Chapter I

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction:

The research aims at developing communication skills at the tertiary level using certain strategies and apt activities related to all the four communication skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW). There is a high body to research reported about teaching learning process to impart language skills in traditional classroom. However, there is a little body of research reported about teaching and learning process at instructional settings, multimedia and computers to teach communicative skills to students.

This research study, both theoretically and practically, tries to find out the problems faced by the Indian students in developing the skills in English language. Problems are enormous for tertiary learners. They may continue even after a certain level of proficiency in English. The problems include the understanding of the four skills in the way to speaking English vocabulary, the basic grammar and so on. Still the students have problems in selecting the correct tense, adverbs, and verbs and with nouns which result in error analysis. With all these problems both in language and skills in English, the researcher has have discovered a considerable amount of practical, situational problems which slow down the learning of English language. Due to lack of exposure to English both in the classroom and in the living atmosphere; lack of understanding’ lack of opportunities to drill and practice’ and ‘anxiety, nervousness and fear cause the students not to acquire mastery in English
language. These are the vital factors that block the students not to achieve mastery in developing of the four skills in English. Complicatedness might be measured in terms of the amount of effort, above what is considered normal, necessary to arrive at the completion of a given task.

Generally, students consider that the greatest fault is committing mistakes in English. Other reasons which slow down the learning of communication skills and effective speaking is due to cultural behavior, fear of self-exposure, and nervousness. Every learner of the English language is expected to develop skills and aptitude. It is the means to develop oneself both efficiently and within society. Skills and training add to efficiency and profits.

1.2. General Objectives:

To observe and to introduce the necessary procedures to improve the communicative competence of the students belonging to the first year English Literature students of 2007 batch at Devanga Arts College, Aruppukottai to enrich and improve communication skills while learning English under part III.

1.3. Specific Objective:

To explore issues related to teach communication skills to 2007 batch first year English Literature students of Devanga Arts College, Aruppukottai.

1.3.1. Geographical Position and other Details about Aruppukottai:

Aruppukottai is a town and a municipality in Viruthunagar district in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. It is in the middle of Madurai-Tuticorin National Highways
NH-45B. SRI. RAMANA MAHARISHI (a great Hindu saint who founded Sri Ramana Maharishi Mutt at Thiruvannamalai, Tamilnadu) was born in Tiruchuli some 12 KMs away from Aruppukottai town. The name is evolved from 'Arumbu Kottai’ which means Fort of Jasmines. The small villages and towns surrounding Aruppukottai are famous for production of Jasmine flowers. It is also called as United Streets of Aruppukottai (USA). The villages around Aruppukottai are Panthal Gudi, Pudur and Nagalapuram in the south, Palavanatham, Mettukundu, and Kullur Sandhai in the west, Palayampatti, Kattangudi, Kovilangulam, Kalkurichi, Mallanginar and Kariapatti in the north and Ramalinga Nagar, Kalloorani, Thiruchuli, Muthuramalingapuram, Neeravi and Aladipatti in the east. These are small villages with below 1000 in population. Thiruchuli and Kariapatti are taluk head quarters with no colleges in them. In every year S.S.L.C. and +2 public examinations, Aruppukottai Educational District has been occupying the first position in overall pass percentage for the past many years in the whole of Tamilnadu.

1.3.2. Population of Aruppukottai as on 2001:

As of 2001 India census, Aruppukottai had a population of 83,999. Males constitute 50% of the population and females 50%. Aruppukottai has an average literacy rate of 79%, higher than the national average of 59.5%; with 54% of the males and 46% of females literate. (http://www.aruppukottai Wikipedia.com)
1.3. 3. Aruppukottai and Multi Profession among People:

Aruppukottai acts mainly as an Educational and Commercial hub for the surrounding villages. It is noted for its cotton industries mainly spinning mills. Rice mills and limestone industries, hand loom, power loom, printing press, and some small scale industries such as school note book and daily calendar manufacturing. Hand loom, power loom is the main job in Aruppukottai area. Saliyars, Mudaliyars and Chettiar (Devangars) have weaving as the main work. Major employers are spinning mills, weaving sectors (handloom and power loom), rice mills, private transport and government sector apart from agriculture. Weaving industry in Aruppukottai serves mainly the Tamil Nadu Government's Free Dhoti and Saree Campaign. Agriculture is also a main concern in town areas and surrounding village areas. Thus Aruppukottai has a very good feeding of first generation students from all walks of life to schools, high schools, higher secondary schools, polytechnics, ITIs, an engineering college (Sri Sowdambiga Engineering College) and two arts and science colleges namely Devanga Arts College and S.B.K. Arts College.

1.3.4. Educational Institutions at Aruppukottai:

Aruppukottai town has 8 higher secondary schools and they are 1) Devangar Higher Secondary School (boys), 2) Devangar Girls Higher Secondary School, 3) Senghunthar Higher Secondary School, Vellaikottai (Co-education), 4) SBK Higher Secondary School (boys), 5) SBK Girls Higher Secondary School, 6) CSI Girls Higher Secondary School, 7) Saliar Mahajana Higher Secondary School (Co-education), 8) Al-Ameen Muslim Higher Secondary School (Co-education). In addition to these schools there are higher secondary schools in the villages around
Aruppukottai. The following villages do have one higher secondary school each. They are Panthal Gudi, Pudur, Nagalapuram, Palavanatham, Kullur Sandhai, Kalkurichi, Kariapatti, Ramalinga Nagar, Kalloorani, Thiruchuli, Muthuramalingapuram, and Neeravi. Every year from these schools a minimum of 2300 students come out completing +2 examinations successfully enabling themselves to join in the two arts colleges, one engineering college and some other professional colleges which are in the near reach of Aruppukottai.

1.4. Thrust Institution for Research:

Devanga Arts College where the teacher/researcher has been working for the past 26 years receives 1/4 of the strength of passing +2 students as said above. The college was instituted in 1970 by the steps taken by "Aruppukottai Town Devangar Commercial Association" (the teacher-researcher is a member in this Association), Aruppukottai Town Devangar Moondru Mirasu Uravinmurai and Devangars of Aruppukottai town and surroundings areas. B.A., English Literature was started in the academic year 1979-’80. The college had an overall total of 293 first year students in 2007 in various courses under both regular and self financing courses, such as B.A/ B.Sc/ B.com, B.Com (CA) and B.B.A. The students admitted in the academic year 2007-’08 in the first year English were 50 in number (36 Female students and 14 male students). Among the select 50 students 12 students came from Aruppukottai town and the remaining 38 students came from the surrounding villages as mentioned earlier in this part. The students joining in this college were all almost first generation students coming from families among villagers, daily wages earning people or the workers in mills and hand loom and power loom factories.
Thus the teacher/researcher’s study has a thrust in developing the skills required to communicate in good English. The English teachers in the higher secondary schools particularly want most of their students should pass in English of +2 examinations. So they have been adhering to the procedure of asking their students to study and memorize the essays and paragraphs being either dictated or written on the blackboards in the class rooms. It has strong evidence that the students joining in colleges after completing their +2 have no strong foundation in English. They do not know how to speak or what to write when they come to join in colleges. The select group of 50 students taken for research study is not an exception as all the students have to begin from the start to pursue their English communication skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing.

1.4.1. Datum about Research:

The teacher-researcher planned to spend a minimum of 360 hours (VI Semesters) with the select group of 50 students. He scheduled the time as related to the main time table of the Department of English. He decided to conduct classes on all working days possibly between 4.15pm and 5.15 pm. It will give him a minimum of 250 hours to be with his select group and he planned to teach the remaining of 110 hours from his regular timetable allotted to him by the department. He has been teaching them the following subjects Social History of England and a novel in the first year, English for Competitive Examinations, Phonetics and Spoken English and a novel in the second year and a separate paper 'English for Employability, and he is the course teacher for a minimum of one subject in first, second and third year. He has been allotted one hour each to teach first, second and third year subjects thus
enabling the teacher/researcher to spend the needed 110 hours in the regular teaching hours.

1.5. Communication Skills:

Communication skills are the abilities in the areas of language understanding, communicating expressively and practical language skills. Students focus more on practical knowledge rather on theoretical concepts during their course. Transfer of knowledge with their teachers, peers and others related people is crux in written and spoken English in applying the theoretical knowledge during and after their professional course in today’s globalized environment.

1.5.1. Need of Communication Skills:

English being the internationally accepted language, communication skills in English are essential for every citizen in the global family. Particularly students need the skills as they need to use them during their course work; participating in group activities like seminars, workshops, symposiums and project works; facing interviews in campus placement drives by reputed national and multinational companies. They need to live up to the expectations of their recruiters by excelling in like group discussions and other information exchange activities like HR and technical rounds. Against this backdrop, communication skills have become primary, relegating the skills to background for students. The students with poor standards of communication skills are unable to get a lucrative job after the course and are classified as ‘unemployable’ by the recruiters.
To address this pathetic situation, efforts need to be taken by everyone in the educational system. Students need to change their attitude towards acquiring language skills and endeavour to master the abilities. Teachers should work and innovate together to impart communication skills during the college education. Institutions must focus on improving students’ professional competency, self-confidence, managerial efficiency and entrepreneurial development instead of focusing only on academic knowledge.

1.6. Communication Skills - Language Skills and Communicative Competence:

The complete communicative process is the hierarchical arrangement of various components of communication that are illustrated as follows:

i. Intended message – abstract ideas and feelings of speaker who wishes to communicate.

ii. Encoder – the person who is intended messages in the form of words and gestures.

iii. Signals – the encoded message transmitted in the form of the mechanical impulse.

iv. Decoder – the person who receives communication signals into meaning and ideas.

v. The received message – the result of decoding communication signals.

Language skills are fundamental in the acquisition of communicative competence. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are language skills; grammar and vocabulary are sub-skills. Listening and reading are used as the channels of receiving information and are named as receptive skills. Speaking and writing are used as channels of sending information and are named as productive skills. All
these four skills and two sub-skills of language are the basis for communication and form the base for the language proficiency. In addition, the verbal exposition will encompass the non-verbal behaviour that has cultural compatibility.

1.7. Role of Environment in Acquiring Communication Skills:

Conventional methods of teaching and learning are not helping in developing communication skills at expected levels. A teacher is unable to pay personal attention to each student consistently to guide them in improving their communication skills in a class with forty to sixty students and sessions lasting from forty to sixty minutes duration. The better way out is exposing the students to English using culture and environment in appropriate activities. Quality is to be improved at three areas of instruction: objectives or goals of learning, methods and pace. The conventional system needs enhancement with an infrastructure to inherit sufficient skills in the surroundings contributing to language learning.

1.8. Educational Technology:

Education is the act or process of imparting or acquiring particular knowledge or skills for a profession. Technology is the use of tools, machines, materials, techniques, and sources of power to make work easier and more productive. Educational Technology is a creative blend of idea and product technologies with subject-matter content in order to engender and improve teaching and learning processes.

Educational Technology is devoted to techniques to make learning more efficient based on pedagogical theories. Theory, practice, processes and resources
are the fundamental facets of Educational Technology. Theory consists of principles of propositions that serve as the body of knowledge. Practice is the application of the knowledge to solve problems. Practice can also contribute to the knowledge base through information gained from experience. Resources are source of support for learning, including support systems and instructional materials and environments. Thus, the purpose of educational technology is to influence and improve teaching learning process.

1.9. The New Method of English Teaching:

Teachers are trying the maximum to improve the teaching of English in India. So far English has been taught through the traditional grammar-translation method. They give careful explanation of word meaning and usage of the words. Then drilling and mechanical exercises follow. But in the last few years, a shift toward communicative approaches of English language has been introduced and the instructional method is changed.

Tertiary students develop their own skills. The method of education given to the tertiary level students is not a satisfactory one. Even after having had a course in English the tertiary student remains an ignorant to the language.

1.10. Expectation from Tertiary Students:

The students of tertiary level should be perfect in all the four skills. However it is noted that the tertiary level students do not have reasonable communication skills. So it becomes an imperative to say that every tertiary student should have the aptitude to express fluently in English.
1.11. Formal and Informal ways of learning:

Learning a language takes place when the chief environment conditions change the learning behaviour of the students related to language skills. It is dealt in particular with the idea of “fluency” or common aptitude in the acquirement of language skills. It is the desired goal of foreign second language learning. It is governed by certain conditions related to language skills and students’ interaction with individuals using language as a tool of communication. Special attention is given to cultural assumptions and how they affect the learners and users of English language. This may not be a problem for the native speakers and is only a problem with those of second language users of English.

1.12. Role of English Teachers:

At all levels, the teachers require the aptitude to understand a subject well enough to communicate its spirit to a new generation of students. The purpose is to set up a sound information base. It enables students to construct novel ideas which will be exposed fruitfully to different life experiences. The passing of knowledge from generation to generation allows students grow into valuable members of humanity. The teachers are also expected to be aware of the factors like a socio-educational perspective, the sociological circumstances and conditions of students, the role of education in India, and the constraints in the Indian education system and in the resulting observation of the need of English skills. He must also be aware of styles, methods and approaches.
English teachers are expected to interpret information, good decision, knowledge and intelligence into a language in which a student can recognize and understand the meaning of its utterance. The teachers should make the students to be familiar with English.

Communication skills are the foundation for any person to pursue higher education in India. Training and learning in elementary schools and higher secondary schools should be made available in English itself. Then only the students can get opportunities to obtain higher education and training.

1.13. Problems faced by Indian Students in English:

Teachers of a foreign language should try to and teach and make students produce error-free sentences. It can be possible by engaging the students in two ways: engaging (opening of a verbal exchange) and disengaging (finishing of a verbal exchange). It is also possible by making them engage to certain concepts like: requesting positively, responding and negatively responding (to an offer or invitation). These occasions for verbal communication are burdened with complicatedness. The reason for this problem is because of the different communicative strategies followed by speakers of the English language.

1.14. Communicative Strategies and Problems:

The ‘communicative approach’ to language learning is not fully or widely practised in India. There are fewer amounts of communicative strategies. So there arise lot problems in communication. The difference in the language structure may confuse the speaker of the English language due to mother tongue interference as in
the case the Tamil word ‘padichacha’, has to be uttered in English as ‘Have you finished your study?’. Instead of using one word the Tamil students have to use five words to convey an idea in English which they feel it difficult to find out the correct vocabulary or they may feel uninterested in speaking English. The problem is not only related to linguistic interference but also to communicative interference.

1.15. Problems Faced during Communication:

Following are the problems faced by the students of English in India.

1. Engaging: Students are much hesitant to begin a communication in English with others. They never are the beginners of speech. They will expect others to start speaking. It is due to the lack of linguistic competence.

2. Disengaging: Students find nervousness in disengaging the listener. It is not intentional but sheer ignorance pushes the Indian students behave like this.

3. Requesting: It is common among students having an idea that telling merely the word ‘please’ will finish all their expectations. They never indulge in getting a reasonable answer but they will say, please’ and expect an answer from the others. In their mother tongue, it is very easy to make a request but the students feel disgusted to request in English.

3. Acceding: Students find it difficult due to confusion to accede. They never think that they have something more to their saying. They have to learn to say “Thank you for your company and nice talk’, ‘See you and I will always remember this meeting’ and ‘Bye, I will try to contact at the earliest’ or ‘Bye , I will call you often’.
4. Accepting: Everyone has to express corresponding enthusiasm or happiness when someone offers a help or a prize. One has to say “Thank you very much for your invitation”, ‘Thanks for your kindesses and so on. But students fail to develop a culture in which use of such long phrases or sentences are totally absent.

5. Negative Responses: The native speakers never like to receive negative responses face to face. They will never become emotionally upset in such times. But it is a different case against Indian students who can easily become emotional and upset at times of negative responses. Students use mother tongue discourse strategies when using a second or foreign language (they do not carry over entirely).

It can therefore be speculated that:

- Cultural ignorance makes the students remain awe stricken.
- Students are living in a totally different atmosphere.
- Students do not have chances to meet the native speakers
- Students are devoid of practical conversation with the native speakers.

It is the ‘implicit cultural knowledge’ which is used in the situation. It is the duty of the teachers to make the tertiary students get aware of the real atmosphere, circumstances, surroundings and native like atmosphere while making them learn English. The usual set back in teaching English as English can be listed below:

- Is English complicated one?
- Do our students really find English more difficult to learn as a foreign language?
- What measures are to be taken by the investigators or teachers to make the learning of English so easy?
It is truly felt that any problem related to language have learning at the tertiary level is a comparative and a relative concept. It is due to the fact that languages presuppose communication in contrast to the usual view that communication presupposes languages. Further communicative situation is multifaceted in India, having many official languages and different official language for each state and all these factors transform indirectly the language learning situation in India and its various states from Kashmir to Cape Komerin into a much complex one.

English, undoubtedly, has deep structures, rules, grammars and so on with which the Indian students are totally upset to learn all of them. As a school subject and, at some times, an illusory language, the complexity for the Indian students in learning it is doubled. In spite of having skilled (partially or completely) teachers in English, newly established Language laboratories and many reputed institutions offering education in English, English skills are yet to be developed.

1.16. Position of English Learning in India:

English is considered as a language to be understood from the lessons, lectures and from the books and it is never treated as a system to be enthusiastically used by everyone. Even now, English is not given importance in higher institutions and it is not given the real position of a means of communication.

Most of our students commit mistakes in the agreement of verbs with the subject. They will say unknowingly ‘Every one of us are here’, ‘Each and every student have attended the seminar’, and ‘Each boy and each girl are given free note books’. They assume plural verbs are to be used whenever they come across ‘us’ and
‘and’ in the beginning part of the sentence. English has some problem not only for the Indian students but for all the students of tertiary level in various countries. The native speakers also find some features of English naturally difficult to learn. English pronunciation is particularly more difficult for the speakers living in other countries including the native speakers. For a child any language is very easy to learn as it is a habit developing but for the grown up students at the tertiary level will certainly find it in the opposite manner.

1.17. Developing English Fluency:

Fluency in English language is the search thing of everyone in this modern globalised world as it would give recognition and fetch an individual a very consummate profession and bring prestige to an individual. Acquiring fluency is not an easy task as it requires a lot of hard work with understanding capacity. The reasons for this may be listed as below:

- Students can have no chances of reading newspapers published in English.
- Students never watch news channels available in English in which news is telecast all 24 hours.
- Students never speak in English to the foreigners while they visit their countries and never volunteer them to guide in English so that they could get a chance to speak with the active speakers.
- Students never go to English films where there is a lot of conversation to develop their fluency by watching movie and listening to the dialogue.
- Students never get the English novels published in English and they never read them to increase their vocabulary.
- In most of the higher institutions all the subjects are now taught in Tamil (Mother tongue) only. This is also a minus point.
The major cause in the students’ greater non fluency level in English in India is that the curriculum of the education they have. The student studying in a tertiary institution studies English for the first two years of study in the degree level. The time allotted for English in these four semesters is one period for one day only. The student in his study has the possibility of remaining in the English classes just for 240 days excluding the examination, admission and preparatory works.

In the allotted periods of 240 days, the teacher is conscious only of completing his allotted portions. In this way, the students have to sit in the classes just an audience since the chance of learning speaking and reading skills are forbidden in the classroom. Thus, the students are denied knowing the four skills for which the modern world is giving utmost importance. They do not realize the truth that today’s scenario has totally changed and the foremost expectation by the employers from every student coming out of higher institutions is efficiency in communicative skills with good computer knowledge.

1.18. The Teaching – Learning Process:

Teaching learning listening skill, speaking skill in general and pronunciation in particular are emphasized in audio tape-based language laboratory. In real life listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are interdependent and integrated but in the laboratory, they are taught independently through particularly designed activities. Role and function of the teacher in audio tape-based language laboratory has changed rapidly in perspectives and methods in teaching English as second language. Fundamental issues of concern in preparing and using material in the laboratory are stated as follows:
Improving the abilities in focused and extensive listening

Attention on providing different levels of material for different phases of learning.

Focus on the content that conveys meaning, even in primary stages.

Emphasis on genuine language and interesting communication

Stressing on problem-solving and active manipulation of information

Verification of comprehension

Trying on non-threatening learning procedures so as to ensure conducive environment for language learning

The study initiated on methods and materials of language laboratory focuses on the conditions necessary for real comprehension to crop up and for the skills to be acquired in the second language class.

1.19. Teaching Listening Skill:

Listening skill is an essential element in improving the language proficiency. Listening is attending to an interpreting oral language and is necessary to improve speaking skill. The student listens to oral speech in English, then separates into segments the utterances she hears, groups them into words, phrases and sentences to understand the meaning. The following modes of listening are included in the training using audio tape-based language laboratory:

- Interactive one-way communication is listening to a message and doing an activity consequently. It is equally widespread in communicative situations in day-to-day life.
- Non-interactive communication is listening and retaining the message to use it later or just for entertainment. Listening to radio, concerts, lectures, public performances, watching TV programmes etc.
Self-talk is recapitulating the earlier versions of listening by which internal thinking and reasoning is carried out.

In the laboratory, students listen during activities for two purposes; to repeat and to understand. While listening for repeating, students imitate and memorize linguistic items such as words, idioms and sentence patterns. This is an important beginning task and focus of listening exercises. However, it is listening for understanding is real listening in its own right. Students listen as part of using English for communication purposes. While listening for comprehension, students may be involved in the question-oriented response model of learning or in the task-oriented model of learning. In the question-oriented response, model, students may be asked to listen to a sentence, a dialogue, a conversation, a passage and accomplish the task described in the passage through interaction with others or by themselves.

Audio tape-based language laboratory utilizes various task-orientation materials that focus on listening performance of the learners. A number of activities can be phased in under the six categories illustrated by Simmon in the laboratory to improve students’ listening skills.

i. Listening and performing actions
ii. Listening and performing operations
iii. Listening and solving problems
iv. Listening and transcribing
v. Listening and summarizing information
vi. Interactive listening and negotiating meaning through questioning and answering.

Technique is a particular method of performing an activity. Various techniques can be used while applying the above stated task-orientation materials
during the training. The following techniques are taken to train listening skills among the students using various material and activities effectively in the laboratory:

- Developing cognitive strategies – listening for the main idea, listening for details, and prediction
- Developing listening by integrating with the other language skills – listening and speaking, listening and pronunciation, and listening and vocabulary
- Listening to authentic material – weather reports, news, discussions, advertisements etc.
- Listening while using technology – telephoning, voice mail, voice chat etc.
- Listening for academic purposes and for fun – seminars, workshops, symposia etc.

A well-graded listening comprehension activity in the laboratory has teaching points from all the components of language. Listening does not focus only upon the sounds in isolation or in combination. It may begin with the discrimination of sounds and may proceed to the discriminations of sounds in combination, words, phrases, clauses and sentences. It focuses on the discrimination of various intonation patterns, and grammatical structures. However, the ultimate goal of listening is to listen for information.

1.20. Principles of Teaching Listening Skill:

Listening is not just mere recognition of linguistic units and their meanings. It comprises the ability to predict information based on linguistic context, and the situation and topic of the message conveyed by the linguistic code, as well as the
expectations about the world. Listening helps also to understand and act according to the emotional state of the speaker.

First teacher should be clear about the goals in teaching a lesson for listening comprehension. These goals must be made explicit by explaining them to the students so that the learning process becomes meaningful to them. Then teacher plans the class with a systematic progression in the material and in teaching. Teacher gives direction to the students as to what they should listen for, where to listen, when to listen and how to listen. Finally, in the laboratory, teacher insists students on active participation. They are given some written or oral response in the activity particularly designed for that session. Listening is done silently, but needs to be demonstrated through some other explicit expression.

Teacher organizes lessons in such a way that there is a need for students to develop concentration while listening and for remembering to reproduce the given information. This does not need that teacher clutters the lesson with facts, and details. Even with very little details, activities can be able to create a need to listen intently, if the material is based on a communicative need. For example, in a post office context the counter clerk has to listen to the customer carefully and remember exactly the quantity and denomination of the stamps the person has asked for. The communicative urgency and the need to listen carefully and remember what has been listened to should come from the lesson itself. During such activities, students develop their memory span consciously while listening to a message. Strengthening and expanding students’ memory span in progressive steps in English advances their listening skills.
Personality and individual natural characteristics of the students of a class play vital role in planning listening skill training activities in the laboratory session. The learners need to have interest, enthusiasm and minimum competence in listening to the speeches of effective speakers in English. In due course of the orientation, they should be able to listen and remember relatively lengthy sentences and phrases. The training mostly adopts various activities with the problem solving technique. In this regard, Schmidt also states that problem solving is a function of conscious processing, but that the unconscious mind seems to deal with “processing of frequency information and the resolution of probabilistic constraints” (Schmidt: 149). In natural contexts, generally no one prefers to speak using longer sentences. It is also a common thing that in most occasions one tends to use certain sentence patterns more frequently than others do. Teacher takes advantages of such patterns and structural information and prepares activities for listening practice in the laboratory.

Listening, thinking and remembering are related issues and go together in real life situations. They cannot be isolated one from the other but in the laboratory class teacher tends to focus on these as inter-related items. The teacher organizes the lessons and their presentation and teaching in the class in such a way that listening, thinking and remembering are integrated in listening comprehension. Focus of the class is consistently on the exposure to speeches of effective speakers of English language in authentic situations so that the students get a spurt imitation that helps them to improve their speaking skill.
In preparing or selecting material for the listening sessions in the laboratory, Morley suggests three important principles: relevance, transferability and task-orientation. The materials should be relevant to the interests and level of the students of the particular class. Joan Morley envisages that content, structures and words used in the listening materials should be of such a nature that these are transferable and utilized in other classes and in real life situations. (Celce – Marcia: 90-92)

1.21. Teaching Speaking Skill:

Audio tape-based language laboratory is an effective tool to train tertiary students to improve their speaking skill besides listening skill. Students get many opportunities to interact with effective English language with the machinery available in the laboratory, with peers during pair work or group work with or without machinery and with teacher to clarify doubts or to consolidate the basics or to respond during the activities. During the work in the laboratory while participating with audiotapes are provided with the opportunity to practice spoken English in activities particularly designed for the purpose. As students practice the speaking skills in the laboratory, the content of the language, confidence and clarity of thinking are improved. A few basic strategies that can be used to improve speaking skills in the laboratory sessions are explained as follows:

1.21.1. Asking and Answering Questions:

Asking questions and eliciting answers may be used for various purposes. First, asking questions enable the students to practice what he/she has learned. Secondly, teacher may ask questions to find whether the student understands new
vocabulary and the structures. Then he/she may ask questions to know whether he/she is able to use new words and new structures.

1.21.2. **Imitation and Repetition:**

Imitation helps students to pronounce and produce English sentences they listen from the audio-tape as closely as possible. Imitation also includes the capacity to produce the sentences in the contexts in which the original sentences are produced. On the other hand, repetition refers to the acts of producing the expressions in as close a manner as possible to the original. Repetition leads to automatic reproduction of the expression, and in the process, some sort of memorization of the sound or structure practiced takes place.

1.21.3. **Substitution:**

Substitution of a word, phrase or sentence by another is an elementary method that helps students to produce new utterances and to develop speaking skill. In this way, a sentence frame is practiced first and then suitable slots in the frame are identified for substitution. When substitution is made, students produce a number of new sentences with ease.

1.21.4. **Question-Answer Dialogues:**

Simple question-answer dialogues around given contexts and objects are another method to develop speaking skill among the students. There are three types of questions generally one uses in real life situations namely, ‘yes/no’ questions (Do you drink milk?), ‘or’ polarity type questions (Do you prefer coffee or coke?) and
‘wh’ questions (What do you usually drink?). All these types of questions can be combined in the dialogues of various activities.

1.21.5. Day-to-Day Expressions:

Expressions of greetings, introductions, gratitude, small talks, making acquaintance, leave-taking, appreciation, expressions of regret, asking to be excused etc., are very important communicative acts one needs to master. Such activities introducing the day-to-day expressions introduce the culture associated with English language that is different from the culture associated with their mother tongue.

1.21.6. Eliciting:

Eliciting is related to presentation or asking questions to get some information or reaction from the listeners. It is an important process where teacher can execute to get the class involved in explaining day-to-day events in the class. It helps students to focus their attention, to think and to use the information what they already know.

1.21.7. Guess and Speak:

Guessing is important for listening comprehension and can be used to improve speaking skill. Through the process of guessing, students are encouraged to see the patterns of usage and to find the correct words and sentences according to the context. Students work out the rules of deriving new words for themselves in guessing activities.
1.21.8. Directed Dialogues:

The teacher asks a student to make a comment to or ask a question of another student during the activities of directed dialogues. In such activities, students must be able to understand what the teacher asks them to do. Then they identify the appropriate part of the teacher’s expression that would become their response, manipulate the grammatical structure suitably and then produce the correct response.

1.21.9. Descriptions:

Describing a place, a person or a situation is an important area where one needs to improve speaking skill. In the activities focusing on descriptions, students describe a person or place or a situation to their peers one by one in pair work or group work. The listeners may ask to inquire more about the person, place or situation. Such interaction would help them to learn the needed language and practicalities to use the same.

1.21.10. Role-Play:

Role-plays bring real life situations into the laboratory. Students imagine and assume roles and exchange their views with other participants. This activity enhances students’ clarity of thinking in exchanging the information in proper manner and style. Their reasoning abilities and negotiation skills are developed by providing suitable roles to the students in a planned manner.

The above-cited techniques are induced in activities to conduct in the laboratory sessions to improve speaking skill. Mostly the sessions concentrate on
transferring idea units while exchanging information in various activities. In majority of the situations, ideas are communicated through simple sentences / words. Vygotsky focuses on word meaning as the “critical unit for making the bridge between thinking and speech” as he feels that it “belongs not only to the domain of thought but to the domain of speech” (Cole 47). With the helping hand of the electronic equipment, pronunciation of students can be polished by inducing the spurt of imitation.

1.2 Principles Involved in Teaching Pronunciation:

Pronunciation is a very important component of speaking skills. Only with proper pronunciation, second language users of English could communicate accurately. Correct pronunciation gives accuracy to the message conveyed. Correct pronunciation implies that similar one but not an identical one to the native performance.

Students with excellent skills in listening, reading, and writing and having poor pronunciation in English are deemed to be less proficient in their language skills. Teacher can focus on improving the pronunciation of the students with specifically designed activities in the laboratory. The pronunciation system includes the individual consonants, consonant clusters, vowels, stress and intonation besides the combinations of the distributional patterns of all these elements.

1.2.1 Factors that Influence Pronunciation:

Studies differ from one another as to their ability to pronounce English correctly as no two students come from identical backgrounds. Oral discourse of a
student reflects the backdrop from which he/she comes from. The following factors that influence the students’ pronunciation are identified: a) The influence of native language, b) Age c) Exposure to English – length and intensity of exposure, d) Natural phonetic ability, e) Attitude and sense of identity and f) Motivation and concern for pronunciation. The socio-economic class of the student and his/her exposure to English using society has strong influence on the level of proficiency attained in the pronunciation of English. Students with rural background will not get proper exposure to the effective use of English language and this influences their performance.

1.22.2. Practice in Context:

Contextualization of sounds is another important aspect in teaching pronunciation. In the early stages of the practice, students concentrate on practicing individual sounds / words without any context. In the laboratory practice sessions, context plays major role while focusing on words, phrases and sentences. Context dominates the pronunciation and students learn the pronunciation subconsciously with a sense of involvement and dignity. While asking questions about students, their family and friends, what they do, what they did do etc.

Familiar words / topics also may be used for additional practice by asking students to use that information in the present activities. Such activities demand students to recapitulate words / phrases / sentences already known to them along with the identical pronunciation. Opinion type and discussion type questions are introduced in the advanced classes. To understand and use accentuation and intonation not only questions, even sentences, dialogues are practiced in the context.
This helps students to use the pronunciation in real life situations when they come across similar contexts.

1.22.3. Time Spent on Pronunciation Practice:

The teacher leads students through several levels and kinds of materials in specially designed activities dealing with structures. Pronunciation exercises should be added with a variety of other components of the language like memorization, comprehension, interaction etc, to extend their need and willingness. Availability of time for the course and for the specific class hour is a major factor for the orientation. If the course is intended to improve pronunciation for competitive examinations like TOEFL / IELTS, there will be plenty of time for the practice.

1.23. Reading: Its Position among Tertiary Students:

Reading is an entirely forbidden skill among the students of South India both in the higher secondary level and tertiary level. As the reading practice has not been exhibited by the students so far almost all the students of tertiary level find it difficult to read even a small paragraph at home and in the class room. All students are born with necessary communication skills to speak to others in their day to activities. As far as the reading skill is concerned no single student has developed the reading of original English novels and English news papers. They have never tried to find the logical relationship vocabulary.

The students think that reading is not a skill of beneficial and so they do not try to find out the importance of it. They were not aware of speed reading, skimming, scanning and the purpose of reading.
1.23.1. Reading as an Important Skill:

The tertiary student has to understand that reading is the base skill that will automatically enhance him to develop other three skills listening, speaking, and writing respectively. A challenge for those trying to read in a language other than their first arises from the fact that not all words a student reads are represented in their mental lexicon. In such cases, readers can ignore the unknown word, consult a dictionary (or another source such as a friend or the teacher) and infer it from the context.

The tertiary student should begin to read from easier to the most difficult to achieve better reading skills. He is to read an English author regularly. He is to understand the style of the author. He is to find out the way that the author has used grammar and vocabulary. He is to have in mind that continuous reading will enable him to get a command over vocabulary. Then everything becomes easy for the student. In due course of time the student can develop strong concentration on the reading item he has been indulging in.

1.23.2 Benefits of Reading:

To achieve success at all levels the tertiary student has to acquaint himself with the reading skill. He is to read in an easy, funny and affordable way and this will create interest for reading. Reading develops learning skills of new words enabling them to acquire understanding the various grammatical structures in English. The student can add vocabulary to his already stored vocabulary. The result
of such reading is exciting as it gives him great confidence and moral strength with in him.

1.23.3 Reasons persuading Reading Process:

Many researchers have come out with various reasons that persuade the readers in making them indulge in reading and in consequent to develop reading skill. Among all reasons one’s attitude tends him to make positively or negatively to a reading material. A negative attitude is prevalent among the tertiary level students as for as the reading is concerned. Motivation is less among the tertiary students and so the number of students who read daily or continuously is less. Concentration is the vital factor in reading process but the shortage of vocabulary makes the students horrify to read lengthy passages. It is found that every student has to develop a positive attitude with self motivation and strong will for concentration in order to acquire a great success in reading for various purposes.

1.24. Writing and its Importance:

It is true to say that a writer is an artist creating magic in words. In addition to an individual talent one has to develop flair for writing and if the tertiary student has this quality, it is a God’s gift. But it is a shocking one to find that no student belonging both to urban and rural areas excel in this skill. It is evident that none has the capacity of writing an essay for some pages individually. The students keep awe stricken when it comes for writing as they feel that their weakness may be exposed. The students should foster an interest to write something on various subjects before they gain access in this skills.
1.24.1 Access to Writing - A Simple Process:

The tertiary student should note that there are many activities imbibed in the development of creative writing. Amongst all, the first requirement is that the student has to collect his thoughts for arranging them in a sequence. Then he has to plan how he should begin and an introduction is necessary to bring out the quintessence of his subject. Next he has to develop his ideas along the process of writing just like the mason who lays brick after brick to build a wall and a full room. Writing skill can be developed through perfect and prolonged practice alone. He, before doing all these has to make himself thorough with varied structures in English, to undergo the ordeals of doing lot of exercises from the basic to the advanced levels. The teacher’s role in developing the writing skill of the student is multifaceted as he has to train them with exercises related to context and discourse based keeping in mind the ideas of Critical pedagogy.

1.24.2 Mechanics of Writing:

Researchers put forth the various components that comprise the mechanics of writing. They include knowing how:

- To make letters of the right shape and size.
- To have proper spacing between (i) letters and (ii) words and (iii) lines.
- To use capital letters and punctuation marks correctly.
- To make a fluent hand movement in writing.
1.24.3 Aims of Teaching/ Learning English:

The main of teaching English is to enable the student to express himself correctly in writing on matters of everyday life. The same is the aim of students trying to learn it. He should be able to describe events, to narrate incidents and to write reports. He should be able to write letters (both personal and impersonal), curriculum vitas, and etc. required to compete with the other students in the competitive global arena. The student has to acquire the ability to write correct English. He must have something to write about and know how to organize the ideas in proper sequence. The students are not aware of these facts rather the English teachers do lack knowledge about this fundamental requirement for which the English cultural non exposure alone is the reason.

1.25. Sum-up:

Hence it is understood that the physical, sociological and environmental conditions of students serve as obstacles to learn English language. It is also felt that vocabulary, grammar and phonology are also the hindering factors to learn English at the tertiary level. There are chances of problems of understanding a language in cross cultural circumstances and linguistic nature of culture. It is true that in India the students have language barrier or culture barrier that block the students in learning the English language.