also the ‘degree of Politeness’ required in each case. These three relations will require ‘colloquial’, ‘informal’ and ‘formal’ language respectively to be employed in the Speech Act. As for the degree of politeness required in the Speech Act, all the relationships of the addressee elaborated above along with the imposition involved need to be considered. However, the third variable, the imposition involved in each of the situations, will be discussed in detail when the responses of the students to particular Speech Act are elaborated in Chapter V of the thesis.

3.2.2 Speech Acts:

Speech Act is the minimal unit of discourse or a basic unit of communication. It is understood as the verbal representation of social behaviour of the participants. It is thus a social phenomenon. Speech Acts are complex verbal behaviour based upon the socio-cultural knowledge of the participants. That is to say, only the linguistic knowledge is not sufficient to participate in any speech event. In the non-native context, the language learner may achieve mastery over the vocabulary and grammar of the language but this cannot be considered as his control over the pragmatic or functional uses of language, as is required in the production of the Speech Acts. That is to say, the learner might have acquired various forms for expressing gratitude or for requesting;
but the learners may not be certain of the appropriateness of using one form rather than
the other. The reason for using Speech Act as data elicitation technique for the
assessment of Communicative Performance is that, it helps to assess both the linguistic
and social knowledge of the learner.

As Cohen (1996) points out, in the production of Speech Act, both the socio-
cultural choices and sociolinguistic forms used in the realization are important. The
socio-cultural choices refer to:

1. The speaker’s ability to determine whether it is acceptable to perform the
Speech Act at all in the given situation; and,
2. The selection of one or the other semantic formulas (a word, phrase, or
sentence that meets particular semantic criteria) appropriate to the realization of
the Speech Act.

Moreover, while performing the Speech Act, the addressee needs to take into
consideration the following factors:

1. The culture involved,
2. The age and sex of the participants,
3. Their social class and occupation, and
4. Their roles and status in the interaction.

The sociolinguistic forms are the actual linguistic forms used by the addressee for the
realization of the Speech Act. It is the appropriate use of different varieties of language
like ‘colloquial’, ‘informal’, ‘formal’, etc.

Out of the eight Speech Acts included in the Questionnaire, five are the Face-
threatening Speech Acts—Request, Refusal, Complaint, Correction, and Suggestion;
whereas, three are the Face-saving Speech Acts—Apology, Compliment and Expressing
Gratitude. For the participants of the interaction, the Face-threatening Speech Acts are
the sources of potential miscommunication. That is why, the addressee needs to be very
careful in the execution of these Speech Acts and also in selecting the appropriate
variety of the language for its realization. Moreover, the addressee needs to show
respect to the ‘face’ of the addressee, i.e. the public self-image of the addressee. Such
respect to the face can be shown by employing certain Mitigation Devices and
Politeness Strategies in the Speech Act. It has been argued by different scholars that
there is variation in the learners’ use of Politeness Strategies in the Speech Acts. Such variation is the outcome of the assessment of the appropriateness with reference to the cultural factors. Therefore, it is expected that the data elicited with the help of these Speech Acts will provide cases of sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic transfer from the L1 of the students.

It is important here to elaborate the nature and constitutive elements of each of the Speech Acts included into the Questionnaire. Therefore, in the following pages, the researcher has included the discussion of the individual Speech Acts with respect to the ‘regulatory’ and ‘constitutive’ rules.

3.2.2.1 Request

Request is one of the Face-threatening Speech Acts. The purpose behind this act is to get the addressee do a specific task for the speaker. In addition to the P and D variables, the realization of this act is dependent upon the degree of imposition present in the situation. Imposition refers to the impact of favour asking on the addressee in terms of specific reactions. Such imposition is dependent upon the distance between the addressee and the addressee and also upon what is requested for. The realization is also sensitive to the communicative role, the gender and the age of both the addressee and the addressee. Such realization and expectations of the degree of imposition are highly culture-specific in that the different variables pointed out above may require different degrees of Politeness. The learners are generally aware of what might be disruptive or difficult from the hearer’s point of view and they vary their language accordingly. According to Brown and Levinson (1978), imposition is ranked in proportion to the required expenditure of service and time by the addressee. Therefore, the speaker should use some Mitigation Devices to compensate for the imposition that the act poses upon the addressee. On the basis of this discussion, the following characteristics of the Speech Act of Request may be elaborated:

1. The Speech Act of Request involves addressee’s asking for something which is outside of the addressee’s daily routine.
2. This act of doing something requires some time/or effort on the part of the addressee or it deprives the addressee of something.
3. Request does not have any role-related obligation on the part of the addressee to fulfill the task.
4. It involves reciprocity in terms of returns for the favour done to the addressee.
5. Request imposes some constraints on the future behaviour of the addressee in that s/he needs to fulfill the act in future; therefore, it needs some Politeness Strategies to be used while requesting.

3.2.2.2 Refusal

The Speech Act of Refusal consists of denying an offer, request, invitation, etc., either directly or indirectly. In fact, the denial in each case is nothing but saying ‘no’. However, in many societies how one says ‘no’ is more important than the response itself. The reason seems to be that saying ‘no’ involves a potential threat to the social harmony. As a result, the production of the Speech Act of Refusals requires the Communicative Competence, i.e. knowledge not only of the linguistic system but also of the socio-cultural expectations embedded in the situation. The addressee must also know the appropriate linguistic forms and their functions in addition to the knowledge of their occurrence. The appropriateness of the Speech Act of Refusal is very important since the inappropriate response may offend the interlocutor. Thus, Refusals are Face-threatening Speech Acts and their use demands the assessment of the P, D and R factors. Often, Refusals are realized through indirect strategies.

Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) have investigated the Speech Act of Refusal produced by American native speakers of English and Japanese EFL learners. They analyze the Speech Act in order to find out the semantic formula employed in its realization. In the case of Refusal to the Invitation, the semantic formulas they discover are:

1. An expression of regret, followed by,
2. An excuse, and ending with
3. An offer of alternative.

However, they report differences between Native Speakers and Non-Native Speakers in terms of the order of the semantic formula used in the realization of the speech Act, the frequency of the semantic formula and the context of the utterance employed in the response. These three semantic formulae might be realized using different linguistic realization patterns and such patterns are called Supportive Moves.
3.2.2.3 Correction

As are the Speech Acts of Request and Refusal, the Speech Act of Correction is also a Face-threatening act. Such Face-threatening acts require the speaker to be sensitive to the ‘face’ of the addressee. Therefore, they need to use some Mitigation Devices or Politeness Strategies so that they may not be misunderstood. That is to say, they need to be very tactful in their use of language. In the Speech Act of Correction, in order to provide Politeness, the addressee needs to use some positive remarks, some softeners and some other similar formulas. Such use of Politeness Strategies is aimed at the conduction of smooth communication and also to disarm the potential for aggression. Politeness Strategy is the language usage developed in order to make a situation less Face-threatening. Both the Power and Solidarity between the addressee and the addressee and the social context plays a much greater role than is generally perceived. The Speech Act of Correction involves the following preconditions and interaction goals:

1. The realization of the speaker that the addressee has committed a mistake according to some norms—social, behavioural, academic, or others.
2. Speaker’s assessment that s/he can ask the addressee to correct the mistake or at least to make him/her realize that s/he has committed a mistake.
3. Use of appropriate language with reference to Power and Solidarity between the addressee and the addressee and the socio-cultural context surrounding the Speech Act.
4. Use of Politeness Strategies is required so that the addressee may not be misunderstood.
5. The Direct or Indirect Correction would be used depending upon the relation between the participants and the severity of the mistake.

3.2.2.4 Complaint

Complaint is also a Face-threatening Speech Act in which the addressee complains about a case of injustice directly to the ‘offender’. Such cases of complaint are very subjective in that individuals differ in their assessment of what they perceive to be injustice or wrong-doing. This assessment is, again, based upon, to certain extent, the social and cultural expectations. The realization of this Speech Act varies across different dimensions like social status, familiarity, Power and Solidarity, etc. That is to
say, in the realization of this Speech Act, the addressee follows the cultural norms. The realization of this Speech Act may be Direct or Indirect depending upon the variable pointed out above. The addressee again needs to use some Politeness Strategies so that the relation between the complainer and the addressee should not get damaged. That is to say s/he should be tactful when complaining. The following could be seen as some of the factors involved:

1. The speaker should perceive that the addressee has committed an action which is socially unacceptable.
2. It involves the realization of the speaker that the socially unacceptable action has unfavourable consequences for him/her or for the general public.
3. The speaker uses an expression of complaint which can be either Direct or Indirect depending upon the Power and Solidarity between the speaker and the addressee.
4. The speaker needs to use some Politeness Strategies to keep the channel open between him/her and the addressee.
5. It may also involve the explanations of the socially unacceptable action which can be used as an Indirect Complaint.
6. Generally, the Complaint is used by a person of lower or equal social status/age/class/caste etc. to address a higher status person. The higher status person would generally in such situation use Speech Act of Order rather than that of Complaint.

Olshtain and Weinbach (1987) provide a list of semantic structures used as Head Acts in the Speech Act of Complaint: (1) Below the level of reproach, (2) Disapproval, (3) Complaint, (4) Accusation and Warning, and (5) Threat. However, the use of the extreme structures like ‘Threat’ might shut down the interaction and the social relations as well. Similarly, Murphy and Neu (1996) provide a list of semantic formulas used in the Speech Act of Complaint: (1) An explanation of the purpose, (2) A Complaint, (3) A Justification, (4) A candidate solution- request.

3.2.2.5 Suggestion

Suggestions are one of the sub-types of the Directive Speech Acts. In the use of the Speech Act of Directives, the purpose of the Speaker is to make the hearer commit
him/herself to some future course of action. Thus, this type of Speech Act attempts to make the world match the words. Directives contain different types of Speech Acts like Request, Commands and Suggestions. Haverkate (1984) distinguishes between Impositive and Non-Impositive Directives. The Impositive Directives include more threatening acts like Request, Order, and Pleading. The Non-Impositive Directives are Suggestion and Instruction. The major difference between them is that of benefits: in the Impositive Directives, the carrying out of the action benefits the Speaker, whereas in the Non-Impositive Directives, the benefits are meant for the Hearer. Nonetheless, the fact remains that Suggestion is a Face-threatening Speech Act, because in its realization, the Speaker in a way intrudes into the Hearer’s world by performing an act about what the hearer should do. Therefore, in the performing of the Speech Act of Suggestion, many factors should be taken into consideration: the urgency of the suggestion, the degree of embarrassment in the situation, and above all the social Distance and Power between the Speaker and the Hearer.

The Speech Act of Suggestion, can be classified into two types: the ‘Inclusive–We Suggestions’, where the Suggestion benefits both the Speaker and the Hearer; and, the ‘Non-Inclusive Suggestions’, for the benefits of the Hearer alone. On the basis of this discussion of the Speech Act of Suggestion, the following facts of the Speech Act can be enlisted:

1. Suggestion includes performing the Speech Act for the benefits for either both the Speaker and the Hearer, or only for that of the Hearer.
2. The Speaker believes that a particular action of the Hearer will be profitable for both of them or only for the Hearer.
3. It is a Face-threatening Speech Act, in which the Speaker intrudes the world of the Hearer, making the situation embarrassing.
4. Since it involves asking the Hearer to do something, it should be done with appropriate linguistic realization.
5. It requires the use of Politeness formulae to soften the burden that the Speaker is imposing on the Hearer.

Martinez-Flor (2005: 175) elaborates the linguistic strategies used in the realization of the Speech Act of Suggestion as presented in the table 3.6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIRECT</td>
<td>Performative Verb</td>
<td>I suggest that you... I advise you to ... I recommend that you ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noun of Suggestion</td>
<td>My suggestion would be...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imperative</td>
<td>Try using...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative Imperative</td>
<td>Don't try to...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specific Formulae</td>
<td>Why don't you...? How about...? What about...? Have you thought about...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONVENTIONALISED</td>
<td>Possibility/Probability</td>
<td>You can... You could... You may... You might...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMS</td>
<td>Should</td>
<td>You should...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need</td>
<td>You need to...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td>If I were you, I would ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIRECT</td>
<td>Impersonal</td>
<td>One thing (that you can do) would be Here's one possibility: ... There are a number of options that you... It would be helpful if you... It might be better to ... A good idea would be ... It would be nice if...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hints</td>
<td>I've heard that...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.6: Linguistic Realization of Suggestion**

### 3.2.2.6 Apology

An apology is the remedial verbal action proposed by the addressee upon committing an offence. Bergman and Kasper (1993: 82) conceptualize Apology as ‘compensatory action to an offence in the doing of which S was causally involved and which is costly to H’. They classify Apologies into two types:
1. Ritualistic Apologies: those redressing virtual offences, which are remedied by the sole offering of an apologetic formula, and
2. Substantive Apologies: those redressing actual damage inflicted on the addressee, sometimes including an offer of material compensation.

Though this Speech Act is universal, the conditions for apologizing are not universal. That is to say, different speech communities differ in their assessment of the offence and its severity. Moreover, such assessment is dependent upon the social factors such as the interlocutors’ relative status and familiarity to each other. Thus, there are cross-cultural variations in the realization of the Speech Act of Apology. In American English, for example, the formulaic phrase ‘excuse me’ is offered for Ritualistic apologies, whereas in British English, the use of the phrase ‘I’m sorry’ is far more common for both the types.

Apologies can be realized by a finite set of conventions of means or strategies. Such strategies are related to the offensive act and serve as the deliberate move on the part of the speaker to make the offence go away either by regretting and proposing remedy or by denying the responsibility of the offence. Both the context-internal and context-external factors are responsible for selecting the appropriate variety of language in Speech Act of Apology. The nature of the offence is itself one of the Context-internal factors involved. The most important factor in the selection of sociolinguistic variety in Apology is the severity of the offence. Context-external factors responsible for the selection of the appropriate variety are the social power (P) and the social distance (D). The lower the offender’s status as compared to the offended person, the more the offender is prone to apologize by means of explicit apologetic formula, intensifying apologetic force, and to choose a more formal apology (Maeshiba, et al., 1996: 159).

The following may be cited as the preconditions and interactional goals of the Speech Act of Apology:

1. The addresser is aware that s/he has committed an infraction, and the infraction has some unfavourable consequences for the addressee. Thus, this Speech Act is employed when the behavioural norm is broken.
2. The addresser believes that his/her act of Apology will rectify the situation and will also help to re-establish the mutual relationship.
3. The addresser knows that it is appropriate for him to apologize for the committed offence.

4. S/he wants that the relationship between him/her and the addressee should not be spoiled.

5. S/he should know the correct and appropriate procedure of apologizing.

On the basis of these preconditions, the addresser can use the Speech Act of Apology. The following are some of the types of Supportive Moves and Head Acts that can be employed in the Speech Act of Apology:

1. Explicit expression of Apology: The speaker uses a word or expression or utterance, as the Head Act, which contains a ‘performative verb’ like apologize, forgive, excuse, be sorry, etc.

2. It sometimes involves explanations or account of the situation which caused the apologizer to commit the offence. Sometimes such explanations are used by the speaker as an Indirect Speech Act of Apology or as a Supportive Move for the Head Act.

3. Acknowledgement of the responsibility: The offender admits his or her fault in causing the infraction.

4. An offer of repair: The speaker promises to carry out actions to repair the damage resulted from the infraction.

5. This may also involve the promise of non-recurrence of the offence by which the speaker commits him/herself not to cause the same offence in future.

### 3.2.2.7 Compliments

The Speech Act of Compliment is one among those which are closely tied to the culture in which they occur. Not only the linguistic realization but also the Situations, Objects, and People and their abilities for whom or about whom the compliments are given vary cross-culturally. This makes the areas of complimenting challenging for the language learners. Therefore, simply the mastery over the linguistic forms seems to be inadequate for performing the Speech Act of Compliment, because the inappropriate use of language would result in the assessment of the addressee as arrogant, impatient, unfriendly, etc. to the Speech Community.
The Speech Act of Compliments consists of the expression of sincere admiration of positive qualities of the addressee. It minimizes the risks in communication and is considered to be a tool for establishing solidarity among participants. Sometimes, the Speech Act of Compliment can be used as the opener of conversation. Manes and Wolfson (1981: 120-121) studied Compliments and identified the following nine syntactic categories commonly used for giving Compliments:

1. NP is/looks (really) ADJ.  (Your shirt is beautiful.)
2. I (really) like/love NP.  (I like your car.)
3. PRO is (really) (a) ADJ NP.  (That’s a nice wall hanging.)
4. You V (a) (really) ADJ NP.  (You did a good job.)
5. You V (NP) (really) ADV.  (You really handled this situation well.)
6. You have (a) ADJ NP!  (You have such beautiful hair!)
7. What (a) ADJ NP!  (What a lovely baby you have!)
8. ADJ NP!  (Nice game!)
9. Isn’t NP ADJ?  (Isn’t you ring beautiful?)

In their study, Manes and Wolfson found that 85% of the compliments collected from the American people employed one of the first three syntactic structures.

As compliments are independent of the previous topic, most of the Compliments indicate the use of daxis to specify the object like– the second person pronoun, ‘you’; or demonstratives like ‘this’, ‘that’, etc. Moreover, there are different topics related to Compliments. For example, in American English, three major categories are identified: appearance or possession, abilities or accomplishments and the personality traits of the interlocutors (Knapp, Hopper, and Bell, 1984). Such topics associated with Compliments indicate what is considered to be admirable in the community.

3.2.2.8 Expressing Gratitude

The Speech Acts employed to express Gratitude are ‘the utterances whose Illocutionary Force is that of gratitude in response to receiving a gift, favour, reward or service’ (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1993: 65). Thus, it is the post-event Speech Act and that the event is beneficial for the Speaker. Expressing Gratitude is one of those Speech Acts that have important social value. This is the most frequently used of the Speech Acts in the interpersonal relationships. The use of this Speech Act provides the feeling
of warmth and solidarity among those involved in the interaction. On the contrary, the inadequacy in the expression of gratitude or its absence might result in unfavourable consequences for the relationship between the addresser and the addressee.

The Speech Act of expressing Gratitude has different kinds of linguistic realizations— from simple, phatic and formulaic utterances to complex and lengthy dialogues developed mutually by both the participants. Most of the time, both the native and non-native users of language alike seem to associate the expression of Gratitude with the phrase ‘thank you’. However, there are certain underlying complex rules indispensable for the expression of gratitude in such a manner that is satisfying to both the parties involved. Moreover, Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) point out that there are significant cross-cultural differences in the realization of this Speech Act, which pose difficulties to Foreign and Second Language students. Due to all the considerations, the successful performance of this Speech Act is difficult.

Different scholars have commented on the Speech Act of Expressing Gratitude; some of them rate this Act as ‘face-threatening’, whereas some others claim it to be ‘face-saving’. Brown and Levinson (1978), for instance, are of the opinion that Expressing Gratitude is a ‘face-threatening’ act in that the Speaker’s acknowledgement of a debt to the Hearer threatens the ‘negative face’ of the listener. Emphasizing the positive aspects of the Speech Act of Thanking, Searle (1969), on the contrary, defines it as ‘an illocutionary act performed by a Speaker based on a past act performed by the Hearer that was beneficial’ (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1993: 65). According to Leech (1983), the Speech Act of Expressing Gratitude has a convivial function in which the addressee’s showing appreciation for the act of addressee helps to maintain a polite and friendly social atmosphere.

At this juncture, it is essential not to confuse the use of the expression ‘thank you’ with Expressing Gratitude. That is to say, not all cases of the use of ‘thank you’ designate Gratitude. For example, there are other functions associated with the phrase, like it is used as a response to compliments, and also used for closing the interaction.

3.2.3 Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

According to Wesche (1983: 47-48), in order to make a Communicative Test valid, it should possess the following six categories:
1. The test should be integrative and pragmatic in nature and should involve both the verbal and the situational context. The usage aspect (the correctness of grammatical form and its organization) should be investigated as it is demonstrated through language in use. Moreover, such test should also employ the ‘appropriateness of the examinee’s response in terms of illocutionary development and the sociolinguistic variables present’ as evaluative criteria.

2. The test should be as direct as possible. It should assess whether the learner can ‘do’ something in the second language with acceptable degree of efficiency as well as appropriateness to the situation.

3. A variety of language situations should be used in order to assess the examinee’s manipulation of a variety of language functions.

4. It should be criterion-referenced. That is to say, the performance should be judged with reference to the definition of the adequate performance required on the task rather than with the performance of the other examinees.

5. The test scores should be reliable.

6. It must be feasible.

Assessing the test employed in the present research with regard to the above characteristics; the first thing that emerges is that, as Wesche points out, the present questionnaire is integrative and pragmatic in nature. The term ‘integrative’ refers to the quality of the test where the conventional classification of the four skills is not exploited separately; rather all the four skills are assessed together. Moreover, it also suggests the greater role allotted to the context (linguistic, discoursal and socio-cultural). Such tests are essentially context-dependent. The present test is essentially based on the context. All the three contexts are employed for the assessment. It is ‘pragmatic’ in the sense that the test investigates language use for a specific purpose rather than language usage. However, the language usage is also assessed, not explicitly, but through the language use. Moreover, the test employed here is ‘direct’. According to Weir, Direct testing:

... requires an integrated performance from the candidate involving communication under realistic linguistic, situational, cultural and affective constraints. Candidates have to perform both receptively and productively in relevant contexts. The focus is on the expression and understanding of functional meaning as against a more limited mastery
of form. The move to direct testing has further encouraged by a concern among language testers about the problems of format effect. (1990: 12)

In the Questionnaire, both in Part II and Part III, the context of situation is provided and the subjects’ ability to employ language in the context has been assessed. Since, Speech Acts are used as the basic units for assessment; the focus is naturally on the communication of functional meaning. The written DCT used in Part III, moreover, has the ‘element of unexpectedness’, so that the authentic responses are elicited. Thus, in order to test the Communicative Competence and Communicative Performance of the students, care has been taken as to ‘where, when, how, with whom, and why the language is to be used, and on what topics, and with what effect’ (Weir, 1990: 1). Thus, the tasks employed herein are authentic tasks which will elicit genuine language use by the examinees for a purpose.

The discussion of the criteria employed to judge the responses provided to Part III of the Questionnaire is elaborated in section 3.2 of this chapter. The section contains various criteria like the grammaticality of the responses, its appropriateness to the context, its comprehensibility, its cohesiveness and above all the politeness employed in it. All these considerations make it a Reliable test.

Validity of a test refers to the ability of the test to assess the qualities which it claims to measure. That is to say, it means whether the Test actually measures the qualities which are being explored. In the present study, the researcher is concerned with the assessment of the Communicative Competence and Communicative Performance of the students. Therefore, in order that the Test to be valid, it is expected to measure the same constructs correctly.

As has been pointed out in the earlier chapters, Communicative Competence is not Grammatical or Linguistic Competence. Rather Grammatical Competence is one of the inseparable parts of the Communicative Competence. Thus, Communicative Competence involves both knowledge of grammaticality of the language and the knowledge of the appropriateness of the language use. From this point of view, Part II of the Questionnaire consists of measures which assess the Grammatical Competence explicitly. The first three sections– Discrete-Item Test, Cloze Test, and Vocabulary Test– assess the Grammatical Competence. The Sections IV and VI of Part II of the Questionnaire examine the knowledge of appropriateness of the linguistic responses, whereas Section V of the same Part assesses both the Grammatical Competence and the
knowledge of the appropriateness of the linguistic responses. Moreover, it has been shown by different linguists that the MCDCT, i.e. the Multiple Choices Discourse Completion Test has construct and face validity, which are said to be sufficient for the overall validity of the test.

As for the validity of Part III of the Questionnaire, it provides an opportunity for the researcher to collect ‘natural’ and ‘authentic’ responses of the students. It has been accepted as the most reliable and valid way of collecting natural data on a large scale (Houck & Gass, 1996; Hudson, 2001; etc.). In the recent literature dealing with language testing, the Discourse Completion Tests are the most commonly used method for collecting data. As with the MCDCT, the written DCT possesses both the construct validity and the face-validity which helps to call it as a valid test for the assessment of the Communicative Performance. Above all, the structure of the DCT employed for the present study is based on the structure of the written DCT elaborated in literature. Moreover, the researcher is investigating the responses provided by the students to the situations in Part III for the different aspects of the Communicative Competence and a separate list of questions is prepared for the purpose. The prepared questions are not only about the grammaticality of the responses, rather, their acceptability, effectiveness, and appropriateness has been assessed. Such a list of questions further provides construct validity to the Questionnaire.

As for the reliability of the assessment of the responses, for Part II, only one correct option is used and the remaining three distracters are based upon the principles discussed earlier. Therefore, the score of Part II of the Questionnaire is reliable. As for the reliability of the assessment of the responses of Part III, the list of questions and the discussion of the reason why each of these questions are included provides the reliability to the scores. On the basis of these questions, the responses will be coded in the SPSS software, which will provide additional reliability to the scores. Moreover, the limitation of the social identities of the addressee in each of the situation in Part III provides a reliable way to interpret the appropriateness of the responses. In addition, the researcher will include the examples from the elicited data while discussing and elaborating different aspects of the abilities of the students in the Results and Discussion Chapters.
3.2.4 Implementation of the Questionnaire

As pointed out earlier, the Questionnaire is implemented to the students in their respective classrooms. However, there are certain facts related to the event which are essential to be shared. The researcher has observed that generally the students are not ready to respond to the Questionnaire. The researcher did not find it much difficult to get the Questionnaire filled from the students pertaining to English and Sciences departments. However, when he tried to get them filled from the students of other languages and of other faculties, it was really a difficult task. Particularly, the students from the Social Sciences Departments and the Hindi and the Marathi Departments do not want to involve themselves in any activity which is carried out in English. As soon as they are asked to do a particular thing in English, they declined the very idea. In such situations, the researcher needed to see their concerned teachers; and only with the help of them that it was possible for the researcher to collect the required data.

3.3 General Variables Formed for the Assessment of Communicative Performance and their Justifications are as Follows:

3.3.1 Identification of the Speech Act with respect to the Description of the Situation Provided

In Part III of the Questionnaire, on the basis of the description provided in the test, the student is expected to identify the correct Speech Act and accordingly to record the responses. The student has to produce the response which is the most appropriate in the given situation. It, therefore, involves the instinctive assessment of the given situation by the students. The assessment requires the students to comprehend the meaning of the language used for describing the situation. It is also concerned with the ability of the student to read and understand what is given. Unless the student assesses the situation properly he cannot decide the appropriate response. It is, therefore, essential to recognize if the students have identified the Speech Act for two reasons:

i) It helps to assess the students’ competence in reading and understanding the language, and

ii) It also helps to claim that the students have the ability to use the coherent language.
3.3.2 Grammaticality of the Language of the Response

As pointed out in the earlier chapter, Grammatical or Linguistic Competence is an inseparable part of the construct of the Communicative Competence. Accordingly, with the help of the present criterion, the researcher intends to examine the ability of the students to produce grammatical responses. The researcher, thus, assigns equal importance to the Grammatical Competence as to other competencies involved in the construct. However, it is not sufficient to know if the responses are grammatical or ungrammatical, for the researcher is exploring both the abilities and the inabilities of the students. For that matter, it is necessary to know the area(s) in which the students commit grammatical mistakes. In the last chapter of the thesis, the researcher, moreover, intends to propose certain remedies for the identified inabilities of the students. From that point of view, the next dimension that requires to be assessed is the specific areas in which students commit mistakes.

3.3.3 Area(s) of Language Use that Register Grammatical Mistakes

The researcher has classified the following areas in order to analyze the grammatical mistakes committed by the students:

A) Typographical Mistakes:

In this area, the mistakes in the use of correct spellings of words and punctuation marks are considered.

B) Lexical Mistakes:

Among others, the lexical errors result from the use of the incorrect word forms (noun instead of adjective, etc.), in the use of suffixes and prefixes.

C) Grammatical Mistakes:

Errors resulting from the wrong use of preposition, tense, word order, etc. will be considered.

D) Semantic Mistakes:

These are concerned with the errors in regard to the meaning. These errors result particularly from the selection of incorrect words. When the students cannot retrieve the correct and appropriate word, they use a word similar in meaning or a ‘super-ordinate term’ or a related word; and in the process, they commit mistakes. Sometimes, the incorrect selection of a word is due to the consequence of the influence of the L1 of the
students. In addition to these specific categories, to analyze the grammaticality of the responses, the researcher uses different combinations of these categories.

3.3.4 Severity of the Mistake(s)

Identification and classification of the grammatical mistakes is only the first part of the task. Since the objective of the present research is to explore the Communicative Competence and Communicative Performance of the students, it is crucial to know the severity of the mistakes committed by the students. The severity of the mistakes will be assessed on the basis of the comprehensibility of the responses. If a mistake makes the response incomprehensible, it will be regarded as a ‘high severe’ mistake. On the contrary, if a response contains a mistake which does not seriously interfere the comprehension process, it will be regarded as a ‘low severe’ mistake.

3.3.5 Level of Syntactic Complexity of the Response

The present formulation is introduced in order to assess the syntactic complexity of the responses produced by the students. Syntactic complexity will be assessed with reference to the classification of sentences: Simple Sentence, Compound Sentence and Complex Sentence. Simple sentence consisting of only one finite clause is understood as having ‘low level’ complexity. On the other hand, if the response consists of a compound sentence with only two finite clauses, it will be treated as the case of ‘middle level’ of syntactic complexity. In the ‘high level’ complexity, the responses comprising of complex sentences are treated. The response consisting of a non-finite clause will also be treated as involving ‘high level’ syntactic complexity.

The consideration of syntactic complexity is also helpful for assessing the ‘formal’ nature of the language of the response. Generally, it is believed that the formal use of language requires complex sentences rather than simple ones.

3.3.6 Use of Explicit Cohesive Devices in the Response

Discourse Competence is basically concerned with the practical aspects related to two prominent concepts: Cohesion and Coherence. Both of these concepts are used to investigate the relationship among and within the sentences. Cohesion is the lexical and grammatical link, particularly present in the ‘Surface Structure’ of the language, whereas Coherence is a semantic link that is present in the ‘Deep Structure’ of the language. The first criterion used to assess the responses—identification of the
appropriate Speech Act—entails the coherence present in the Deep Structure of the response. In the present criterion, the explicit linguistic links i.e. Cohesion, are considered.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) have given an extensive account of the Cohesive Devices as follows:

**Reference** – Use of pronouns and other linguistic elements to refer to the linguistic unit in the preceding or the following part of the text.

**Conjunctions** – Explicit connectors used to combine two clauses or to connect the linguistic unit with the preceding or following ones.

**Substitution** – Larger linguistic unit substituted by the smaller ones, leading to the Cohesion in the discourse.

**Ellipsis** – Omission of the repeated elements in the earlier clause or earlier sentences.

**Lexical Cohesion** – Unity of the discourse achieved through the repetition of the lexical items in the earlier part of the discourse, replacing simple repetition of the same word with words similar in meaning (synonyms) or words having broader scope of meaning (super-ordinate terms).

All these devices will be identified and investigated in the responses provided by the students.

### 3.3.7 Comprehensibility of the Meaning of the Response

This criterion, undoubtedly, is related to the criteria used to assess grammaticality and complexity of the language of the responses. It is generally believed that if a sentence is grammatical, it is understood by the listener. However, this is not true for all the instances. As linguists have pointed out, a sentence may well be formed in accordance with the rules of grammar, it may not be comprehensible to the listener. Moreover, in the attempt to use more complex language, the speaker might lose the original point that s/he intends to communicate, leading to the confusion on the part of the listener/reader as to the exact meaning of the response. In order to assess the ability of the students for producing comprehensible language, the present variable is formulated. Similarly, it assesses the clarity of the expression employed by the student.

The assumption that the speaker/ writer encodes the message in the language and the listener/ reader decodes it has been challenged in the recent theories, both in
Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. It has been maintained that such an assumption does not recognize the facts:

i) that language is an arbitrary system having no direct connection between the signifier and the signified,
ii) that listener/reader is not a passive agent, and
iii) that the listener/reader might not comprehend whatever has been intended by the speaker/writer

For the earlier linguists, the meaning-making process was one-dimensional. However, in the recent theories of Linguistics, this assumption has been challenged. Instead of looking at meaning as always already present in the language, it is now looked upon as a ‘negotiation activity’, thus attributing the listener an important role in the meaning-making process.

Thus, it is essential here to cognize the negotiation that the student has made in the response, so that the meaning is understood by others. The options, with the help of which, this ability will be rated are– Easy to Comprehend, Difficult to Comprehend, and Not Comprehensible at all.

**3.3.8 Amount of Information Provided in Response**

This formulation is based on the assumption that in order to achieve the Perlocutionary Object of the Speech Act, it is necessary for the speaker/writer to provide sufficient information in the Speech Act, so that the listener/reader can understand his/her intention. For example, in the Speech Act of Apology, it is not sufficient to say ‘Sorry!’ or ‘I’m sorry!’

Rather, the reference should be made to the ‘offence’ for which the Apology is proposed, accompanied by the non-repetition of the act in future. Similarly, in the Speech Act of Request, the speaker is expected to use Supportive Moves like ‘attention getters’, and also the compensation for the imposition involved in the Speech Act, in addition to the request Head Act. Such Supportive Moves or additions are used to ensure that the Speech Act should not ‘misfire’ and its intended effect is brought home. Thus, in the present formulation, the responses will be judged to see if they contain sufficient amount of information for the successful and effective realization of the Speech Act.

Sometimes, it has also been argued that NNSs, in the realization of the Speech Acts, use unnecessary information. Researchers find that L2 learners of English talk too
much by adding a variety of Supportive Moves (e.g., Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1986; House & Kasper, 1987; Rintell & Mitchell, 1989). Edmondson and House (1991) refer to the fact that the L2 learners tend to be more verbose than the target language speakers. Therefore, the responses containing too much of inessential information are referred to as ‘verbose’. The ‘amount of information’ formulation is examined on the variables like– ‘Sufficient Information’, ‘Insufficient Information’, and ‘Verbose’.

3.3.9 Appropriateness and Effectiveness of the Amount of Information Provided in the Responses

The judgment regarding the sufficiency/ insufficiency / verbosity of the responses cannot be made without reference to the interpersonal characteristics of the participants. These interpersonal characteristics of the participants determine their relationship ranging from ‘intimate’, ‘informal’, and ‘formal’. Each of these relationships, in turn, determines the ‘amount of information’ required in a particular Speech Act. For example, the mother is more intimate than the father and requires less amount of information. In the context of the present research, only three variables in the relationships are used– ‘intimate’ for a friend, ‘informal’ for a classmate, and ‘formal’ for a professor. No doubt, there are other variables also; but they are not used in the present study. The appropriateness and the effectiveness of the information, thus, will be judged with respect to the following scale:

Friend: Intimate– requiring less amount of information
Classmate: Informal– requiring moderate amount of information
Professor: Formal– requiring elaborate amount of information

3.3.10 Clarity of the Locutionary Act

Austin (1962) maintains that Speech Act consists of three subsidiary but simultaneous acts– Locutionary, Illocutionary, and Perlocutionary. Unless all these acts are fulfilled, the Speech Act cannot be said to have achieved its effect. The first of these subsidiary acts, the Locutionary Act, is concerned with the communication of the meaning of the Speech Act. Obviously, this formulation also is useful for assessing the comprehensibility of the language of the response. As Coulthard (1977) points out, the mastery of linguistic system is almost always insufficient for the realization of this act. Moreover, as Austin (1962) maintains, the selection of linguistic elements, for the addressee, is governed by his/her effort to convey the intention. Sometimes, the
addresser prefers indirect ways of performing the Speech Acts. In this context, it is essential to investigate if the linguistic choices of the addresser perform the Locutionary Act or not.

3.3.11 Communication of the Illocutionary Force

The second subsidiary act, the Illocutionary Act, is said to be the most important of the three acts, quite often equated in narrower sense with Speech Act. This act is concerned with the communication of the Illocutionary Force—i.e. the intended meaning of the speaker. In the earlier Chapter, the researcher has discussed the distinction between the Semantic Meaning and the Pragmatic Meaning. The Illocutionary Force of the Speech Act is its Pragmatic Meaning. Thus, it is concerned with the question—What does the addresser mean by the linguistic response? With the help of the same linguistic unit, the addresser might mean different things, in different contexts. This is specifically true for the Indirect Speech Act. For instance, the following utterance: There is a bull in that field. This utterance can have different Illocutionary Forces like—giving information, making a request for action, posing a threat, etc.—depending upon the situation. Therefore, the current formulation will assess whether the response of the student communicates the required Illocutionary Force with reference to the context provided in the test item.

3.3.12 Appropriateness of the Variety of the Language used with reference to the P, D and R factors

The communicatively competent user of language is expected to use such a variety of language that is appropriate with respect to the social identities of the participants involved in the interaction. These social identities have been grouped into three variables: Power (P), Distance (D) and Imposition (R). The Power variable refers to the relative power of the addressee (H) over the addresser (S). The second variable refers to the social distance between the addresser and the addressee. Imposition means the demand the Speech Act makes on the future behaviour of the addressee.

The greater the Power of the H over the S, the greater the distance between the H and the S; and the greater the imposition involved in the Speech Act, the greater will be the threat of the Speech Act, requiring the formal use of language and vice versa. That is to say, the use of a particular variety of language results from the variation in the
The student has to conceive the social relations between himself/herself and a friend, a classmate and a Professor. Thus, the Power and the Distance variables are the same across different Speech Acts. However, there is a great variation in the imposition involved in every Speech Act.

At this juncture, we need to be careful while assessing the appropriateness of the variety of the language, as the assessment of all the three variables will be specific to the cultural background of the students. For example, the student’s judgment of the appropriateness of a variety of language will be determined by the Indian, and more particularly, the Maharashtrian socio-cultural background in which the student lives and interacts. Therefore, who among the participants- the friend, the classmate, or the Professor, or the student under consideration- enjoys the greater Power will be dependent upon the student’s socio-cultural perception of his/her relation with the others. The same is the case of the ‘Distance’ variable. Moreover, the assessment of Imposition is also culture-specific. What counts as an ‘offence’, or which ‘request’ imposes greater demands on the addressee are assessed by the students with reference to the Maharashtrian behavioural patterns. For this reason, while assessing the appropriateness of the variety of language, the researcher needs to refer to the Maharashtrian ways of social behaviour. In order to study the variety, the researcher will try to analyze the formal nature of the language, which will be dependent upon the use of the modals. It is generally believed that the use of the modals ‘would’, and ‘could’ ‘may’ make the language more formal than the use of the modals ‘will’, ‘can’ etc. Similarly, the formal nature can be assessed with reference to the complexity of the language and the explicitness of the responses.

3.3.13 Effectiveness of the Selected Register for the Attainment of Perlocutionary Object

In accordance with their assessment of the P, D and R factors, the students use a specific variety of language– colloquial, familiar, informal, formal, technical, etc. With the help of this formulation, the researcher intends to assess the effectiveness of the type of the register-variety that the students deploy in their utterances for the attainment of the Perlocutionary object. Sometimes, a student may use a very formal variety of language in the response meant for a friend. Such inappropriate use of the variety of
language, rather than achieving the intended effect, may bring in the unintended outcomes. For that matter, it is essential to investigate the effectiveness of the variety of language for the attainment of the goal.

3.3.14 Structure of the Speech Act Set

The Speech Act or the Speech Act Set does not generally consist of a single Head Act. Many kinds of Supportive Moves are employed, so that the intended effect is brought home effectively. For example, the following utterance: Hello Mohan. Please, give me your pen. I’ve forgotten mine at home. In this example, ‘Please give me your pen’ is the Head Act of the request. The other elements are Supportive Moves. ‘Hello Mohan’ is a Supportive Move considered as ‘attention getter’ or ‘Alerter’. ‘I’ve forgotten mine at home’ is another Supportive Move, which provides a reason for the request. Thus, the structure of this Speech Act is: Supportive Move + Head Act + Supportive Move. There are variations in the structure of the Speech Act Set employed by the students. Therefore, it is essential to point out the structure of the Speech Act Sets. The following are the commonly used structures:

i) Only Head Act
ii) Supportive Move + Head Act
iii) Head Act + Supportive Move
iv) Supportive Move + Head Act + Supportive Move

Generally, it is believed that the use of the Supportive Moves ensures the attainment of the goals of the Speech Act. However, such use of Supportive Moves is also conditioned by the P, D and R factors.

3.3.15 Nature of the Speech Act

The nature of the Speech Act will be discussed in terms of the linguistic realization of the Speech Act. The following are the four categories of the nature of the Speech Act:

i) Explicit
ii) Direct
iii) Conventionally Indirect
iv) Non-Conventionally Indirect
In the Explicit Speech Act, the addressee makes clear what s/he means by the utterance. For example: I request you to give me a pen. The basic criterion for the identification of the Explicit Speech Act is the explicit ‘performative verb’. The structure of such performative verb is: ‘I VP you that’. The VP of such performatives makes the Illocutionary Force of the Speech Act explicit. In the above example, the VP ‘request’ states explicitly what the addressee means by the utterance. The Direct nature of the Speech Act is: ‘Give me a pen, please.’ Yule (1996: 55-6) classifies Speech Acts into Direct and Indirect Speech Acts. Referring to the types of sentences and the functions for which they are used, he elaborated this distinction. For example, the Declarative Sentence is used for giving information, whereas the Interrogative Sentence is used for asking questions. The Imperatives are used for giving orders or requesting and the Exclamatory Sentences for showing emotions. If the Speech Act is realized by the specific type of a sentence and is employed for the function associated with it, it is Direct Speech Act. If an Interrogative Sentence form is used for the Speech Act of Request, it is Indirect Speech Act, for example: ‘Can you pass the salt, please?’ The Indirect Speech Acts are further divided into the Conventionally Indirect and non-Conventionally Indirect. If an Indirect Speech Act is repeatedly being used for the same function, it is called Conventionally Indirect Speech Act. The above example, ‘Can you pass the salt, please?’ is a Conventionally Indirect Speech Act. However, there are other indirect ways of doing the same thing; for example: ‘I’ve forgotten my pen.’ In this sentence, no explicit request is extended. However, the context of the response makes it count as request. Such utterances are Non-Convention Indirect ways of doing the things. Thus, in the Non-Convention Indirect Speech Acts, the context is extremely important since, in the absence of the specific device to indicate the Illocutionary Force, the context and the shared expectations of the participants will be helpful for determining the Illocutionary Force of the utterance.

Similarly, Blum Kulka et al. (1989) have elaborated the distinction between Direct, Conventional Indirect and Non-Conventional Indirect Request from different points of view. They have elaborated the distinction with reference to the meaning of the responses. The following is the elaboration:

**Direct** – A request was coded as a directive, if its meaning was directly determinable from its linguistic content alone.
Conventionally Indirect – An utterance was described as conventionally indirect, if its meaning was interpreted through its linguistic content in conjunction with contextual clues.

Non-conventionally Indirect – A request was considered non-conventionally indirect, if its illocutionary force was dependent upon contextual inference.

The use of any of these types of Speech Act is again determined by the P, D and R factors. Specifically, in the Fact-threatening acts, the indirectness is the preferred nature of the response. In the light of the discussion, it is essential here to recognize the nature of the Speech Acts the students have used in their responses.

3.3.16 Appropriateness of the Nature of the Speech Act with reference to the P, D and R Factors

As has been pointed out, the selection and the use of the different types of the Speech Act is governed by the P, D and R factors. In the literature, it has been pointed out that the Indirect ways of Speech Acts are more polite than the direct ones. Thus, in the two responses,

Give me your pen, please.
Can you give me your pen, please?

the latter is more polite since it provides an option for the addressee to deny the request, which is not possible in the direct request. As a result, it is essential to explore if the students show variety in the use of the nature of the Speech Acts with respect to the three variables.

3.3.17 Use of the Mitigating Politeness Strategies in the Head Act

Brown and Levinson (1978) and Leech (1983) have pointed out that the human communication process is based on the Principle of Politeness. That is to say, the absence of ‘politeness’ in the language of interaction may cause the breach in the social relationship of the participants. Thus, Politeness is the lubricant of human interaction. As such, the researcher intends to study the use of Politeness Strategies employed by the students in their responses. One of the places where such Politeness Strategies are used is the Head Act and one of such strategies is the mitigating devices: ‘please’, ‘I’m afraid’, ‘possible’, ‘mind’, ‘will you’, etc. The use of such mitigators indicates the regret and unwillingness of the addressor to impose something on the behaviour of the
addressee. Consequently, the use of such mitigators provides the required sense of Politeness to the responses.

However, it is not possible to assess the Politeness only with reference to the mitigating devices used in the Head Act. As Kachru and Smith (2008) point out, the Politeness of a response should be assessed with reference to the total of the response. For example, a response might not contain a mitigating device, yet it may be highly polite. Thus, besides the mitigating devices, there are other markers of Politeness discussed in the Chapter II and accordingly, the total of the response should be judged from the perspective of Politeness. However, we should bear in mind that Politeness can be used as the internal factor in the Speech Act, like the use of the mitigating devices in the Head Act, or can also be externally employed with the help of the use of Supportive Moves. Therefore, in order to investigate the Politeness of the responses, the technique evolved by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) will be used. They have classified the use of Politeness Strategies into Down-graders and Up-graders. Down-graders mean the internal Politeness Strategies employed within the Head Act of the response. Such internal use weakens the Illocutionary Force of the utterance, and consequently minimizes the potential threat present in it. On the contrary, the Up-graders are the Politeness Strategies employed as Supportive Moves. Such strategies do not weaken the Illocutionary Force of the Speech Act.

3.3.18 Degree of Politeness
It has been argued that the degree of Politeness can be assessed on a scale like the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Polite</th>
<th>Polite</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Impolite</th>
<th>Very Impolite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Figure 3.1: Scale of Politeness

Such assessment will be based on the study of the mitigating devices, Supporting Moves, Nature of Speech Act and other devices used to show Politeness. Thus, the responses of the students will be assessed with reference to the above scale.
3.3.19 Appropriateness of the Politeness Strategy with reference to the P, D and R factors

It is expected that students should vary the use of Politeness Strategies according to the P, D, and R variables present in every situation. It is quite possible that a student might use high polite utterance inappropriately, while speaking with his/her friend for a situation involving relatively low imposition. Therefore, it is essential to identify if the use of the Politeness Strategies is appropriate to the P, D and R factors or not.

3.3.20 Contribution of the Supportive Moves to the Effectiveness of the Speech Act

As has been stated earlier, in addition to the Head Act, Supportive Moves are used to provide effectiveness to the Speech Act and to ensure that the desired effect is achieved. Moreover, the Supportive Moves also provide the required information and Politeness to the response. Therefore, it is helpful to know if the Supportive Moves are required at all and how far they are responsible for providing effectiveness to the total of the response in order to achieve the desired goal. On the contrary, if it is found that the Supportive Moves are not required and do not provide effectiveness, the response can be evaluated as ‘verbose’. Moreover, different types of Speech Acts require different kinds of Supportive Moves. For example, in the Speech Act of Request, the Supportive Move designating regret on the part of the addressor is appropriate, whereas such a Supportive Move is not required for the Speech Act of Complimenting.

3.3.21 Use of Communicative Strategies in the Response

As has been rightly pointed out by Hymes (1972), the ideal native speaker-listener who has complete knowledge of the language system and who is able to retrieve the knowledge without difficulty cannot be found. Even among the native speakers of a language, nobody can claim that s/he knows the total language system. Similarly, it is quite possible that while using language, some appropriate words might not be retrieved. Therefore, even among the native speakers of a language, the use of Communicative Strategies is quite rampant. The language users employ such strategies to compensate for the knowledge breakdown and also to provide effectiveness to the response. Such use of Communicative Strategies is even more important for the NNSs, for their knowledge of L2 is essentially limited and they face more difficulties in the
retrieval process. Therefore, it is useful here to explore the Communicative Strategies used by the students under consideration in their responses.

In the responses of the L2 user, such Communicative Strategies are discernible in the monitoring of their responses. The students are seen to correct their responses by erasing a word and replacing it with another or by changing the construction of the response in order to provide effectiveness. Thus, in the responses, the researcher will also look for the corrections, if any, introduced by the students. The generally visible strategies are— the avoidance of a word, the change of a word, the use of the general terms, etc.

Other types of Communicative Strategies specific to the L2 users are derived from their respective L1s. Here, the common strategies like— Code-Switching, Code-Mixing, and Code-Borrowing are observed. Moreover, there are implicit and explicit cases of L1 transfer in the responses. Each of these strategies will be examined from the responses provided by the students.

3.3.22 Achievement of the Desired Goal

In Communicative Language Testing, the goal of using language is emphasized. That is to say, it is essential to assess the potential capability of the utterance to bring home the desired effect. Although a response is grammatical, appropriate, effective and acceptable, but does not achieve its goal, it is of no use. For that matter, the researcher will assess the possibility of the achievement of the goal elaborated in the situation with the help of the responses provided by the students.

3.3.23 Final Assessment of the Communicative Competence

On the basis of the investigation of the responses with all these criteria, the final assessment of the Communicative Competence of the students will be made. The following categories will be used for classification:
Table 3.7: Categories for the Final Assessment of the Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>FINAL ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical and Appropriate</td>
<td>Communicatively Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical and Inappropriate</td>
<td>Grammatically Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungrammatical and Inappropriate</td>
<td>Incompetent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungrammatical and Appropriate</td>
<td>Pragmatically Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response is given or denial to respond due to certain reasons</td>
<td>Resistant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.24 Some Other Important Facts Regarding the Methodology

There are some more facts related to the methodology employed in the present research. The researcher thinks it essential to share:

1. After getting the responses to the Questionnaire, the researcher has encoded the filled Questionnaire as 01 to 150. The coding provides the researcher a convenient way to refer to the specific response in a particular item of the Questionnaire. This is more important in Chapters V and VI where the researcher will quote the actual responses of the students.

2. The researcher has followed APA style-sheet for providing references to the works consulted for the present research.

3. The data collected for the present research is preserved with the researcher. Anyone who is interested may consult the researcher for further reference.