CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Summing Up

All over the world, the language courses give importance to the skills of language specially speaking skills. At international level, fluency in English is in demand therefore many a teachers and theorists strive to find out new and effective ways of teaching English. With every new finding our assumptions and practices regarding the teaching of spoken English gets modified, to a certain extent. The inclusion of spoken tests in college and university exam is an instance of the level of interest in the said skill.

The traditional methodology of teaching speaking was limited to repetition. Memorizing certain dialogues played an important role. The approach was drill-based. In 1980’s communicative language teaching came forward. It changed the nature of syllabus and methodology of teaching. The grammar based syllabi were rejected and function based syllabi became more relevant. The task oriented teaching made the learners attempt real communication though their knowledge of English was limited. In such a practice, the learner had to find out his own way of communicating a notion. Though difficult, the learners showed a great improvement with this kind of practice. With the advent of globalization, the communicative approach faces the challenge of cross-cultural ethics. Now it needs to go beyond communicative competence and include intercultural competence while developing the oral skills of the learners. For this propose, the teaching material also needs to be modified.

Knowing the related facts, the thesis aimed at testing the spoken performance of the higher secondary level students. The students of Std XI and XII of different colleges in Nanded city were selected for the purpose of research.
The main thrust of the research was on finding the errors in spoken English, analyzing the errors and suggesting remedial measures for the improvement of the same. The idea behind choosing this area of research emanated from the fact that most of the students of the region from Marathi and Urdu medium commit errors in spoken English.

The introductory part focused on the importance of English. The status of English in pre-independence and post-independence era was discussed. A review of situation of English in Maharashtra was also made. Various methods of learning English language were also looked at. Different approaches to learn English language were also taken into consideration.

Then the researcher undertook a survey of the previous research conducted in this area in India. The nature and scope of research in ELT in English is discussed. The previous research in language skills is also taken into account. Research conducted in communication competence is also discussed. Research carried out in errors in grammar as well as phonetics is also taken view of.

The theoretical and historical background of error analysis was dealt upon. Limitations of Error Analysis are taken into account. Levels of error are also discussed and classification of errors is done.

After the theoretical part, an analysis of the collected data was done with the help of tables and graphs. Samples of the data of students of Std XI and Std XII are considered and errors are marked. Grammatical errors committed by the students such as omission of major constituents, errors in subject-verb agreement, use of verbs, tenses, prepositions, articles, pronouns, plurals, possessive case, word order were pointed out. Errors in pronunciation are also marked out. The errors committed by the students of English, Marathi and Urdu medium in these areas are illustrated with the help of tables and graphs. Questionnaire was distributed to find the confidence level and fluency of the students. After error
analysis, reasons for lack of spoken competence are mentioned. Observations after evaluation are recorded using a statistical test known as t-test.

6.2 Findings

The above statistical results lead to the following findings.

1. English medium students performed better than non-English medium students.

2. Among non-English medium students, Marathi medium and Urdu medium students were selected for the study. In the category of grammatical errors, there was no significant difference in the performance of the two.

3. Omission of major constituents in a sentence emerged as the biggest difficulty for all the three media.

4. The lowest numbers of errors by the students of all the three media were found in the case of use of plurals.

5. The sequence of difficult areas for Marathi medium students was omission of major constituents, word order, prepositions, articles, verbs, possessive case, subject verb agreement, tenses, pronouns, plurals.

6. In case of Urdu medium, there was a slight change in the order of difficulty, articles were more difficult for them than prepositions. The remaining sequence was similar to that of Marathi medium.

7. The sequences of difficult areas for English medium students was omission of major constituents, verbs, prepositions, articles, possessive case, word order, subject verb agreement, tenses, pronouns, plurals.

8. It was interesting to note that verbs occupied the fifth position for Marathi and Urdu Medium students whereas it was second most difficult area for the English medium.
9. The tendency of using broken syntax and avoiding complete sentences was found to be common among the English medium students.

10. The use of Marathi and Urdu words was common among the non-English medium students. Moreover some of these students could not respond correctly even to the greetings like Good morning, Good evening.

11. In case of pronunciation of words, English medium students were far better than that of the other two.

12. The frequency of errors in pronunciations of English medium students was less than 50% as compared to the other two.

13. Among the non-English medium students, the area of difficulty of Marathi and Urdu medium students were quite different.

14. Marathi medium students faced difficulties with the sounds /f/ and /z/.

15. Urdu medium students had problems with the vowels sounds.

16. Mispronouncing the words with silent letters was a common problem.

17. Most of the students of all media failed to differentiate between /Ø/ and /ð/.

18. Reading the word ‘essay’ as ‘easy’ was also a problem. Similar examples were found in case of women, shall, symbol, and yesterday.

19. So far as the frequency of errors is concerned, the highest number of errors was found with the words with silent letters like receipt, comb, deft, honour, talk.

20. The lowest number of errors was found in case of vowels in the words like college, image, yes, vacation, all.

21. Apart from errors in grammar and pronunciation, it was believed that the students do not have confidence to speak in English but the analysis shows that the students of both English and non-English media do posses the confidence.
22. Not a single student of any medium was found to be poor in confidence.

23. English medium students had an upper hand and were more confident.

24. Among the non-English medium students, Marathi medium students showed more confidence and enthusiasm to learn and to speak in English.

25. Urdu medium students had slightly lower level of confidence.

26. Fluency was a problem with all the students irrespective of the media.

27. Even the students of English medium were found to be poor in fluency though the number of such students was very less i.e. 8% of the selected sample.

28. Fluency was the highest with the English medium students.

29. Urdu medium students were more fluent than Marathi medium students.

30. It was believed that the level of confidence co-relates with the fluency but the results of the analysis do not confirm this co-relation. In other words, the students had the confidence but they lacked fluency.

31. English medium students had more exposure to English than Marathi medium and Urdu medium students.

32. Marathi medium and Urdu medium students are at par so far as the exposure to English is concerned.

33. Lack of exposure to English is a major reason for the poor spoken competence among the junior college students.

Then suggestions are offered to conduct certain activities to improve areas such as grammar, pronunciation, confidence and fluency. There are teachers who equate learning of English language with the study of English grammar and lay more emphasis on grammar. There are some other teachers who intend to discontinue the teaching of grammar. However, it should be kept in mind that some knowledge of grammar is essential but care should be taken so that the
students are not overburdened with rules. There are different ways and methods of teaching English grammar. But to make learning of grammar interesting, certain activities like asking the students to provide points on a certain topic, presenting the grammar points both in written and oral forms, using substitution tables to teach various items of grammar, playing games, teaching with the help of pictures etc. are recommended.

Pronunciation skills can be taught in an effective manner if certain activities are conducted. Opportunity to listen to correct pronunciation can be provided. Students can be made to listen to news channels such as BBC and CNN. Drilling exercises can be done in the language lab. Lingua phone records, tape records, mobiles phones, smart phones, can be used to improve the pronunciation. Songs and rhymes, tongue twisters, limericks, dialogues etc. can also be used for teaching pronunciation.

The confidence level of the students can be raised by using student friendly teaching methods in a participatory mode. Use of situational dialogues can motivate and build up confidence in the students. Asking students short questions on text/picture/advertisement, giving them riddles to solve, encouraging them to speak consistently, use of mirrors and effective use of non-verbal communications are some of the ways that can develop confidence level of the students. Small talks and discussions can also serve the purpose.

Fluency in speaking English can be increased using certain ways. Extensive practice in reading, asking the students to read loudly, selecting news-items for reading, asking the students to prepare and practice time bound speeches, asking them to give a short speech about a shown object or picture, involvement in debates and group discussions are some of the ways that can certainly improve fluency in spoken English. Using recent mobile applications designed for improving fluency is also recommended.
It is an established fact that there is much difference between speaking and other skills especially writing. Pauline Jones' remarks (1996, p.12) are notable in this regard.

In speaking and listening we tend to be getting something done, exploring ideas, working out some aspect of the world, or simply being together. In writing we may be creating a record, committing events or moments to paper.

It is also true that spoken interaction remains complex in nature. Spoken discourse is generally composed of short phrases and clauses. It can be planned like a lecture or unplanned like a conversation. It has more vague or generic words than written language. It may have slips and errors showing the continual processing of discourse. It moves on with the kind of responses received from the listener. It has a lot of variation in accordance with the role of speaker, the purpose of speaking and the context.

Conversations form a part of speaking skills. It is observed that conversation do contain certain fixed expressions. J.C. Richards (2008 p. 20) calls them 'conversational routines'. They perform specific functions in a conversation and make it sound natural. They help the speakers to establish themselves in positions before starting the actual conversation. These routines include the actions like making arrangements of sitting or standing, offers of hospitality, etc. Wardhangh (1985, p. 74) says:

There are routines for beginnings and endings of conversations, for leading into topics, and for moving away from one topic to another....it is difficult to imagine how life could be lived without some routines.
These routines must be included in the teaching materials especially for the foreign students, with the help of these routines foreign students can converse in a native-like fashion. Moreover, it contributes in boosting their confidence level.

Style of speaking is also important in conversations. It changes with the circumstances and with the roles, age, sex and status of the speakers. The social roles of the speakers determine the style of speaking. If the speaker and the respondent are of equal social status, the conversation will be causal and informal. If it is not so, the conversation will be formal with more number of polite expressions from the lower side. The linguists talked about three the functions of speaking. They are:

Talk as interaction

Talk as transaction and

Talk as performance.

Talk as interaction serves a social purpose. It is close to ‘conversation’. When people meet, they try to establish good relations and construct a comfortable zone. This type of interaction can be formal as well as informal. It proceeds with instant feedbacks from the listener. It shows the type of power relation showed by the participants. Talking to a fellow passenger, talking to an old friend, etc. are the examples of this type. Opening and closing conversation is an important skill involved in it. Moreover, choosing topics, making small talks, giving examples from personal experiences, turn-taking, responding to others are also significant. Many of the foreign learners find it difficult because of lack of exposure and vocabulary. The teachers need to equip them with eliciting tools. The expressions like ‘Pardon’, ‘Excuse me’ help a lot to carry on the conversation. With this, a lot of listening comprehension improves the situation to a greater extent.

In talk as transaction, the main focus is on information. The message is more important than the frequency of participation. Making oneself understood is
the goal. Group discussions and problem solving activities in the classroom are examples of this type. The skills like explaining, describing, asking for clarifications, making comparisons, etc play an important role in talk as transaction.

The third type of talk is talk as performance. It is a public talk where the speaker gives some information to an audience. Here the presenter focuses upon both message and audience. The talk is organized one. Form as well as accuracy is important. Language is mostly formal and similar to written form. It is often a monologue. Giving a lecture, a welcome speech, a report reading session, etc. are the examples of this type. Sequence, information, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary do matter in talk as performance. Keeping the audience engaged and creating an effect on them play a substantial part.

It is seen that students who are good in one of these types are weak in the other. Many a students are good when it comes to delivering a small talk but the same are weak in interacting. This is mainly the case with foreign students. In the context of the sample selected, English medium students are better in the talk as interaction whereas the non-English medium students are weak in the same. With some practice and preparation the non-English medium students can do well in the talk as performance. Linguists believe that talk as interaction is the most difficult to teach. Situational dialogues help here. Care must be taken that the drills in situational dialogues remain natural and not mechanical. To perform well in this type of talk, the students need to be initiatively engaged. They need to learn certain ice-breakers. The expressions like “That’s interesting,” “yeah,” “really,” help in giving feedback and carrying the conversations forward. Conversation starters like inquiring about whether or some recent event or giving an account of the personal activity too help the beginners to establish themselves in a conversation. A very simple activity of asking questions and responding to them will allow the students to engage in a better conversation outside the monotonous
and mechanical drills. One of the students will come on stage and make a simple statement like “I saw a movie yesterday”. Then the others will ask him/her various questions like when, where, with whom, etc. the teacher will monitor the class and give proper instructions if and when needed.

It is comparatively easier to teach talk as transaction. There are a lot of communicative materials available to engage the students in group discussion and problem solving activities. It is true that this helps to build the confidence and fluency of the students. At the same time these activities do harm accuracy. So, it is better to plan these activities with some focus on language tasks. The sequence (Preparing, Modeling and eliciting, Practicing and reviewing) helps in improving the teaching learning of talk as transaction. In the beginning the teacher should introduce the students with the topic and the task. The students should be given some time to think over it. They may even be provided with some reading material related to the topic of discussion. Then the discussion will start. The teacher will monitor it but will not correct the errors at this stage. After a short discussion by the students, the teacher will give suggestions to the students regarding polishing the language. Here the errors can be corrected without offending the students. Then the students can be asked to prepare a written report of what went on in the discussion. One of them will finally give the report.

Talk as performance needs a different teaching strategy. It can be dealt with the help of written text as the formal uses of spoken language are close to that of written texts. Providing examples or models of speeches, oral presentations, stories, etc. helps a lot in this regard. Video or audio recordings can be more effective for this purpose. The teachers should analyse linguistic and other organizational features of these examples. The following questions guide this process:

What is the speaker’s purpose?

Who is the audience?
What kind of information does the audience expect?

How does the talk begin, develop, and end? What moves or stages are involved?

Is any special language used?

Students may work jointly on planning their own talk and then present it to the class. The steps involved in talk as transaction can be useful for this type also.

In short, while preparing or using speaking activities for the classroom the teachers should focus on developing talk as interaction, transaction, and performance in a gradual manner. The method and strategies for modeling the activity should be taken into account. The stages in which the activity is divided should be planned well. The language support and other resources needed to carry on the activity should be well thought. The expected level of performance and the nature of feedback should also be considered.

The teachers need to realize the fact that there can be no improvement in the spoken competence of the students unless a special attention is paid to it. The first thing is to provide them a good role model to imitate. So, the teachers should speak in English inside and outside the classroom. The bilingual method is not being rejected or opposed. Only the point is that the amount of exposure to English be increased. If a day of week is selected for practicing spoken English activities apart from the routine syllabus, the level of motivation will surely enhance.

The students should understand the significance of being competent in speaking skills. Self motivation and tireless striving is the key to acquire any skill. The same is true about speaking skill. Students should give half an hour every day to this purpose. They should try to enrich their vocabulary through newspapers, etc. They should form their own group of classmates/friends who will converse in English without being bothered of the errors. Once they are at ease with speaking in English, they should aim at being grammatically correct.
6.3 Recommendations for Further Research:

i. The study may be carried forward and the competence at different levels (like primary, secondary, higher secondary and degree level) can be compared and contrasted.

ii. Inclusion of the students from the technical institutes and rural colleges will be an asset.

iii. Grammatical errors can be dealt more elaborately.

iv. Pronunciation skills can also be studied comprehensively.

v. If the test-teach-retest method is followed, the researcher can come out with more concrete conclusions.

vi. Instead of audio recording, videography can help to check the body language of the students in order to know about the actual confidence level of the students.
6.4 Works Cited

