Chapter I

Introduction
1.1. General

Language is primarily a tool for communication, which also plays an effective role in knitting the society. The history of a language is nothing but the history of the people who speak it. Changes are an integral part of language. When a language refrains from changes it almost becomes a dead language. Words change their meaning, new words are added (coined) and old words are replaced by new words. The people who use the language are the main sources of the induced changes. Apart from this, language is influenced politically, economically, ethnographically, technologically, scientifically and culturally. ‘There are about 4,000 languages spoken in the world today’ (Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable, 2003).

1.2. Role of English in the Global Arena

About five hundred years ago English spread through the length and breadth of the world. People not only in the United Kingdom, United States of America but also in the former British colonies speak English. English is used as a first, second and as a foreign language by about 380 million people around the world. It enjoys the privilege of being the largest used western language. It has established itself as a national language in many countries. Speaking English is considered as
superior among natives of the colonial countries. Though French is equally used as a lingua franca in the colonial countries, English is still ‘the real powerhouse’.

English stands elevated and people all over the world aspire to learn the language to present themselves better in whatever field they belong to. The whole world has shrunk to a global village as a result of technological advancements. Globalization is the buzzword in every one's lips in the present scenario. It is been used as the language of the network (web). English is the language used as an effective tool to materialize globalization.

English has become inevitable as it serves as a link language and is learnt in many countries. It is gaining ground even in countries like Japan, China and other Asian countries where it had not set foot so far. These countries do not want to be left out in the whirlpool of globalization and so there are some serious steps that are taken towards learning the language.

The status of English has increased internationally in both the political and commercial spheres after the World War II. The enormous leap in the growth in the field of science and technology was feasible only with English.
English is gaining ground in the field of education as well, worldwide. It enjoys the privilege of being the commonest first foreign language taught in schools. African countries use English as the medium of instruction at the secondary level and beyond. English knowledge is considered indispensable at the post graduate level for reading texts, listening to lectures, for writing research papers and to take part in seminars and discussion.

1.3. English in India

“There is a growing preference for English, particularly in the domain of education, where, significantly, people can exercise their choice when there are alternatives. The exuberant confidence expressed at the time of Independence for the complete replacement of English as a medium of the vital functions of the society has waned and the desire of replacement has given way to the desire for concurrent continuation. With the stabilization of the democratic political system in the country, the demand for equal treatment to all the major languages intensified and English was projected as the neutral language with no regional or ethnic base in the country” [Omkar N. Koul, 1992].

The Indian constitution has recognized more than eighteen native languages and English as the official language. The present situation in India is that a person has to be multi-lingual, for one has to speak their own mother tongue at home, use a local variety outside the home for
social interaction and use yet another language at the place of work. Therefore in India people are bilingual and at times multilingual. English is the language of the private sector, large scale and high tech industries and is extensively used in executing technical work. “91 per cent of advertisements in newspapers for jobs specifically mention competence in English.” [Omkar N. Koul, 1992] The English newspapers enjoy majority circulation in India. “India is the third largest publisher of books in English after USA and UK and 42% of the books that are published in India are in English, though the second language speakers of English is only 2.5%” (1961 Census) (Omkar N. Koul, 1992). According to the Cambridge fact finder (1999), in 1990 the Indian population was 844,000,000, out of which 4% were speakers of English as a second language, that is 33,760,000.

People in the multilingual environment in India prefer to speak in English among themselves. “English is one ‘pan-Indian’ language that would promote ‘national integration, as no other language would.” (Omkar N. Koul, 1992).

Colonial countries, which have adopted English as a second language in school education can reap maximum benefit only if effort is taken to build competence in English. For Indians the possibility of higher education abroad and international mobility can be possible only with the use of English. These advantages have underscored the teaching of English. They can aspire to represent the country on these platforms
only if maximum effort is taken to teach the learners. Enormous resources are being spent in this regard and the benefit it provides is only half, as it is not planned properly.

India being a diversified country has its own style of spoken form of English. The Indian English (Inglish) has many new vocabulary added to it from the native vernacular. There are liberal word inputs into English from day to day usages. Hence, English spoken by people having a particular mother tongue at times becomes unintelligible to people who have different mother tongues.

1.3.1. English Language Teaching in India

English was brought into India a few centuries ago and was initially taught to Indians to carry out clerical jobs. English has been taught in schools as second language for over a century along with the vernacular language. Lord Macaulay’s famous minutes of 2nd February 1835, clearly indicates that the western education should be imparted through the medium of English. He observes, ‘English stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the west whoever knows that language, has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generation’ (Mohammad Aslam, 2003).

After India attained freedom in 1947, “British symbols were replaced but the institutions and instruments were retained. This is true
of the English language also which had symbolic as well as institutional and instrumental functions” (Omkar N. Koul, 1992).

In the remote corners of the country in small villages, the classes meet under trees where the teacher may not have an advanced professional training but are quite successful in language teaching. Suresh Canagarajah (2002) observes: “I am not ashamed to say that it is such a charismatic rural teacher who initiated my own learning of the language”. Such teachers have instilled ‘curiosity towards the language, the ability to intuit linguistic rules from observation of actual usage, a metalinguistic awareness of the system behind languages, and the ability to creatively negotiate meaning with speakers and texts.

The situation has not changed much especially in teaching English. Educational authorities, parents and students are yet to decide on which would be an effective language for being the medium of instruction at school: English or vernacular. “English medium is prestigious and is in great demand, for the replacement of English in higher education (under graduation, post graduation and professional colleges) the policy is lukewarm and there is strong resistance citing arguments of academic mobility of teachers and students, availability of text and reference materials and lack of development of Indian languages, particularly the technical terms” (Omkar N. Koul, 1992).
There is still an unanswered question as to the level of competence one should possess in English. Is it enough if a learner is able to pass examinations in English or should the learner be fluent enough in English to use it effectively in communication? Another question to be answered is the level at which the students are to be introduced to English. In some states it is grade one. But there is no uniformity in this regard.

The teaching methods, teaching material, teachers, tools and the classroom have remained unchanged or with only a little change, pose a problem and hinder the language teaching. The problems are multi-edged, and effective measures are to be taken to solve it. Teaching English suffers a serious setback, which is not aimed at the academic and professional needs of the learners. The teachers are ill equipped to bring in an effective learning process in the learners and so they are even resistant to the new tasks.

One of the problems is in the area of material production, which is used to teach the language to the learners. It has to be checked for its goals, assumptions, objectives and practices, as it is implied to a larger nation.

The curriculum has been handed down, the hierarchical ladder to the experts who design the textbook according to the framework. This is handed over to the teachers who decide ‘what, why, how, where and
when’ they should be learned by the learner. The cadres of people, who designed the textbook, are mostly those who do not have experience as a teacher, and know the classroom only theoretically. The learner becomes the victim throughout their educational career. It is virtually impossible to present the problems of teaching English in India because of its inherent diversity. To paint the exact picture of the problem a bigger canvas is needed.

1.4. Part Played by English in Schools

“English is taught in more than 200,000 schools and it is taught from the primary stage itself in many States” (Omkar N. Koul, 1992). Though a quantum increase is witnessed in the number of schools and the enrolment of students in such schools, the level of competence in English has neither increased nor has remained standstill. The schools opt a bilingual method and pose that the medium of instruction is English. English as a foreign language cannot linguistically function as a second language, and is the crux of the problem of teaching English as a second language. Millions of Indians study a foreign language as if it were their native language, with the result that the required competence is never achieved. The standards are so poor “that ways and means of improving the teaching of English as a second language constitute a major academic obsession – Error analysis, Contrastive Analysis, Use of Technology, Remedial Courses, Testing, and so on.” (Omkar N. Koul, 1992)
English which began as a language of commerce in India has itself become a profitable commodity. English language teaching has become a very expensive business. The institutes, which impart this kind of learning, are divided into the haves and have-nots. The parents are even ready to send their wards to the expensive schools at the cost of their personal pleasures. The conventional type of classroom with blackboard, wooden slate, a teacher who handled almost all the subjects to all the classes is a rare site these days especially in the urban areas it is lost. Technology has replaced the conventional learning environment. But in a country with huge amount of learners a close examination in this regard is essential. It has being reduced into a ritual and it has lost its enthusiasm because the teachers and the students are not yet ready for this change in their classroom. New exercises, which are to be aided by technology, are merely reduced to a mechanical routine. This can be seen in the simple exercises for listening. It is performed without enthusiasm in a monotonous way. Thus, the increasing demand of English language teaching has only decreased its standard.

The whole curriculum has to be revised and rearranged; especially the teaching materials have to be revised. It should be planned in such a way that there is integration and coherence. The teachers are to be oriented and motivated for effective teaching by the new system.
1.4.1. English in Higher Secondary Education in Tamil Nadu

The examination conducted in March 2006 was the first examination based on the new revised syllabus. The textbooks taken up for the study are used by over 5,00,000 students every year and hence an evaluation of the textbook is inevitable.

The boards of study that exist among the schools in Tamil Nadu are matriculation and State board upto the tenth standard. The state board can be further classified into English medium and Tamil medium based on the medium of instruction that is followed. The matriculation board is considered better by both the students and the parents because of the standard it possess. The matriculation schools are private institutions whereas the state board schools are run by the Government and in some cases by private institutions. The main differences between these schools are the teacher student ratio and the standard of teaching. The students from the matriculation are believed to possess better competency in English when compared with their counterparts in the Government schools. Again in the Government schools the English medium students are believed to possess better competency in English than the Tamil medium students. The students from all these groups take up the same board (state board) when they enter the higher secondary. About 5,76,948 students appeared for the board exams conducted in March 2006, out of which 74.5%, that is, 3,89,244 have
passed the examination. The percentage of students who passed in English is 95.5%. The first mark in English was 192 out of 200 in the examination conducted by the Stateboard in March 2006.

1.5. Need for English Language Teaching

Need of English has gone up in academic, official and commercial walks of life. The Education Commission, 1964-66 has said the following on the teaching of English. “For years to come English will continue to be necessary in higher education as a library language, so a solid foundation in English must be laid at the school stage” it further states the position of English in India “English for a very large number of students, will remain only the second or the third language” (Omkar N. Koul, 1992)

The Central Advisory Board of Education suggested the three-language formula.

“1. (a) Mother tongue, or
   (b) Regional language, or
   (c) a composite course of the mother tongue and a regional language, or
   (d) a composite course of the mother tongue and a classical language, or
   (e) a composite course of a regional and classical language.

2. English or a modern European Language.
3. Hindi (for non-Hindi speaking areas) or another Indian language for Hindi-speaking areas.” (Mohammad Aslam, 2003)

The role of English is wider and some of them are given below:

1. English is the language of knowledge (science and technology)
2. English is the language of liberal, modern thinking
3. English is our window to view the world
4. English is the library language; English is the language of reason
5. English is the link language;
6. English is the lingua franca.

The metaphor of the ‘window’ is central in this structure, in which Indian languages are the ‘walls’, that enclose us in ‘darkness’ and English is the ‘window’ that, lets in the ‘light’ of reason and modernization.” (Omkar N. Koul, 1992)

Though during the time of independence in India English was considered as the language of the Satan by the freedom fighters, and was much apposed, it soon established itself and came to be praised as the boon of Saraswati, the Goddess of learning by Rajaji in his later years.

English is considered as a prestigious language and the user is considered as a privileged person in the Indian society, because all the advanced knowledge is available in English or in English translations and this position is still to be reached by any regional language in India.
1.6. Review of Literature

“Design, Oversight, and Teacher Qualification for Dual Credit Freshman English Courses in Texas” by Bunting (2004), Texas A and M University Commerce, conducted a research to access dual credit English courses in the Texas Community college system in which supervisor and English teachers responded to the questionnaire that asked about the design and implementation of dual credit courses at school.

Lee (2004) carried out a research on “Globalization, Nationalism, and the English Language: Korean High School English Textbook Analysis”, to the University of Washington. It deals with the content of the Korean High School English as Foreign Language (EFL) Textbooks. The implication of this result included the necessary revision of the Korean EFL textbook considering their impact on the learners.

“A Linguistic study of the Techniques of Teaching English at the Higher Secondary Level in Tamilnadu”, submitted by P.K. Rangasamy (1998), to the Bharathiar University, deals with the techniques employed while teaching English at higher secondary level. This work has highlighted the methods adopted for teaching English at higher secondary level.

The present study is considered as a pioneer study on evaluating the textbook for English at higher secondary level in Tamilnadu keeping in mind the views of the students and the teachers.

1.7. Research Design and Methodology

The research design that is adopted and the methodology used are explained in detailed.

1.7.1. Aim of the Study

The present study has been taken up having the following aims in mind:

1) to diagnose the strength and weaknesses of the higher secondary textbooks;

2) to point out restructuring of the existing textbook wherever a need raises;

3) to find out the attitude of the students belonging to various mediums of instruction, that is, English and Tamil and various boards, that is, Matriculation and Government State board.

4) to identify if the existing textbooks prescribed for the higher secondary develops the competencies of the learner sufficiently.
1.7.2. Method of Study

The method of study adopted for this study is descriptive. Opinions on the textbooks were collected from the teachers and the students who are from different boards. The study has been carried out in the following sequence/order.

1. Preparation of the Questionnaire
2. Selection of Informants
3. Collection of data
4. Elicitation of data
5. Data analysis and processing
6. Content analysis of the textbook

1.7.2.1. Preparation of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was prepared to obtain the views of the students as well as the teachers on the textbook. For this purpose four questionnaires were prepared. One questionnaire was prepared for the teachers who handle the first year class and the second one for the teachers who handle the second year class. The third questionnaire was prepared for students belonging to the first year class and the fourth questionnaire for the students belonging to the second year class.

The first part of the student’s questionnaire contained questions relating to their educational background, sex, mother tongue, group of study such as first group, second group etc. name of the school and its
location. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of questions relating to their views on the physical aspects of the textbook. The final part of the questionnaire consisted of questions that tested the competency level of the students.

The teacher’s questionnaire contained the same questions as that of the students with respect to the textbook. Apart from this the teachers were questioned on the teaching experience, educational qualification etc.

1.7.2.2. Selection of the Informants

For the present study samples were drawn from the school situated in and around the district of Coimbatore.

Total numbers of informants are 275.

1.7.2.3. Administering the Test and Collection of Data

Questionnaire method has been used to collect data from the informants, regarding their views on the textbook and a test was administered to test their performance in various competencies.

1.7.2.4. Methods Adopted for Analysis of Data

The views that were gathered from the informants were used for the analysis. Apart from the questionnaire, which served as the main source of data, a systematic analysis of the textbook was also taken up. The various features of the textbook and the supplementary reader has been analysed in detailed and presented. Thus an attempt has been made to evaluate the higher secondary English textbooks.
1.7.3. Scope of the Present Study

The scope of the study has been restricted to the evaluation of the English textbooks prescribed to the first and second year of the higher secondary and the supplementary readers for both the years. The views of the teachers who teach using these textbooks and the students who learn through these textbooks has been collected and analysed.

The data was collected towards the end of the academic year when the teachers had completed teaching the textbook and the students were revising for the final examination. This was considered the right time to collect data as the students have used the textbook for one academic year and their views are valid ones. The number of schools selected were, three school to represent the three board, namely, Matriculation, Government English medium and Government Tamil medium.

1.8. Presentation of the Study

The present study, on the evaluation of the English textbooks for the higher secondary is divided into six chapters. The chapter wise presentation of the study is presented as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction

The first chapter consists of a brief description on language, role of English in the global arena, English in India, English as second language
in the Indian context, part played by English in schools, with special reference to higher secondary education in Tamil nadu are explained in detail.

This chapter further explains the research design and methodology such as selection of informants, data collection through fieldwork, administering the test, and methods adopted for data analysis. A brief review of literature is also presented.

Chapter II: Curriculum and the need for Evaluation of Curriculum

This chapter throws light on curriculum, syllabus, and course material designing for English as a second language in Tamil nadu.

Chapter III: Organisation of the Textbook

This chapter presents in detail the lay out of the textbooks (eleventh and twelfth standard) taken up for evaluation. Further, list of units, word count of each prose item, sentence in a prose item, longest word in a prose item, shortest word in a prose item, longest sentence in a prose item, shortest sentence in a prose item, number of tasks in each unit, total number of tasks under each competency in a textbook are listed and discussed in detail. The list of units, word count of each story, sentence in a story, longest word in a story, shortest word in a story, longest sentence in a story, shortest sentence in a story are listed for the supplementary readers (eleventh and twelfth) of the higher secondary.
Chapter IV: Analysis of the Physical Aspects of Textbook

This chapter presents the view of the students from various boards, and their teachers, on various physical aspects of the textbook, like cover design, printing, illustrations, charts, graphs, topics selected, tasks in the textbook, sentences and words in the textbook, grammar items, difficulty faced while using the textbook. The views on the physical aspects of the supplementary reader by the informants are also presented.

Chapter V: Analysis of Competency Task in the Textbook

Chapter five focuses on the skills that the textbook develops. The performance of students in various competencies, like vocabulary competency, grammatical competency, reading competency, writing competency, literary competency, supplementary reader, learning competency, occupational competency, strategic competency and listening competency are discussed in detail.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

The concluding chapter deals with the major findings of the present study, focusing on the merits and demerits of the textbook and suggestion for the improvement of the textbook, and further research in the area. A bibliography has also been appended to the study.