CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS

We list here the main conclusions derived from our research.

A strong group of 100 per cent respondents wholeheartedly accept the usefulness of study skills component in their studies as well as social life.

A close study of the data reveals that the respondents find study skills component useful in reading, note taking, note making and writing. 93.33 per cent respondents opine that a study skills component on their course would help them in reading articles in journals; 83.34 per cent respondents that it would be useful to them in reading articles in textbooks; 76.66 per cent respondents that it would enable them to understand lectures; 74.29 per cent respondents that it would help them in taking notes from articles; 73.80 per cent respondents that it would enable them to take notes from textbooks; 72.86 per cent respondents that it would be useful to them in following seminar presentations; 79.00 per cent respondents that it would enable them to participate in seminars; 66.66 per cent respondents that it
would be useful in writing reports; and 62.43 per cent respondents that it would enable them in writing essays.

A majority of respondents have difficulties in understanding spoken English; 57.14 per cent are unable to understand unfamiliar forms of English, e.g. local accents; 54.28 per cent have difficulties in accessing linguistic input while dealing with in a social context; 83.81 per cent have difficulties in understanding spoken English used by participants in seminars or group work; and 69.04 per cent and 68.57 per cent have difficulties in understanding spoken English of teachers on seminars and lectures respectively.

A great number of respondents have difficulties in speaking English; 48.58 per cent have difficulties in using English in clarifying the situation if misunderstood; 42.86 per cent have difficulties in expressing opinions in seminars; and the number of those who have other difficulties grows smaller thereafter. What becomes clear from the data is very alarming for us. The data reveals that spoken or conversational English is not stressed at the school level and this call for a remedial syllabus to be designed with focus on the development of conversational English.
Writing reports or essays and note making are very often troublesome for 50.00 per cent of the total respondents. The remaining 50.00 per cent of respondents never have difficulties in writing reports or essays and note making because some of them may have studied in English medium.

Understanding written English is not at all difficult for majority of respondents. 39.51 per cent students have very often difficulties in understanding written English of handouts, 48.09 per cent respondents have very often difficulties in understanding written English of textbooks and 40.94 per cent respondents have very often difficulties in understanding written English of classroom notes. A major chunk of as much 60.47 per cent, 51.90 per cent and 69.04 per cent of the population survey never have any difficulties in understanding written English of handouts, textbooks and classroom notes respectively.

82.37 per cent respondents are not very often satisfied with their written work whereas 71.90 per cent are not very often satisfied with their spoken English. 64.28 per cent respondents have difficulties because of uncertainty of their subject while 64.75 per cent students have
difficulties because of uncertainty about appropriate style of speech or writing.

A majority of respondents do not have problems regarding study methods. Only 30.95 per cent respondents have learning difficulties in demonstrations, 28.57 per cent respondents have learning difficulties in lectures, 19.04 per cent respondents have learning difficulties in using references, 20.47 per cent respondents have learning difficulties in group discussions (group of more than 10 students), 20.47 per cent respondents have learning difficulties in group work, 16.66 per cent respondents have learning difficulties in group discussions (group of less than 10 students), and 14.28 per cent respondents have learning difficulties in using mechanical devices.

The respondents have difficulties in learning study methods mainly due to (1) behaviour of others and (2) self mental drawback. 48.57 per cent respondents have difficulties because of unfamiliar accent speech of people. 32.38 per cent respondents have difficulties because of other people’s too colloquial speech. 19.05 per cent respondents have difficulties because people speak too fast.
46.66 per cent respondents have difficulties because for them English isn’t a mode of natural expression. 36.19 per cent respondents hesitate to use English only because of fear of making mistakes, i.e. fear of making mistakes stop them to express themselves freely in English. There is a mental block which stops the students to express them freely and naturally. So it is very essential to remove this mental block. 13.33 per cent respondents have difficulties because they speak too slowly.

A higher figure of 70.00 per cent belongs to those who find speaking English most difficult. For 20.00 per cent respondents, meeting other English students is most difficult task. For 94.29 per cent respondents, studying their subject is very easy. Only 2.38 per cent respondents have problem in meeting other students and 1.29 per cent respondents have problem in understanding English. The data reveals that a majority of respondents are quite confident and find themselves comfortable in meeting students, studying their subject and understanding English. But majority of respondents feel themselves in hot water when it comes to speaking in English and that is why it is very essential for us to focus on this aspect from the very initial stage.
61.90 per cent of the respondents strongly believe that their reading has improved a lot. 58.09 per cent students are of the opinion that their listening has improved a lot whereas 41.90 per cent of students believe that their listening has improved a little. 34.76 per cent fill a lot of improvement in their writing whereas 47.14 per cent students are not satisfied with the writing. The problematic skill to improve upon is speaking according to 81.90 per cent respondents. That is why an ideal remedial syllabus would have to have stress on speaking skills.

75.23 per cent respondents opine that their English has improved by studying in English, i.e. English medium has played very important role in improving their English. Only 12.85 per cent respondents opine that their English has improved by talking to English people. Very few respondents (11.90 per cent) opine that their English has improved by working on difficulties with English, such as grammar.

Time management is very important factor in study. 70.00 per cent respondents have more problems in organizing time. So an ideal remedial syllabus would have to have stress on time management.
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A higher figure of respondents (82.85 per cent) belongs to those who feel at a disadvantage because of language. The data indicates that a high level of motivation is required. There are various situations in which respondents feel themselves at disadvantages because of language. It means that a barrier for them. The data reveals that 91.42 per cent students are poor listeners, 80.00 per cent students have problem in note taking, 71.90 per cent are at a disadvantage in seminar and lecturer only because of language. Writing essays and reading take a lot of time in case of 53.33 per cent students. Very few number of students of the opinion that they are at a disadvantage at giving oral reports and reading books, attending class and preparing the reports, in lectures and seminars. Therefore, we should form an ideal remedial syllabus in which enough focus must be on note taking and note making skills.

A majority of respondents (71.43 per cent) are of the opinion that they have problems since the study skills has been introduced whereas only 28.57 per cent respondents are of the opinion that they have not any problems since the study skills has been introduced. This group might have either studied in good schools or they might have a good family background. These respondents seem to be self-reliant.
A majority of respondents (91.90 per cent) note that they have problems in vocabulary and listening. It simply indicates that listening skill has not properly acquired by them and therefore more emphasis should be given to listening skill at the very initial stage of study. A majority of respondents (90.95 per cent) have problems in science and popular lectures vs. specialist lecture. 66.66 per cent respondents have problems in Nature science explanation vs. social. This means that majority of respondents feel comfortable in science and popular lectures but have maximum problems in lecture related to social science because of the use of special terminology. This shows their limited knowledge of vocabulary. Taking part in seminars and writing reports and essays are troublesome for 45.70 per cent respondents.

Most of the respondents (89.52 per cent) are of the opinion that the study skills component has helped them to prepare for or avoid these problems whereas only 10.47 per cent respondents opine that the course has not helped them to prepare for or avoid these problems.

Many things become clear from the suggestions given by the majority of respondents. These suggestions reflect the reality and true aspect of our education system. A large group of respondents (90.48 per
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suggest practical English conversation - writing, grammar, note taking for better improvements. 80.00 per cent suggest that there should be a separate learning group according to levels of respondents’ language. It implies that language proficiency should be taken into consideration in any learning situations. 78.57 per cent respondents suggest that the enough emphasis should be put on writing and taking part in seminars and listening to lectures for improvements in study skills. 63.81 per cent respondents suggest that students’ background and needs should be taken into consideration for improvements in study skills. The division of students into groups according to their proficiency in English has made it possible for us to form a meaningful remedial syllabus in the subject. Instead of addressing ourselves to a mixed class with varying levels of competence in English, we find we are able to realize our objectives better by dividing the students according to their competence in English and by offering courses different levels of competence. 21.90 per cent respondents suggest that they would prefer to study English, and not study skills course. This seems to be contradictory. This group seems to be in some confusion regarding the importance of study skills. They don’t realize the importance of study skills. Only 21.90 per cent respondents suggest having actual university course for improvements in study skills and 20.95 per cent respondents
Conclusions suggest that more options and more time on project should be given for improvements in study skills.

We have very interesting data available with us. The data is very helpful in forming any good remediation programme for the students of science. Many of the classroom techniques designed to teach language skills at the college level, such as oral drilling have been tried out often but with rather poor results. For a mature learner, language learning should be more challenging than just carrying out repetitive tasks. The breaking down of the skills into listening, speaking, reading and writing is only a broad and rough kind of classification. There may be two main parameters in the design of courses in the light of English in India being treated as a library language: the register to be used and the skills to be concentrated upon. The student does not need to command any register except the one he/she is concerned with and, therefore, he/she need only be exposed to the vocabulary and structures of the register. This principle is applicable in designing courses in English for the students of Agriculture, Science and Technology etc. While a multi-skill approach may be preferable at the elementary level, it may be desirable later to concentrate on a particular set of skill that the learner needs.
In present day educational scenario, it becomes the task of the English teacher to procure such methods and materials, which would prompt the student, who is shying away from English, into willingly transforming himself/herself into an active participant in the class-room interaction. Although there are courses produced by various technical institutions, we have not been able to develop a Technical English course that can prevent the need of basic teaching of grammatical structures and is acceptable to a majority. The responsibility for spelling, punctuations, standard usages, and grammatical base of expression belongs to the high schools. Until the high schools of our country take it upon themselves to do a better job in training students to write, the earlier part of our English teachers’ careers will have to be spent in this sub-collegiate task. We strongly believe inter-disciplinary collaboration to be desirable in the sense that the language would then be effectively used by the teachers and each one would be contributing to the building up of a language sense among the students.

Questionnaire

There are total 20 questions in the first tool - Listening Test. The data reveals that in case of a majority of respondents (65 per cent), all the answers are correct and acceptable whereas in case of 35.00
per cent respondents all the answers are incorrect. So this gap of 35.00 per cent cannot be accounted for easily. This spurt of 35.00 per cent is a strong indication that things will change for better but only if the listening skill is to be introduced at an early stage of education.

There are total 28 questions in the second tool which was meant to measure the respondents' competence in note taking skills. We got very clear cut data here. A majority of respondents' (68.00 per cent) all the answers are correct and acceptable. On the other hand only 32.00 per cent respondents' answers are incorrect. The data reveals that majority of respondents do not have problem in taking notes, but at the same time we should keep one thing our mind that we cannot ignore the gap of 32.00 per cent. This is the same group who also has problems in listening. So we should form such a remedial syllabus that put enough stress upon the development of listening and note taking skills.

The third test was meant for testing reading comprehension, note making and organizational skills. There are total 15 questions in the test. A majority of respondents (80.00 per cent) don't have problems in reading for comprehension whereas only 20.00 per cent don't feel themselves confident in this skill.
The factors that emerged are listed and discussed here in the hope that the information will prove useful to those involved in teaching and testing of study skills in a variety of different teaching institutions.

The solutions could be introduction of practical sessions as has been in vogue in FYBSc, FYBE (CS), FYBBA, SYBBA and FYBCA in Sardar Patel University. We should spend valuable class-room time on training our students to understand spoken English. The researcher suspects that in many academic institutions, listening practice is hardly touched on or if it is, it will be incidental or even accidental! If one of our main aims is to teach our students oral communication, then we have no option but to give prominence to the development of listening skills as well. Communication cannot successfully take place unless what is spoken is also understood. Indeed, it is the researcher's own experience that students often seem to have greater difficulty in following what is said to them than making themselves understood. Therefore, we should aim to provide our students with sufficient learning practice to enable them to understand with reasonable ease both native and non-native speakers of English when they speak at normal speed in unstructured situations. The discrepancy between the output of education and our needs is too vast. Unless the teaching situation at school level improves and the science institutions get
linguistically well-equipped students, the teachers need to be imaginative and flexible in their teaching technique and material. This obviously requires of each institution that they have a sustained in-service programme for regularly training their teachers. Their teaching at the initial stage ought to be need-based and practice oriented and the course should be of introductory nature, as the first rung in the ladder of specialization.

The set of the null hypotheses we had formulated state that the learners are not, at least in the majority of cases, able to
(a) produce adequate written English for formal academic writing tasks;
(b) understand spoken English for listening to lectures and discussions;
(c) understand written English for reading textbooks and other sources of information both intensively and extensively; and
(d) demonstrate adequate mastery over spoken English for taking part in academic discussions and presenting papers.

\[ H_01 \]: The learners are not, at least in the majority of cases, able to produce adequate written English for formal academic writing tasks.

Our findings from the research confirm that this is true because their syllabi do not have any provision for study skills which would
Conclusions give them good grounding in the production of adequate written English for formal academic writing tasks (Tables 1, 2, 21 and 23 of Annexure 6). Thus this hypothesis stands accepted.

\[ H_0^2: \] The learners are not, at least in the majority of cases, able to understand spoken English for listening to lectures and discussions.

Our findings from the research confirm that this is equally true because their syllabi do not have any provision for providing them training in developing adequate listening skills which would train them to understand spoken English for listening to lectures and discussions (Tables 3, 7 and 12, of Annexure 6 and tables 1 and 2 of Annexure 5). Thus this hypothesis also stands accepted.

\[ H_0^3: \] The learners are not, at least in the majority of cases, able to understand written English for reading textbooks and other sources of information both intensively and extensively.

Our findings from the research confirm that this is just as true because their syllabi do not have any provision for providing them training in helping them develop adequate writing skills which would enable them
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to understand written English for reading textbooks and other sources of information both intensively and extensively (Tables 5, 6, and 7 of Annexure 6). Thus this hypothesis too stands accepted.

\[ H_0 \]: The learners are not, at least in the majority of cases, able to demonstrate adequate mastery over spoken English for taking part in academic discussions and presenting papers.

Our findings from the research confirm that this is similarly true because their syllabi do not have any provision for providing them training in presentation skills that would help them develop adequate mastery over spoken English for taking part in academic discussions and presenting papers (Tables 4, 9, and 12 of Annexure 6). Thus this hypothesis stands accepted as well.

Thus, all the null hypotheses we had set stand accepted and this gives us reason to suggest that provisions be made in their syllabi for the purpose of enabling them to (i) produce adequate written English for formal academic writing tasks; (ii) understand spoken English for listening to lectures and discussions; (iii) understand written English for reading textbooks and other sources of information both intensively and
extensively; and (iv) demonstrate adequate mastery over spoken English for taking part in academic discussions and presenting papers.

Future Research:

This study was limited to certain universities only, but to strengthen the findings of this study, similar study may be carried out to other universities of the country. Some variables other than those included in this study might be affecting the achievement of students. Hence, such variables be identified and included in this study to be conducted in future.