

CHAPTER I

REVIEW OF ELT SCENE IN INDIA

I. Present Status of English in India

When British came to India they brought with them the English language. Since then, English has caused a lot of upheaval and controversy as the rule of the British itself. Though Colonial domination came to an end in 1947, English as a language had come to stay. Indian intelligentsia felt that in years to come the effect of English language would wane as in the case of Persian after the Moghuls, but that was not to be. English language continued to be the medium of various Commissions appointed to decide and determine the role of English in the academic and administrative life of post-independent India.

In India today, English finds itself at the crossroads. For the past four decades, there has been an ongoing debate about re-allocating the role of English in India. After independence, a considerable amount of rethinking was done regarding the place of English in India. In 1950, the Constitution of India guaranteed the continuation of English as the

official language for 15 more years. Meanwhile, the Union Government took upon itself the task of promoting and developing Hindi as an official language. But over a period of time, it was seen that Hindi could not replace English. Loss of English was viewed by educators as a retrograde step and substitution of Hindi with English was considered an imposition by the southern states. The passing of the bill in Parliament in 1963 established the acceptance of English as the Associate Official Language of the country.

Due to societal changes, English continues to play an important role in the communicational matrix of free India.



Figure 1. Spread of English around the World. (David Crystal 1995)

The Indian subcontinent ranks third in the world in terms of number of English speakers, after the USA and UK. (Figure 1.) This is largely due to the special position which the language has come to hold in India itself.

It is estimated that nearly 4 percent Indians that is, over 30 million (David Crystal 1995) make regular use of English as compared to 3 percent in 1983 (Kachru 1983). This figure is impressive considering the fact that the total percent of speakers of several “scheduled languages” (Kachru, 1983: 71) in India is less than the total percent of speakers of English. English is also the official state language of the North-Eastern states of India - Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura.

Over the years more and more Indians have begun to use the language. In a highly multilingual national context, English is a dominant medium of higher-level administration, higher education, the learned professionals, armed forces, large scale industry, commerce, media and the judiciary. It is also a part of the literary and artistic activity in India. Though the number of Indians who use English constitute a small percent of the total population of India, yet, this group forms a large proportion of those who are in leadership roles and are concentrated in large cities in the country, where English functions as the ‘lingua franca’.

English is the main medium of instruction in most institutions of higher learning at the post graduate level. It is taught as a second language at every stage of education in practically all states of India. Examinations in English at school leaving and first-degree stages are compulsory in majority of the states and optional in others.

Withstanding all attacks from the Indian languages, policy makers and educators, the English language through its sheer resilience and mobility is now undergoing a process of Indianization, in the same manner as it adopted US citizenship over a century ago. The difference between the two is that, it is the major language of the USA, but in India it is one of the fifteen languages listed in the Indian constitution. However, English is widely regarded by students and parents alike as the language of opportunity, opening the door to higher education, a better job, upward social mobility etc. Consequently, there is a wide spread desire to learn the language.

II. Historical Perspective of Teaching English in India.

India has a strong and a rich language culture. The diverse languages of the country have the capacity to assimilate new languages that is thrust upon them. With the coming of the British, in literary as well as non literary forms, language use further expanded. Just as Persian, Urdu, Sanskrit etc. were assimilated in the Indian language culture, assimilation of English also enriched the plethora of language use in the country.

The history of teaching English in India can be broadly divided into two - Colonial and Post Colonial.

A. Colonial

English came to India with the British traders. But they were afraid to teach English language for the fear of losing their colonies as had happened in America. The arrival of the East India Company saw the revival of English for two reasons: one, improvement and promotion of literature and two, introduction of knowledge of sciences. Even Indian

thinkers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, recognising the importance of this European language, reinforced the adoption of English as medium of education in our university system. But it was Macaulay's minutes of 1835 that made English the language of the government, education and advancement. The immediate consequences of the recommendation were- English became a symbol of imperial rule and self improvement. Macaulay succeeded in forming "a class of people Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions in morals and intellect" (Krishnaswamy and Sriraman 1994: 46). He wanted this class to be (a) interpreters between the British and the millions whom they governed in India and (b) to refine the vernacular dialects of the country and enrich them with terms of science borrowed from west and render them effective vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of population. It is highly debatable whether either has been achieved. Nevertheless, English education continued to be offered by the missionary institutions whose curriculum was highly classical.

Though Classical Literature in England was on the decline, English studies in India ironically focused on the study of English Classics. Through the study of English, the aim should have been transfer of relevant knowledge and translation of useful books. But even today, we

have not been able to shun English Classicism and our syllabi all over India are replete with overtones of classical and canonical literature that seem to be “more perishable than the pyramids of Egypt” (Krishnaswamy and Sriraman 1995: 34). The features of English education in India during the Colonial rule are as follows:

1. teaching of English was extremely formal and imitative during the early years of the British rule. Formal variety of English was taught in schools;
2. the number of English medium schools and colleges increased. There was an increase in the number of Indians who used English;
3. with the coming of the British, English had to coexist with the diverse languages of India. It was put to use in new contexts and in a variety of new settings. This interaction resulted in generating a new variety of English with its own sub-variety called the ‘Indian English’;
4. language studies in India were based on the grammar-translation method which emphasised accuracy and use of full or complete sentences. These factors partly accounted for the predominance of formal teaching of English.

It can thus be said, that teaching of English in pre-independence days constituted teaching of literary texts in which Shakespeare and Nesfield

served as firm grounding, to create a class of Indians with a sound foundation in English.

B. English In Post Colonial India

Teaching of English in India after independence is a continuation of the colonial past. English still remains the language that examines students at universities, conducts foreign affairs, serves as a link language and transacts business nationally and internationally. Independent India witnessed a movement to restore regional languages to their rightful place in the country's educational system. The complexity of this task is emphasised time and again by the different Education Commissions set up to review the language scene of the country.

The first education commission to be appointed in free India was the **Radhakrishnan Commission (1949)** constituting mainly of intellectuals and educationists. They should have conceived the role of university education in broad universalists terms in relation to the immediate political, social, economic and linguistic contexts of post-colonial India. But it contended itself with general vague formulations. The Commission was not clear about the:

1. recommendation of the language to be used as medium of instruction for higher education; and
2. problems that would be faced while examining the different learning loads of 'the regional language, the federal language and English'.

Thus, this commission in a way failed to focus ^{on} the language needs of the country.

The **Secondary Education Commission (1952-1953)** was perhaps the first official body to concern itself with methods and materials of teaching, and the evaluation system. The Commission emphasised that :

1. "only right methods of teaching and right kind of teachers," can bring to life an almost 'dead curriculum' and a 'perfect syllabus' (Aggarwal 1984: 112-13).
2. teaching should shift from verbalism and memorization to learning through purposeful concrete and realistic situations;
3. right teaching methods should be used and right kind of teachers should be recruited; and
4. it showed a combination of idealism and realism on materials to be used. No single text book was prescribed as a rule. The institutions had the freedom to choose text books, as long as they conformed to the standards that were laid by the Commission.

Language planning in India arrived at a crucial stage in the sixties. Even after a decade of independence, the status of English, Hindi and other regional languages, both, as an official language and as a medium of instruction remained unclear. Due to the anti Hindi riots in Tamil Nadu and Angrezi Hatao campaign in some parts of North India, an urgent need was felt to review the status of languages in use in India. The Chief Minister's Conference (1961) recommended the adoption of the three language formula in all schools. This meant :

1. use of regional language or mother tongue when different from the regional language,
2. use of Hindi or any other Indian language in Hindi speaking areas; and
3. use of English or any other European language.

The intention of recommending the three-language formula was firstly, to achieve national integration in view of the formation of states that had taken place on linguistic basis; and secondly, to distribute equally the load of language learning in all parts of the country. Unfortunately, it proved to be an unrealistic formula as it ignored ^{the} lack of motivation among students in the Hindi speaking belt of the nation and the continuing opposition of Tamil Nadu to the introduction of Hindi. Consequently, the three language formula was not uniformly adopted in all parts of India, particularly where it mattered the most.

In 1966, the **Kothari Commission's** recommendations stressed the need to implement :

1. the three language formula,
2. to make Hindi and English as the link languages though the latter could not serve as a link for the majority,
3. to set up special units for teaching language skills and as distinct from teaching it as literature, and
4. to adopt measures so that English could continue to serve as the library language and as a medium of instruction in all major universities. For students, it also recommended that a reasonable degree of proficiency in English be essential for awarding degrees.

The fifties and sixties saw the focus shift to the teaching of language skills. This was in tune with the developments at the international level where the Grammar-Translation method had given way to the Direct Method of teaching. The emergence of the Direct Method in India weakened the teaching of grammar as well as literature. Pre-service training for school level teaching was considered important, while it was felt that no training was required at the college level. Pre-service

training in colleges of education did not keep pace with the growth of knowledge in the field. The establishment of a number of English language Institutes (ELTI's) and Regional Institutes of English (RIE's) contributed to the weakening of colleges of education so far as training of English teachers was concerned.

Reports on the Study of English in India were submitted in 1967 and 1971 by study groups appointed by the Ministry of Education. But after the Kothari Commission of 1966, the **National Policy on Education** was formulated in 1968 to implement the recommendations of the Kothari Commission. As regional languages were already in use as the medium of instruction at the primary and secondary stages, it proposed the following urgent measures to be adopted:

1. to make regional languages the medium of instruction at the university level;
2. to promote development of Hindi as a link language; and
3. to strengthen the study of English because world knowledge was growing at a tremendous pace and India needed to keep abreast of the growth in knowledge and make her own contribution towards it;
4. to develop methodologies for evaluation of teacher performance through self appraisal, through peer group and also student feedback.

The next landmark, the **National Policy on Education and the Programme of Action (1986)** merely reiterated the recommendations of the 1968 policy with regard to development of the language. The policy recommended :

1. improvement of linguistic competencies of students at different stages of education;
2. provision of facilities for the study of English and other foreign languages;
3. translation of books from one language to another to be undertaken; and
4. preparation of bilingual and multilingual dictionaries.

The policy did not make any mention of the medium of instruction on higher education but only said that, efforts need to be made towards transforming teaching methods and urgent steps should be taken to protect the system from degradation.

In 1990 **Rammurthi Commission** submitted its report reviewing the National Policy on Education and the Programme of Action. For the first time a frank analysis of the problems faced in the implementation of the three-language formula was presented. It observed that :

1. the three-language formula had “stood the test of time” (Krishnaswamy and Sriraman 1995: 41) inspite of the difficulties faced in its implementation;
2. the criteria for learning of Hindi and English was not the number of years of study but hours of study and more importantly, levels of attainment;
3. specific steps should be taken to effect a smooth change over from English to the regional languages regarding production of university level books in the Indian languages and regarding relevant options to be provided to students for taking examinations at all levels in the regional language media.

Finally, to establish the place of English in Indian education, the **Curriculum Development Centre** was set up by the University Grants Commission in 1989. The Centre was directed to shift the emphasis of the existing curricula from “teaching to learning” and to design a new curricula that would be socially relevant and which would make “education more meaningful to the needs and aspirations of its beneficiaries” (CDC Report 1989: 4).

Post-colonial India thus saw setting of several commissions to determine the place of English in India and its teaching in the Indian education system. Unfortunately, not all recommendations have been strictly implemented. More importantly, though many syllabuses have been framed, the national committees have never asked learners the reason why they want to learn English; what they expect from the courses which are meant for them; how they want to learn it and what materials would they prefer to use to learn English. Hence, we see a growing disparity between courses offered and expectations of the learners. This growing disparity between learner needs, courses offered and teaching methodologies adopted in different parts of the country, makes us think whether the objectives of teaching English in post-independent India are redefined and if they are, whether the Indian education system is equipped to meet these redefined objectives.

C. Aims and Objectives of Teaching and Learning English in India

Though English exists as the official language of India and is an important subject of our course curriculum, the objectives of teaching English during the pre-independence and post-independence era have undergone a great change.

During the British rule, English occupied a very important place in the education system of our country. English was taught in all schools and colleges as a compulsory subject. The adoption of English as the medium of instruction for higher level of education naturally determined its use as a medium of instruction in secondary schools. English became the sole medium of instruction at the primary, secondary as well as the university level. The study of English dominated the entire curriculum because university education became a passport to Government appointments and the universities required a knowledge of English. Teaching of English thus, was the prime objective throughout the country.

With the national movement for independence gaining momentum, and with the introduction of diarchy at the provincial level in 1921, education passed into the hands of the elected representatives of the people. The emergence of this movement saw focus diminish on the role of English in schools. All efforts were now directed to restore regional languages as media of education at the secondary school level, and as a result, most of the regional languages took over from English as the primary medium of instruction and examination. This transition to regional languages also resulted in some states permitting the use of regional language as a

medium of instruction in training colleges as an alternative to English for some of the curriculum subjects.

Today, schools and colleges do not have a predominantly 'English atmosphere'. In spite of regional languages dominating the primary and secondary education, English continues to be taught as the Second or the Third language under the three-language formula. In many universities some disciplines like Science, Technology and Medicine are taught through English. Though the point of introducing English in the school curriculum is differential, **today the main purpose of teaching English in India is to make our learners gain a practical command of the language.** That is, to develop in our students the ability to use language for the purpose of communication. The development of language skills is therefore the objective of teaching English. Learners need to be equipped with the fundamental language skills so that they:

1. can understand English when spoken,
2. can speak comprehensible English,
3. can read and understand English,
4. can write English correctly, and
5. can translate.

In other words, in India, English is taught in schools and colleges so that our learners can speak, understand, read and write English effectively. This need for the basic knowledge of language assumes importance because apart from satisfying learners' academic requirements, English is also used to perform certain social functions.

English, as an associate official language acts as the link between central governments and governments of non-Hindi speaking states. It is the language favoured by all India institutions, in all India Conferences and Seminars, in the legal and banking systems, in trade, commerce and defence. English provides access to the growing fund of knowledge in science, technology, social sciences and humanities. In short, it is the 'language of development'. Our scientists, technologists, engineers, doctors, economists and researchers need English to communicate with their counterparts in other parts of the world. They also need to contribute towards world literature in their respective fields.

Macaulay may have introduced English to "civilize Indians" (Krishnaswamy and Sriraman 1995: 50) and the earlier generations may have thought that English was necessary for shaping ^{the} character or developing the aesthetic sense, but the present generation of today is

convinced that English is needed for mobility, social and economic advancement. Today, parents also want their children to learn English because knowledge of English provides opportunities for growth within and outside the country. Students have realised that English is necessary if they want to project India's culture, values, languages, literature, science, technology, society, economy, polity and above all their own identities as Indians to the outside world. In other words, "English is the language not of Westernization, but of modernization" (Krishnaswamy and Sriraman 1995: 50-51). Considering the functions English performs in India, English is taught to equip learners with various strategies that will facilitate them to undertake or play their "communicative roles" (Verma 1994: 97) effectively in the society.

Though the objectives to teach English have been formulated in the light of what we perceive our needs for English to be in a multilingual setting at the individual, national and international level, yet, there seems to be an undercurrent of dissatisfaction amongst students and parents. An average learner does not seem to possess a functional command of the language. He/she is unable to comprehend lectures at the university or the college level; is unable to speak a few sentences or express effectively in writing. Is this then a reflection on how English is taught in India?

What are the different methods used to teach English in India? At this point, it would be appropriate to review the different language teaching methods in India and see whether the methodology/methodologies adopted is fulfilling the objectives of teaching English.

IV. Approaches and Methods

In India today, majority of the people are bilingual or rather multilingual. With redefining of objectives in post-independent India, a need was felt to review the different approaches and methodologies used to teach English, and explore whether these redefined objectives are being met with. Throughout history, changes in language teaching methods have reflected recognition of changes in proficiency that learners need; they have also reflected changes in theories of language and language learning. Hence it is important to review the different language teaching innovations of the West and the impact of these changes on teaching of English in India.

Language teaching methods in India are a reflection of the European teaching methods. Before reviewing the different language teaching approaches and methods used, a distinction needs to be made between an approach and a method. In an attempt to differentiate between the two,

Edward Anthony (1963) identified three levels of conceptualization and organization which can be termed - approach, method and technique.

According to Anthony's model (1963), **approaches** are **axiomatic**. It is the level at which assumptions and beliefs about language and language learning are specified. These axioms are abstract conceptual organisations, which remotely guide the teacher's awareness and organisation of his/her work in classroom.

Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of material all of which is based upon a selected approach. It is **procedural** and it is the level at which theory is put into practice. At this level, choices are made about particular skills and content to be taught, and the order in which content is to be presented.

The **technique** is the actual unit of teacher behaviour that takes place in the classroom. It is a teaching device or a strategy to accomplish the immediate objective. It is **implementational**. It must be consistent with a method and therefore in harmony with the approach as well.

Keeping in mind the distinction between approach, method and technique, a short review of the various language teaching innovations of the West is presented and the impact these innovations had on the language teaching scene of India.

The **Grammar-Translation** method dominated European and foreign language teaching from 1840's to 1940's and in a modified form it continues to be used in some parts of the world. It had its origin in Germany and its leading exponents were J. Seidenstucker, K. Plotz, H.S. Ollendorf and J. Meidinger. The objective of this method was "to know everything about something rather than the thing itself" (W.H.D.Rouse, quoted in Kelly 1969 53).

With the British in India, the grammar-translation was popularly used in

Indian schools. It was an era where formal grammar reigned supreme; and the first language/mother tongue was maintained as the reference system in learning of the Target Language. In the classroom

1. students memorized endless lists of grammatical rules and bilingual words;

2. teacher translated every word, phrase and sentence from English to the Mother Tongue. Further, students translated sentences from the Mother Tongue to the Target Language.

By the middle and late nineteenth century in several European countries opposition grew towards this method. As the grammar-translation method focused less on listening and speaking, demand was created for oral proficiency in foreign languages. The Frenchman, C. Marcel emphasized the importance of meaning in learning and proposed that reading be taught before other skills. T. Prendergast an Englishman, observed that children used contextual and situational cues to interpret utterances and used memorized phrases in speaking. But it was the Frenchman, F. Gouin who advocated that a foreign language could be taught using a series of simple events. His method used situations and themes as ways of organizing and presenting oral language. This method found ready audience in Germany and by the turn of the century, after much modification by Henry Sweet, came to be known as the 'direct method'.

The **Direct Method** opposed the grammar-translation method in both theory and practice. The aim of the direct method was to make the learner think in the Target language. The underlying principle was that

words should be directly associated with reality or experience and students were expected to find a meaning to new linguistic forms they were exposed to. Language learning was facilitated by the use of language that consisted of a series of related actions. English was taught through English as a result of which a transition to an “all English classroom” was effected. Emphasis was placed on oral proficiency, inductive teaching of grammar was carried on in classrooms, and learners were taught new vocabulary.

This new innovation in language teaching also found its way to India. The grammar-translation technique was slowly waning and in India the Direct Method was introduced by P.C. Wrenn's (1913) *The Direct teaching of English in Indian Schools*. Otto Jespperson (1956), H. Palmer (1964) and Thomson and Wyatt (1960) popularised the Direct Method in Training colleges. This method secured wide acceptance at the official level. In the classroom

1. instruction was conducted only in Target Language;
2. as the sentence was the unit of speech, only those sentences which could be used everyday were taught;
3. oral training was provided that laid emphasis on listening, speaking and pronunciation;

4. grammar was taught inductively;
5. new teaching points were discussed orally; and
6. new vocabulary was taught after careful selection, gradation and in association with objects, pictures and ideas.

In Europe and America, the early nineties (1920-1940) saw a lot of work done in the field of vocabulary. This period was marked by the pioneering works in the twin fields of vocabulary and reading by Thorndike and Michael West. A shift in focus was perceived from speaking to reading.

In 1940's two parallel schools of language teaching emerged. The entry of the United States of America into the World War II had a significant effect on language teaching in America. The American government needed qualified people to train their military personnel in various foreign languages. Thus, the Army Specialised Training Programme (ASTP) was established in 1942. The ASTP lasted only for about two years but made a considerable impact on the academic community, linguists and language teachers. Linguists and applied linguists during this period were becoming increasingly involved in teaching of English as a foreign language. The demand for foreign expertise in teaching was also growing. Thousands of students who came to America for higher studies required

training in English before they could begin higher studies. These factors led to the emergence of what is popularly known as the **Structural-Oral-Situational Approach (S-O-S)**, in the mid-fifties. This also started being looked as an alternative to the direct method of teaching English as a second language.

The second important development in U.S.A. was the development of the **Oral Approach** by Charles Fries. He was a trained structural linguist and applied the principles of structural linguistics to language learning. He and his colleagues rejected the approaches of the direct method that exposed learners to language which allowed gradual absorption of grammatical patterns. Instead, grammar or 'structure' was the starting point in teaching language, for Fries. Language was taught by placing systematic attention to pronunciation and by intensive oral drilling of the basic sentence patterns and grammatical structures. Teaching techniques concentrated on repetition of a pattern a number of times so that the learner became perfect in the use of the pattern.

In Britain a parallel approach to language teaching was being developed to teach English as a foreign or second language - the Oral Approach. Two prominent applied linguists H.Palmer and A.S.Hornby attempted to

develop a more scientific approach to teach English. In this approach two aspects received attention - vocabulary and grammar. It was Hornby himself who used the term 'situational approach'. This approach suggested that any language item, whether it was a structure or a word, should not be presented in isolation; it had to be introduced and practised in a context, situationally. Efforts made by specialists like Palmer, West and Hornby firmly established the foundations for the structural-oral-situational approach and in late 1940's and early 1950's, it was accepted as a British approach to teaching English as a second/foreign language.

During the period 1920-1940, when new innovations in English language teaching were taking place in the West, in India, very little progress was being made to develop English language teaching. The pace of progress in this direction could not remain steady for two significant reasons - World War II and Independence of India. These events brought with them urgent problems to be solved. Developments in the West had given rise to a vast literature on foreign language teaching, but practically no impact was felt in India. It is distressing to note that courses and examinations remained untouched by the principles and practices associated with the pioneering work of Jespersen, Palmer, West and others. **The only issue that continued to interest and worry the Indian policy makers was the**

use or non-use of mother tongue in an English lesson. Officially, the Direct Method was in use since 1913, but in most schools in India (excepting English medium schools), it was the grammar-translation method that was practised.

Indian independence saw importance given to regional languages in education. This relegated teaching of English to second or third language. This also saw deterioration in teaching of English in India.

It was in 1952 that the S-O-S approach made its advent into India. Tamil Nadu was the first state to agree to use the S-O-S approach for teaching of English as second language. The British Council took keen interest in popularizing the approach. A great need was felt to improve materials and methods of teaching English at all levels. This realisation led to the establishment of the Central Institute of English at Hyderabad and other English Language Teaching Institutes in several states, to train teachers and produce modern teaching materials.

The fifties and sixties witnessed large scale acceptance of the S-O-S approach. The approach embodied the following principles - structural

grading, vocabulary control, oral situational presentation and repeated practice.

Structurally and lexically graded syllabuses and text books were prepared. Teaching methodology also underwent a change. Teaching was compartmentalised; grammar was often taught but no special attention was paid to language acquisition; there was situational presentation of all new teaching items and a great deal of emphasis was placed on 'controlled practice' which used techniques like substitution tables and choral repetition. With the introduction of the structural approach in India, a shift in focus was seen from the idea of language as 'knowledge' (grammar) to language as a 'skill', that could be practised and perfected.

By 1975, the Structural method was practised in all universities, colleges and schools in India. It was regarded as a well established method of teaching English. As most textbooks were based on this method, teachers to some extent were successful in introducing structures and practising drills. This method successfully generated considerable rehearsed structures and repetitive oral language in classrooms. However, it failed to equip learners to cope with language in contexts outside of classrooms. Learners seemed to know each structure well at the time it was taught,

but their command of the language at the end of a structurally graded course still remained unsatisfactory and required remedial teaching. Even teaching of pronunciation remained unattended to. Thus, structural approach came in for heavy criticism both on theory and practice. Yet upto the eighties, teaching of English in India continued in this method.

In Britain, growing dissatisfaction with the structural approach and the changing educational realities in Europe, marked the emergence of a different type of language syllabus which laid emphasis on the communicative functions of language. In America also Noam Chomsky (1957) questioned the theory underlying the structural approach. He, along with the British linguists Candlin and Widdowson, emphasised the functional and communicative potential of language that was inadequately addressed in the current approaches. They saw the need to focus on communicative proficiency instead of mere mastery over structures. In 1972, D.A. Wilkins proposed the first communicative syllabus for language teaching. He described two types of meanings that lay behind the communicative use of language - **notional categories** - in which concepts such as time, sequence, quality, location frequency etc. were included and **categories of communicative functions** which included requests, denials, offers, complaints etc. Wilkins later expanded these

functions into a book called 'Notional Syllabuses' (1976), which had a significant impact on the development of communicative language teaching. Teaching of language began to be viewed in terms of functions it would perform. As this aspect of language learning gained momentum, distinction was drawn between competence and performance. The notion of communicative competence as introduced by Dell Hymes (1972) referred to the knowledge of the rules of the language while performance referred to realisation of the language in terms of output. It referred to the learner's ability to use rules of grammar in appropriately relevant social contexts. A shift was thus perceived in emphasis from the individual to the society and from psychology of mind to the society. The scope of communicative competence widened from its linguistic potential to sociological implications and it was increasingly felt that learners needed language not for mere production of correct sentences, but as a 'social tool'. Both American and British exponents now saw that the **communicative approach** aimed at making communicative competence the goal of language teaching. It also aimed at developing procedures for teaching the four language skills that acknowledged the interdependence of language and communication.

In the communicative approach, the primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meanings exemplified in discourse. Communicative language teaching, meant a little more than an integration of grammatical and functional teaching; "it paid systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language" (Littlewood 1981: 1).

As communicative movement gained momentum in the 1980's, teachers and material designers faced the challenge of creating conditions for learning which made use of genuine communicative contexts. The methodology followed was :

1. development of a friendly rapport between teacher and student,
2. oral introduction of any new item - grammatical or functional through a series of examples,
3. importance given to individual, pairwork or group work, and
4. numerous real life situations provided to learners to put the acquired language to creative use.

With this movement, the role of the teacher also underwent a change. The teacher was no longer a controller of the classroom, but now assumed the role of a facilitator, organiser, resource person and participant.

In spite of these new innovations in the West, English language teaching in India generally remained unaffected. Teaching of English continued by the structural method. Even now in India, the impact of communicative teaching has not yet been felt by a majority of the teachers and has merely remained a debatable issue in discussions and seminars. At the curricular level, in late 1980's, some attempts were made to incorporate communicative approach into the syllabus and among the pioneers to introduce this approach in syllabus design were the universities of Bombay and Baroda.

Communicative language teaching views language as open ended, having endless probabilities or probable options to real life situations, and therefore, the approach lacked proper teacher training and teacher orientation. Most universities in India do not adopt this approach and those who have opted for the communicative syllabus, do not have adequate competent teachers well trained by the RIE's or the CIEFL. It seems that there is some reluctance amongst teachers to undertake any kind of specialised training. To bring about an improvement, no serious thought seems to have been given to train teachers to monitor and assess

their own classroom performance. In India therefore, communicative language teaching did not take off on expected grounds.

By 1975, an undercurrent of dissatisfaction was growing towards the structural approach; communicative language teaching was also not gaining ground. The major insights and ideas that emerged in the teaching of English in India at that time, resulted in the introduction of the **Communicational Syllabus** by N.S. Prabhu (1987).

According to Prabhu, the focus of the project was on grammatical competence which was supposed to develop in the course of meaning-focused activity in the classroom. The central tenet of the CTP was that language form was best learnt when learners attention was on meaning and not on form. The new approach therefore, preoccupied itself with meaning rather than contextual appropriateness.

The methodology comprised over four hundred pre-tasks and tested tasks which were used in teaching learners of several age groups, different language abilities and in different environments. The pre-task was teacher guided and served to orient the learner to solve the task on his/her own through a similar process of reasoning in similar situations. Each task

required an independent effort by the student and the outcome of the task was “roughly analogous to that of a lesson in mathematics, where a problem is worked out publicly and a similar problem is then set for learners to work out on their own” (Prabhu 1987). According to Prabhu this enabled learners to become self reliant with minimal teacher intervention.

Though publicly proclaimed and ably defended within and outside India as a viable alternative for schools, the Project failed to evoke any interest in public schools, state level schools or in the fast multiplying private English medium schools of urban India. In fact, it had no impact on any aspect of syllabus reform in any part of India because firstly, it placed heavy emphasis on receptive language, assuming that learners would internalize the structures and would be able to produce language voluntarily. Secondly, Prabhu adopted purely problem-solving methods for teaching. Teaching methodology was totally devoid of props, stories, songs, puzzles, games etc. Without proper catalyst materials to trigger off idea generation, learners usually lost on variety and excitement of genuine communication. Thirdly, though the communicational approach committed itself to a learning centred environment, it disallowed group-work, fearing that learners would use mother tongue which would

promote pidginization. Unfortunately, this syllabus also was not accepted in the Indian education system.

Reviewing the different language teaching innovations of the West and its impact on the language teaching scene in India, it is seen that the main teaching approaches which were followed were the grammar-translation, the direct method and the structural approach. There was an attempt to incorporate communicative language teaching. Unfortunately, this approach did not permeate deep enough to unshackle the hold of structuralism on the Indian educational system. Even now the syllabuses framed are still based on the structural approach. They do not take into account learners' needs and interests. In very few universities like Bombay and Delhi, no text books are prescribed for the General English course; and where text books are prescribed, they are mostly content based. Teaching materials are still graded structurally and continue to be commercially produced by authors who are outside of the education line. Teaching materials thus remain far from being communicative. It is only in recent times that universities have started preparing teaching materials for their students. This does signify a positive trend and reveals that educators and teachers at all levels are getting sensitized to learner needs, though the process is rather slow.

By way of methodology, the teacher adopts the lecture mode without involving the learner in the process of learning. This may be because only few teachers receive any kind of training or orientation in learner centred teaching. In fact, reluctance amongst teachers to go through any kind of specialized training is perhaps due to lack of challenge in the existing syllabus. Only preparation of communicative syllabus is not important. Training teachers to handle the syllabus is equally important. But no serious thought seems to have been given to train teachers in this new approach. Teachers, do not seem to know the way to monitor and assess their own classroom performance to bring improvement. Language teaching scene in India thus calls for innovations in framing syllabuses, preparing text books, in which learner needs are accounted for and in which teachers would be provided adequate training to teach and use language communicatively.

V. Present Teaching-Learning Situation in India

Reviewing the various methods and approaches used in language teaching English in India, the present teaching-learning situation does not present a very happy picture. It is very easy to say that the standard of English has

fallen considerably at all levels of education. It is easier to put the blame for this 'on poor teaching' at the school level, but, there are other factors too that have contributed to this situation. They are large classes, indifferent students, uncommitted teachers, inappropriate teaching materials, testing techniques that fail to test proficiency in language and lack of uniform policy governing teaching of English.

One of the most important factor that is sometimes overlooked is **lack of uniform policy that governs teaching of English**. Frequent changes in government policy towards teaching of English in several states has resulted in the decline of standards in schools and colleges. The status accorded to English by many boards of education and universities suffers a serious setback. Before independence, English was a compulsory subject in both schools and colleges, but after independence it has not remained so in several parts of the country. In some states, the official policy on teaching of English has not remained stable. Even within one state there are policy changes due to changes in the government. Official policies of some boards of education declare a student successful even if he/she fails in English. However, now many boards and universities which had virtually eliminated English are gradually restoring it to its status of a compulsory subject. But the damage is done already.

Lack of uniform policy in teaching of English resulted in the **exposure to English being differential in terms of number of years**. Students are exposed to English for a period of 9 to 10 years in those schools which offer English as the medium of instruction whereas English is introduced as a subject either in Std. V, or VI, or VII or VIII in those schools which have vernacular languages as medium of instruction. Majority of learners are exposed to English only through their English classrooms. Only a small percent of students, that is, who live in large cities, or who come from highly elite public schools, or those with high income background come in contact with English outside of classroom. Therefore, a general English class at the college level comprises students with different number of years of exposure to English. Majority of students lack **functional command** of the language which is required for academic purposes. They cannot speak correctly nor write their curriculum vitae or even read an English daily. This contributes to the gulf between teaching and learning of English. It also adds to the disparity between teacher and student expectations.

After independence the Government of India adopted a policy of **universal education** through the medium of regional languages. There

was a tremendous expansion of education at all levels. English was widely regarded by students and parents alike as the language of opportunity, opening the door to higher education, a better paid job, upward mobility etc. Consequently, there was widespread desire to learn the language. This led to an increasing pressure on school and university education. Universalization of education also brought with it several problems. Today, classes comprise large number of students; there is dearth of well qualified teachers; infrastructure in schools is insufficient, which includes lack of basic facilities like libraries, reading rooms, audio visual aids even chalk and blackboards. The teachers still follow translation and structural methods when communicative skills need to be refined. Even the examination system allows learners to get their degree by the 'rote method'. The net result is that learners have no practical command of the language.

Our education system permits **offering different types of educational programmes** simultaneously to our students. Permission is granted for "English medium schools" to exist side by side with 'regional language medium schools', run by the local government bodies where students pay a nominal fee. Again, within the government schools and public schools there is a considerable variety. The heterogeneity in our undergraduate

classroom is not only due to students being exposed to English language for different number of years, but also because different types of courses exist in English at the school level. On the recommendations of the Study Group on teaching of English in India, appointed by the Ministry of Education in 1964, it was decided that study of English at lower secondary and senior secondary schools would be at two levels - Course A - higher level, that emphasises study of literature in the language, rather than grammar or structure; and Course B - lower level, that emphasises grammar and structure of the language being studied. Therefore, in undergraduate classes we have learners with a wide spectrum of abilities in English. This heterogeneity also manifests in differences in learning-teaching environments.

Universities in India have also not contributed much to this teaching learning situation. In most universities English is the medium of instruction. Learners need a command of the language to work within the academic framework. However, it is seen that they are not sufficiently equipped with the basic language and skills to pursue their studies through the medium of English. As against this, where regional languages are the media of instruction in various universities, suitable textbooks and reference materials are not available in these languages for each subject.

Therefore, both in universities where English is the medium of instruction and in others where regional languages are used, students require a good grounding in English for academic purposes. Besides, they have to be equipped with the necessary language skills for their future careers as well. It is therefore evident that if English classes are to be relevant, they should help learners in these tasks. But the course content of the syllabuses of many universities reveal that even after 50 years of independence, universities have not decolonised themselves from the intellectual clutches of Western literary imperialism. A teacher lectures on Chaucer, Bacon, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats etc. to students who are not mature enough to understand, nor are able to write or speak few sentences in English. Why can't syllabus designers design a syllabus based on the reality outside of classroom? The syllabi framed does not take into account learners' needs and interests and the English course that is offered contributes very little to the development of various language skills in learners.

The prevalent pattern of the English course seems to be a prescription of prose and poetry, short stories, novels, plays along with some exercises on reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar and composition. The passages normally selected are "ill suited" to the learners ability levels;

they are recycled, rejuggled and edited again as learning materials for the students; the exercises that follow the passages are also haphazard. One needs to keep in mind that today's learners learn their English, not by reading Shakespeare and Eliot, but by reading Enid Blyton, Nancy Drew, Hardy Boys, Mills and Boon and even comic strips. Today's learners are exposed to English language through a boom in media, mass communications, T.V. serials etc. Even quantitatively, hours of exposure to English through anthologies and real life media differs. All learners irrespective of their 'all English' or 'regional background' are exposed to the pop and fashion culture of the society. Even in classrooms, learners bring with them two or three parallel linguistic systems. While speaking, they constantly make shifts from L1 (Mother Tongue) to L2 (English) and L3 (any other language used to interact with peer group outside home and school) and vice versa, as situation and context demands. This interdependence across languages is not restricted to proficiency levels but, carried across performance as well (Vanikar and Mujumdar 1994). Then, what level of English are we imparting to our students through teaching of these old passages? Why can't learners be exposed to the realities of the outside world through reading materials found in Reader's Digest, Science Digest, Young World etc.? Our syllabus designers, obsessed by the study of Western literature consider them 'newspaper

stuff' and keep it out of the classrooms. Keeping in mind the disparity between English taught in classrooms and the English they are exposed to outside classrooms, there is a need to review the materials used for language teaching.

The duration of the English course varies from 1 to 3 years depending upon each university. The number of teaching hours also vary from university to university, from 2 to 6 lecture periods per week, each comprising 45 to 50 minutes. Given these teaching hours there seems to be a mismatch between the 'syllabus' or the 'portion' to be covered and the time allotted for teaching. The teachers hypothetically decide on the number of passages to be taught. Either there are very few passages to teach or too many to cover the whole year around. Once a decision is taken to teach the required number of passages, teachers manipulate the time. They either rush through the passages, not concerned whether students have comprehended it or not, or else stretch the passages upto the end of the year. One fails to understand and realise the proximity between the assigned time slots and learners' pace of learning.

Evaluation pattern in India seems to be 'marks oriented' not 'knowledge oriented'. Except in few universities, tests are not geared to the

objectives of the syllabus. In most universities there appears to be a mismatch between what is taught and what is tested. Testing in most universities continues to be in a written mode. Questions in the examinations are asked only from within the syllabus covered in the classroom. By way of answers learners have to organise, compose, sequence and articulate their thoughts. Unfortunately no training is provided to them to help them write answers. Therefore they fall back on the 'rote method' which helps only a few. Those who are successful in memorizing answers to the set of prescribed questions get through the examinations, but those who cannot memorize, do not pass because they are unable to frame answers on their own as they lack adequate command of the language.

Teaching-learning situation of English in India, thus appears to be in a state of flux where aims and objectives seem not to meet. Goals of teaching English in India further need to be redefined, so that teaching and learning of English is a meaningful and a purposeful process. To achieve this, we need to

1. induct professionalism in teaching so that educators become accountable to society and recognize the rights of learners to demand quality education;

2. evolve a model of teaching-learning that will help shift focus from 'coverage of portion' to 'command of language';
3. evolve alternative materials, methods and evaluation systems that will be in tune with the redefined goals; and
4. develop in students management of learning that will enable them to cope with the diverse needs for which English is used.

VI. Management of Learning

Twentieth century India witnessed a state of turmoil, flux and transition in teaching of English. Politically, independence is achieved, but in these 50 years we have not yet moved from the state of dependency on English to complete freedom in the use of the vernacular languages. Today also English is widely used in many spheres, in many registers and in different domains. Teaching English is relegated to 'text book learning' and 'rote learning', both of which only help learners to acquire degrees. It does not help in achieving proficiency in the spoken as well as the written mode which is required by the learners to address and adapt themselves to academic requirements. Testing in most universities is in the written mode. Learners have to write answers in the examinations for which they are awarded marks. It is essential therefore, that they know how to

express themselves in writing. If they are taught to write effectively, it would enable them not only to pass the English subject, but also to write effective answers in their core subjects. Writing effectively is an important aspect of learner development which would lead to learner autonomy.

Writing is an integral component of any language curriculum. It assumes importance because students are required to produce large chunks of language as they follow the essay format in writing answers not only in language studies but in other subjects as well. For learners, it is a means to learn, discover, develop and refine the ability to write. They can demonstrate their understanding and interpretation of concepts and theories studied through the use of multiparagraph composing skills. But observation of learner writing and evaluation of answer scripts indicate that learners are unable to express themselves effectively through their writing. This could be attributed to the methodology of teaching writing in classrooms.

The methodology used to teach writing is hardly encouraging. Virtually, writing is not taught in classrooms; it is rarely discussed and practiced. Hence, learners do not seem to possess a repertoire of writing strategies

to enhance their work. Whichever methodology the teacher adopts, does not allow for any feedback. Consequently, 'revision' which is an integral part of the writing process is neglected: it is hardly taken up as a classroom procedure. It is observed that learners do use revision strategies. Those who use revision strategies are not provided with appropriate feedback on their use. Therefore, the use of revision strategies is only restricted to surface level corrections. Those who are unable to evolve strategies are not trained to do so. This is because teachers themselves are not oriented in the process of revision. No teacher training institute trains teachers in revising texts. Therefore, revision is still considered in its narrow sense as a "mop up activity" to be undertaken at the end of the writing task. The result is, it is never given its due place in the classroom. As no opportunity is provided to learners to evolve and use revision strategies, their strategies tend to become fossilized. To enhance their written work, the need is to encourage learners to evolve revision strategies.

Revision is a way of managing writing. It is an effective writing strategy that learners need to discover and know its use in their own writing. They may be taught to evolve strategies to support their own work. This research attempts to bring to surface the different strategies

that learners use in their writing. As revision is now considered a problem-solving activity, this study also tries to explore the effect of applying a problem-solving approach to writing. Rather than teach revision in isolation, it is suggested that learners may be made to go through the “cycles and stages of revision” (Sommers 1980: 386-387). Teaching them management of writing would help develop in them clarity of thought and freedom of expression. This may help them to detect dissonance in their texts and sharpen their decision making skills to articulate their intended meaning effectively.