CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.0 INTRODUCTION
6.1 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY
6.2 OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES OF THE PRESENT STUDY
6.3 VARIABLES AND TOOLS FOR THE PRESENT STUDY
6.4 DATA GENERATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT STUDY
6.5 FINDINGS OF THE PRESENT STUDY
6.6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY
6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY
6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY
6.0 INTRODUCTION

Language education occupies a prominent place in the educational system at all levels as acquisition of effective language skills is essential for the total educational process and success. Moreover, language is an integral part of our existence and in a multilingual country like India, the need for a common link language is strongly felt. Further, in view of the technological advancement and globalization, the teaching and learning of English language in an efficient manner has become the need of the hour.

6.1 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Today, in the classrooms, the teachers have to face the problem of mixed ability groups in English which leads to wide range of language efficiency levels. Despite the educational opportunities and efforts taken to cater to the needs of individual differences, academic under-achievement prevails and this leads to problems in the instructional process.

The methodology of teaching English has already moved from structural to functional and communicative uses at higher education levels. But in most Indian schools at the primary and secondary levels, the goals of learning English as a second language are more general in nature with focus mainly on the completion of the syllabus, and therefore communicative use of language is neglected. The learners, at tertiary level, particularly in the professional colleges, are expected to use their linguistic competence for practical purposes. However, the language instruction and practices provided at the school levels for developing the basic skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing-are inadequate and often the learners at higher level encounter difficulties when they have to use language for communicative use in formal situations.
A learner-centered methodology with adequate opportunity for communicative use of English language should be emphasized in the classrooms. Learners should be involved in language tasks to acquire communicative ability. The effectiveness of such a methodology depends largely on the learners and their level of achievement. Depending on the level of achievement, individuals are characterized as high achievers, moderate achievers and low achievers. Most of the earlier studies conducted at different periods and at different levels indicate that achievement in the acquisition of language skills is dependent on a number of variables. Since the development of language skills is closely related to the process of growth, social factors such as socio-economic status, family and educational environment and few personality characteristics play a major role in developing language skills. Pedagogical variables such as learning style, study habits, locus of control, learning approaches and learners’ effectiveness would also contribute to the effectiveness of the learning process. Hence, the present study proposed to identify the socio-pedagogical variables that affect the language skills among the selected first year engineering students and to study their influence on language learning process.

6.2 OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

1. To develop and standardize the tools for assessing language skills (Listening and Reading) of engineering college students.
2. To identify, adopt and standardize the tools for assessing the socio-pedagogical factors of engineering college students.
3. To study the influence of socio-pedagogical factors on language skills of engineering college students.

Considering the objectives of the present study, the following hypotheses were formulated in general.
1. There will be a mean score difference in personality traits and social factors such as socio-economic status, family environment and college environment between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students.

2. There will be a mean score difference in pedagogical factors such as study habits, locus of control, learning styles, learning approaches and learners’ effectiveness between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students.

6.3 VARIABLES AND TOOLS FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

Considering the objectives and hypotheses of the present study, the Socio-pedagogical variables such as Socio-Economic Status, Family Environment, College Environment, Personality Traits, Locus of Control, Study Habits, Learners’ Effectiveness, Learning Approaches and Learning Styles were identified as the independent variables and language skills such as Listening Skills, Reading Skills, Language Aptitude and Verbal Intelligence were identified as the dependent variables for the present study. To measure these variables, the appropriate tools (Vide Appendices) were employed.

6.4 DATA GENERATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Based on the objectives of the study, descriptive sample survey research design was selected for generating the primary data for the study. The present study selected Coimbatore revenue district as the study area and considered UG engineering course as the population. The Coimbatore district has 14 engineering colleges which include one Government College, two aided colleges and eleven unaided self-financing colleges. Among these colleges, one government aided and one self-financing college were selected for the study. The first year undergraduate students of Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE), Computer Science Engineering (CSE) and Information
Technology (IT) of PSG College of Technology and Sri Krishna College of Engineering and Technology were selected as samples for the study. For the present investigation, 30 percent of the students were randomly selected as sample from these courses. Thus, a total of 135 students among which 81 students from Sri Krishna College of Engineering and Technology and 54 students from PSG College of Technology were considered as sample for this study.

The data were collected from the selected engineering students at two phases. At the first phase, the language test batteries, which include language aptitude (spelling and errors) and intelligence, were administered. The receptive skills (listening and reading) of the samples were assessed by administering listening and reading tests through computer terminals using Computer Assisted Language Skills Assessment Package (CALSAP). At the second phase, the data for independent variables were collected by using the selected socio-pedagogical tools. After certain sample attrition and data screening, the sample size was reduced to 100 for the final data analysis.

The cluster analysis was used to group the sample based on differential language skills and the statistical analyses such as analysis of variance, correlation and some diagrammatical representation were also used to find out the significant difference between the groups and to find out the relationship among the variables.

The data collected with the help of tools related to language skills were subjected to cluster analysis to group the samples of the study on the basis of differential language skills. Three distinct groups such as high, moderate and low group based on their relationship of language skills were identified. The high, moderate and low group had 45, 36 and 19 samples respectively. As a second phase, the data related to socio-pedagogical variables of the three groups were subjected to analysis of variance to find out the influence of socio-
pedagogical factors on language skills of the selected engineering students of the study.

6.5 FINDINGS OF THE PRESENT STUDY
The major findings of the present study are given below.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Socio-Economic Status between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It is evident from the study that socio-economic status of the students provides certain distinct advantages which enable them to achieve broadness of experience and language facility. This fact is proved by the mean score values which indicate much difference between the low and moderate groups, and between the low and high groups.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Cohesion (Family environment) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Hence, it is confirmed that cohesion among the members of the family facilitates language development.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Expressiveness (Family Environment) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Thus, it can be concluded that the freedom to express one’s feelings and ideas influences the language skills.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Conflict (Family Environment) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Hence, it can be concluded that feelings of aggressiveness and disagreement in the family affect the development of language skills.
• There is a significant mean score difference in Acceptance and Caring (Family Environment) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. The findings confirm the fact that parental care and cordial relationship among the family members are necessary for developing language skills.

• There is a significant mean score difference in Independence (Family Environment) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. The significant difference in the mean score between the low and high groups indicates that the freedom to decide and choose independently enables the learner to be assertive, and hence improves his language skills.

• There is a significant mean score difference in Active recreational Orientation (Family Environment) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It can be concluded that recreational activities enable the students to enhance their language skills.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Organization (Family Environment) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Hence, it can be concluded that organization factor does not affect the language skills among the engineering students.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Control (Family Environment) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students.

• There is a significant mean score difference in Family Environment (General) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. The findings clearly confirm the fact that family environment factors contribute much to the
development of language skills. It is also proved that the family environment factors of the low and moderate groups do not support them in developing their language skills.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Campus Environment (College Environment) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It can be concluded that campus environment promotes the language skills among the selected engineering students.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Managerial Environment (College Environment) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. The findings confirm that the relationship between the staff and students, students and the management are necessary to facilitate the language skills among the students.

- There is no significant mean score difference in Academic Environment (College Environment) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. The aspects such as curriculum, course content and academic standard do not affect the language skills among the selected engineering students.

- There is no significant mean score difference in Peer Group Environment (College Environment) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It can be inferred from the findings that peer group environment factors do not affect the language skills among the selected engineering students.

- There is no significant mean score difference in Faculty Environment (College Environment) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. The teaching methodology, teachers' treatment of students and teaching facilities do not cause much influence on the language skills.
• There is a significant mean score difference in College Environment (General) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. The findings prove that the institutional factors influence the language skills of the high group to a greater extent, whereas it does not support low and moderate groups.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Self-confidence (Personality Traits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Persistence (Personality Traits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Hence, it is proved that being persistence does not cause much influence on the language skills.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Co-operativeness (Personality Traits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It can be concluded that co-operativeness does not affect the language skills among the selected engineering students.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Emotional Stability (Personality Traits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Hence, it is confirmed that emotional stability does not affect the language skills.

• There is a significant mean score difference in Emotional Control (Personality Traits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. The influence of emotional control on language skills is evident from the findings.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Sense of Responsibility (Personality Traits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students.
• There is a significant mean score difference in Courtesy (Personality Traits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It can be concluded that being courteous influences the language skills.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Sociability (Personality Traits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Hence, it is concluded that sociability factor does not affect the language skills.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Leadership (Personality Traits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Thus, it is confirmed that leadership qualities do not affect the language skills among the selected engineering students.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Initiative (Personality Traits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students.

• There is a significant mean score difference in Attitude towards life (Personality Traits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. The difference between the low and high groups and between the moderate and high groups is much, whereas the difference is less between the low and moderate groups. The findings prove the fact that attitude towards life enhances the language skills.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Attitude towards self (Personality Traits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Thus, it is concluded that attitude towards self does not affect the language skills among the selected engineering students.
• There is no significant mean score difference in Home Environment (Study Habits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It can be presumed from the findings that the home environment factors and planning of work may not cause much influence on the language skills of the adult learners.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Reading and Note taking (Study Habits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It can be concluded from the findings that reading and note taking habit does not cause significant influence on language skills.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Planning of Subjects (Study Habits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Hence, it is concluded that planning of subjects does not affect the language skills among the selected students.

• There is a significant mean score difference in Habits of Concentration (Study Habits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. The findings of the study prove that lack of habits of concentration could be one of the reasons for low performance in the area of language skills.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Preparation for Examination (Study Habits) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It is, thus, concluded that habits such as referring to previous question papers and learning important sections may not affect the language skills.

• There is no significant mean score difference in General Habits and Attitudes (Study Habits) between the groups who possess differential
language skills among the selected engineering students. It is, thus,
concluded that general study habits and attitudes do not affect the
language skills among the selected students.

- There is a significant mean score difference in College Environment
  (Study Habits) between the groups who possess differential language
  skills among the selected engineering students. It is, therefore, concluded
  that classroom and extra curricular activities help the learners improve
  their language skills.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Study Habits (General)
  between the groups who possess differential language skills among the
  selected engineering students. It is evident that the study habits have
  significant influence on the language skills among the students of high
  group, whereas such factors do not influence the language skills of the
  students of low and moderate groups.

- There is no significant mean score difference in Locus of Control
  between the groups who possess differential language skills among the
  selected engineering students. Hence, it is concluded that locus of
  control does not affect the language skills among the selected
  engineering students.

- There is no significant mean score difference in Independent Learning
  Style (Learning Style) between the groups who possess differential
  language skills among the selected engineering students. Hence, it is
  concluded that independent thinking and learning does not affect the
  language skills among the selected students.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Avoidant (Learning Style)
  between the groups who possess differential language skills among the
  selected engineering students. The mean score values between the low
  and high groups, and between the moderate and high groups clearly
  indicate the behavior of the learners of low and moderate groups. Hence,
the findings prove the fact that lack of interest and participation in classroom learning may hamper language skills.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Collaborative (Learning Style) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Collaborative learning style emphasizes social interaction and content learning which enhance the language skills. The vast difference in mean scores seen between the low and high groups and between the moderate and high groups indicates that collaborative learning style influences language skills.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Dependent Learning Style (Learning Style) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It is concluded that dependent learning style affects the language skills.

- There is no significant mean score difference in Competitive Learning Style (Learning Style) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. From the findings, it is concluded that competitive learning style does not influence the language skills.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Participative Learning Style (Learning Style) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. The findings prove the fact that participative learning style promotes language ability.

- There is no significant mean score difference in Learning Style (General) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Though the individual dimension indicates some influence on the language skills, in general learning style, does not have much impact on the acquisition of language skills.
• There is no significant mean score difference in Learning for Achievement (Learning Approaches) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It is concluded from the findings that learning for achievement does not influence the language skills among the selected students.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Learning for Reproduction (Learning Approaches) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It is, thus, concluded that learning for reproduction does not cause much influence on the language skills among the selected students.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Meaningful Learning (Learning Approaches) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Meaningful learning approach also does not affect the language skills.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Learning Approaches (General) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It is concluded that approaches to learning do not affect the language skills among the selected students.

• There is a significant mean score difference in Motivation (Learners’ Effectiveness) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. The fact that motivation to learn is essential in the area of language skills is proved by the significant difference in the mean scores between the low and high groups.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Interest in learning (Learners’ Effectiveness) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Thus, it can be
concluded that interest factor does not affect the language skills among the selected students.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Attitude towards learning (Learners’ Effectiveness) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Attitude towards learning influences the learning behavior. Hence, it is concluded that attitude towards learning influences the language skills among the selected students.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Learning Goals defined (Learners’ Effectiveness) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Students who learn with definite leaning goals perform better than the others. This fact is clearly proved by the significant difference between the low and high groups and between the moderate and high groups.

- There is no significant mean score difference in Attention (Learners’ Effectiveness) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It is concluded from the findings that attention factor does not influence the language skills among the selected engineering students.

- There is a significant mean score difference in Discipline (Learners’ Effectiveness) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It is, thus, concluded that discipline affects the language skills among the selected students.

- There is no significant mean score difference in Perseverance (Learners’ Effectiveness) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It is, therefore, confirmed that perseverance does not affect the language skills among the selected students.
• There is a significant mean score difference in Memory (Learners' Effectiveness) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. It is, therefore, concluded that memory enhances the language skills among the selected students.

• There is no significant mean score difference in Learners' Effectiveness (General) between the groups who possess differential language skills among the selected engineering students. Though some of the sub-dimensions reveal significant difference between the groups, learners' effectiveness inventory in general does not affect the language skills to a greater extent.

6.6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The findings of the present study clearly indicate that some of the socio-pedagogical factors do affect language skills of the students. Socio-economic status, family environment, college environment and a few personality traits are identified as significant social factors affecting the language skills among the selected engineering students.

The findings related to the socio-economic status of the samples of the present study confirm the fact that economic status greatly influences the students' performance in terms of language skills. Socio-economic factors are closely related to language abilities as economic independence leads to equality of family members, and therefore provides better environment. Parents' level of education and occupational status influence students' commitment to learning. Opportunities for additional learning and verbal interactions among family members motivate the children to develop their language skills. The findings of the present study are in support of the earlier studies of Barton (1962), Henry (1963), Coleman (1966), Worley and Story (1967), Adler (1973), Ajech (1991), Eggen (2002) and Ward (2002).
The findings pertaining to family environmental factors reveal their significant influence on the language skills among the selected engineering students. The fact that the climate of the home in general influences learners' performance in language skills is indicated by the significant difference in mean scores between the low and moderate groups, and between the low and high groups. Family environmental factors such as cohesion, conflict, expressiveness, acceptance and caring, independence and active recreational orientation are found to influence the language skills among the selected groups. The fact that parental care, encouragement, attitude towards children and education and availability of stimulating reading materials facilitate to improve the language abilities of the students of the present study has been confirmed. Similar observations were found in the earlier studies conducted by Robinson (1946), Bloom (1965), McClosky (1967), Deutsch (1967), Smith (1974), Coleman and Rainwater (1978) and Gilbert and Kahl (1987).

The findings of the present study in relation to the college environmental factors have proved the fact that the institutional factors play a vital role in developing the social learning outside home. Some of these factors are proved as significant determinants of success in basic language skills. The influence of campus and managerial environment factors on the language skills among the selected engineering students is evident from the findings which are supported by the earlier studies (Robinson, 1946; Himmelweit and Swift, 1969; Hayon, 1987; Lloyd and Blandford, 1991 and Yadav, 2002). The present study, however, does not reveal much significant influence of academic environment, peer group environment and faculty environment on the language skills among the selected groups. The reason for such insignificance may be because the study was conducted among the first year engineering students who probably might not have much exposure to such aspects. Though the findings of these dimensions do not indicate their significant influence on the language skills, the
college environmental factors, in general, affect the language skills among the selected groups.

The findings related to some of the personality traits do not reveal much influence on the language skills among the selected engineering students. Traits such as emotional control, attitude towards life and courtesy indicate their significant influence on the language skills. This fact supports the earlier studies by Gates (1941), Robinson (1946), Siegel (1954), Pimsleur et. al. (1964) and Burstall (1975). The findings related to other personality traits such as self-confidence, persistence, co-operativeness, emotional stability and sense of responsibility do not indicate any influence on the acquisition of language skills. The reason may be the statements included in the personality traits scale were of more general traits, and therefore failed to collect the data related to language skills. Moreover, the samples for the study are from homogeneous groups, and hence, not much difference is observed in personality variables due to differential language skills among the students.

The pedagogical variables, considered for the present study, include study habits, locus of control, learning style, learning approaches and learners’ effectiveness. Among these variables, the sub-dimensions of study habits, habits of concentration and college environment reveal their significant influence on the language skills. Though the other factors do not reveal any significant influence, the findings related to the sub dimensions of study habits, in general, indicate that the study habits greatly influence the language skills among the students of high group, while such factors do not affect the language skills among the students of low and moderate groups.

The findings related to locus of control do not reveal any significant influence on the language skills among the selected groups. The findings of the present study regarding this factor differ from the earlier findings (Crandall, 1965; McCloskey, 1967 and Grossman, 1995).
The findings of the sub-dimensions of learning styles such as avoidant learning style, collaborative learning style, dependent learning style and participative learning style reveal their significant influence on the language skills among the selected groups. The findings, therefore, support the earlier studies by Asher, 1986; Gersten, 1987; Johnson and Johnson, 1989 and Grossman and Grossman, 1994. However, the learning styles in general, do not indicate much influence on the language skills among the selected groups. This is because the samples are from the first year engineering course who would not have been exposed to learner-centered teaching methodology. Identifying a learning style preferred by an individual needs more exposure to different learning methods at higher levels and normally in Indian schools, children are exposed to teacher-centered classroom activities.

The findings pertaining to the approaches to learning such as learning for achievement, reproduction and meaning also do not show any significant influence on the language skills among the selected groups.

A few factors included in the learners' effectiveness inventory indicate their significant influence on the language skills among the selected groups. In the present study, factors such as motivation to learn, attitude to learning, learning goals, discipline and memory are identified as significant factors affecting the language skills. These findings support the findings of earlier studies (Krashen, 1981; Burstall, 1955; Khanna, et. al., 1990 and Sreenivasa Rao, 1994).

Based on the discussions and conclusions of the present study, it can be summarized that social factors such as socio-economic status, family environment, college environment and a few personality traits affect the language skills among the selected engineering students. It can also be concluded that a few dimensions of the pedagogical factors have their influence on the language skills among the selected engineering students.
6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Limitations in a research study are inevitable. In the present study, the investigator has come across a few limitations. At the time of sample selection, the students of the engineering colleges with the modern lab facilities had to be selected, as the samples had to do a computer based test for the assessment of reading and listening skills. The students who have chosen such colleges mostly belong to homogeneous groups and hence the investigator was unable to select a heterogeneous group. While administering the language skills assessment packages using the terminals, the test could not be conducted simultaneously to the students of all the three disciplines as their free slots in the regular schedule did not coincide with the free slots in the lab. Despite the instructions given to the students, interactions would have occurred among the students. However, the answers and scores were not revealed to the students till the whole testing procedure was completed. Moreover, difficulties were also experienced in subjecting the selected samples for such a study consequent to their heavy academic schedule. In spite of our concerted effort, the test could not be administered to a large sample because of technical difficulties experienced during the study. The present study assessed only the receptive skills (listening and reading) of the samples. Assessment of writing and speaking skills was not considered as these two areas require subjective evaluation and may also be a time consuming process. The study was conducted among the students of the three branches (ECE, CSE and IT) and mostly the students of these branches possess the same stature and hence not much difference was observed in the personality variables. Since the study was conducted among the first year engineering students, the influence of pedagogical variables was not apparent, as in schools these students had been exposed to a teaching methodology which is more oriented towards teacher-centered than learner-centered.
6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

In the field of English language teaching, not many research studies have been conducted to identify the factors that affect the language skills. The findings of the present study reveal the immense possibilities for such studies. Since some of the factors have been proved as significant factors affecting the language skills among the selected engineering students, similar studies can be extended to a number of engineering colleges, both in urban and rural areas. The sample size can also be increased by conducting the test to the students of all disciplines. Identifying the learner profile by studying the influence of independent variables on the dependent variables would enable the curriculum planners to frame an appropriate curriculum and design an effective developmental program with suitable instructional strategies.