CHAPTER—I

INTRODUCTION

True education, it must be noted at the outset, is a powerful force in bringing about a desired change. It is education and education alone that can bring about changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, appreciations and understanding things around us.

Education is a process of growth and development which takes place in students, when they work at it under favourable or unfavourable circumstances. The content of education is not a body of knowledge. It is a cluster of attitudes, feelings, perceptions, insights, abilities and skills of which the ability to think independently and clearly is of the first importance. No less valuable is the ability to experience life fully and honestly. Knowledge, as far as education is concerned, is a means to this end and not an end in itself. For the student, there is no knowledge until the student involves himself in getting it. Until the student does something with it, it is only a set of materials waiting to be transformed into living thoughts, ideas and attitudes. In other words, knowledge exists as something known by someone. It has no independent reality of its own.

Generally speaking, most education systems do not help youngsters to understand the components of their conscious and unconscious personalities, the mechanisms of the brain, the operation of the intelligence, the laws governing their physical development, the meaning of dreams and operations, the nature of their relations with one another and with the community at large.

1.1 THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER MOTIVATION

The concept of motivation is used in the explanation of a great number of diverse behaviours. It is concerned with the arousal, direction and continuance of behaviour. It is an omnibus word carrying many different psychological processes as passengers.

In education, motivation often has a rather specialized meaning. Motivation is a concept or variable without physical reality; and its measurement is indirect, just as is our measurement of other psychological constructs such as attitudes, interests and values. (Encyclopedia of Educational Evaluation)
Motivation has been of great interest to parents and deep concern to teachers. Both parents and teachers want their children should learn well. Their deep anxiety is how to stimulate in children a desire to learn, and if once this desire is stimulated, how to nurture it and sustain the same. In other words, the major concern of the home and school is how to motivate the pupil to learn how to arouse his motivation towards school and the learning that is imparted in it.

It is mentioned that motives do form an organized and unified system. But men’s motives are based on his wants and needs. Therefore, the concept of motivation does imply some kind of internal drive force in the organism itself. This drive can have either a positive or negative direction. Wants, needs or desires indicate positive direction; and/or desires indicate positive direction; and they imply the individual’s learning towards the achievement of some object, position or goal. The “negative directions” are indicative of fears or aversions that the individual feels and he tends to move away from the achievement of a certain object, position or goal.

Frymier (1970) clarifies that the concept in another way stating that motivation is that gives direction and the intensity to behaviour and motivation to learn is that which gives direction and intensity to human behaviour in an emotional context and motivation to learn in school is that which, gives direction and intensity to students’ behaviour in a school situation. The terms “direction” and “intensity” need some clarification. According to Frymier, direction implies selection from possible variations in purpose of goals; and intensity implied possible variations in purpose of goals and intensity implied possible variations in terms of degree of effort or energy put forth to attain the goal.

The “direction” further implied that children should be helped to learn, to value learning, to want to learn, to learn how to learn, to value knowledge, to acquire knowledge, to understand knowledge or to apply knowledge to unknown and unforeseen situations. Motivation to learn in schools ought to result in moving school children in that direction. Not only the schools should succeed in kindling a desire among school pupils to learn but give a direction in this sense becomes learned behaviour at least in part and it can be taught or developed among school children.

Motivation of students towards the school is to be interpreted in terms of academic achievement. High motivation leads to better learning and high academic
achievement. Some positively, motivated youngsters seem to draw most heavily upon forces existing within themselves to enhance their learning. They feel adequate, unthreatened and secure.

The most important of Desai’s study (1970) is that healthy classroom climate and school climate serve to achieve an increase in pupil’s motivation towards their school at a significant level. Kurtz (1951) came out with a very significant finding that attitude towards school and academic achievement are positively related. Telling is not teaching, listening is not learning and seeing is not perceiving. So, without some theory of motivation and ability of the teacher in motivating the pupil, no matter how elementary, the teacher will have no guidelines to alter his behaviour or to develop new ones to fit the teaching-learning process.

Some pertinent questions asked by many people are these. (a) Why do children dislike their schools? (b) Why are they not interested in going to their schools? (c) Why are the schools not able to attract their students towards them? In other words, why is the pupils’ motivation low towards the schools? What are the factors of pupils’ motivation towards schools? What happens if their motivation is low? In order to find out answer to the questions, Frymier conceptualized the theory of pupil’s motivation towards schools, standardized the tool for measuring pupils’ motivation towards school and contributed a significant chapter in the concept through the special issue of his “Theory into Practice” Journal (1970).

It assumes that highly motivated children are attracted towards the whole world of ideas according to their own personality and sense of values. This assumption is based on quite a number of researches. The degree to which they are motivated towards learning by the teacher is directly related to their openness to experiences their personal sense of adequacy and the things they cherish.

Proper motivation by the teacher gives both direction and intensity to behaviour. Motivation to learn in school gives direction and intensity to student’s behaviour in a school situation. Motivation relate to the ‘why’ of human behaviour, what people do, ‘how’ they do it and when’ or ‘where’ it is done – are all important but ‘why people do’ and ‘what they do’ are the motivational questions.
Motivation gives both direction and intensity to behaviour to beg the question what is motivation? To be more precise we have to say that motivation is that which gives direction and intensity to behaviour. And motivation to learn is that which gives direction and intensity to human behaviour in an emotional context. And motivation to learn in school is that which gives direction and intensity to students’ behaviour in a school situation.

Motivation is an inferred construct. Direction implies selection from possible variations in purposes or goals. Intensity implies possible variation in terms of degree of effort or energy put forth to attain the goal. Motivation to learn is complex and elusive. So, teacher’s role to motivate the pupil to learn is unique and inevitable, the degree of learning depends directly on the motivational abilities of teacher. In this context, certain pertinent questions struck the mind of the Investigator.

a. What constitutes the teacher motivation?
b. How best can we improve the motivational abilities of teachers?
c. How does the teachers’ motivational abilities affect the standards of his/her English Language Teaching Ability?
d. Do motivation has a say on the teachers’ English Language Teaching Ability? If so to what extent?
e. Can we classify teachers on the basis of their motivational abilities?
f. Does the teachers’ motivational abilities influence his/her English Language Teaching ability? If so to what extent? These are certain vital questions which are to be probed into and await answers.

1.2 THE CONCEPT OF TEACHER COMPETENCE AND APTITUDE

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) has aptly opined in its report that the destiny of India is being shaped in its classrooms. The shape will undoubtedly depend on what goes on in the classrooms and how it goes on. These two facets of classroom situations entirely revolve around its qualities of teachers, who virtually steer the whole process. Hence, teacher is an important instrument in the teaching-learning process, and more so his qualities which contribute for effective teaching. The more active, influential, forceful and effective the more effective and useful in the education. Thus, teacher effectiveness is a phenomenon which works well on the learner.
It is crystal clear that the entire process of teaching-learning transaction depends on the efficiency of a teacher, who is in turn role to manifest potentialities of a child into actuality be accepted without second thought. Teaching-learning process cannot be undertaken in vacuum but, it is a positively directed action, for which teachers are to be endowed with optimum competence in teaching.

There has been an abundant research on teacher effectiveness, teacher competency, etc. with reference to various schools subjects but, research to correlate teacher competence with his English Language teaching ability is in dearth. Rao (1989) states that the quality of effectiveness of teachers is considered to be associated with his attitude towards his profession; his satisfaction and his values and adjustment in the job and professional interest. Fontana D. (1986) further observed that if the teacher is rigid, or has a doctrinaire belief of that his methods are right and those of anyone, who disagrees with him are wrong, than he will be depriving his children of a range of possible learning experiences, to their disadvantage and to his own.

Similarly the Education Commission (1964-66) corroborates that “Of all the different factors which influence the quality of education and its contribution to natural development, the quality, competence, character and adjustment of teachers are undoubtedly the most significant”. From this, it could be deciphered that an effective and competent teacher should have command over his subject and should possess an optimum level of desired aptitude for the profession in order to initiate the substantial learning outcomes.

The concept of teacher effectiveness and teacher competence are not totally new to the field of teaching-learning phenomena. From the time teaching started to gain recognition as a profession experts as well as common man began to wonder about the effectiveness of the teacher and about the range of competence the teacher must have; because, knowing the subject is different from that of the competence or ability to put it in an intelligent way to enable the pupil understand the most complex things in a simplified manner. The concept of a competent teacher is fast changing. Teacher competence and the teacher aptitude are the new targets towards which the educational researchers are heading. So much of importance is given to the teacher competence
because, that alone determines the effectiveness of any educational system of any country.

The educational system might have well formulated aims and objectives to cherish long term destinies and short-term or day-to-day classroom activities. It might have developed excellent administrative structure. But, without an army of efficient teachers the system cannot function smoothly. The aims and objectives should ultimately be translated into real practice by competent teachers. Unfortunately teacher competence is the most neglected aspect of our system of education. For long time it was thought that anybody can be a teacher provided he has some knowledge and a little competence he has to teach. But today’s aim of education is not to impart knowledge alone. Teachers have to face a great challenge today. Since the demands on them are umpteen. They are responsible and accountable for the around development of children, who are kept under their supervision. Therefore, there should be an overall change and development in the professional ability of classroom managers or facilitators.

Teaching is an intricate activity. The intricacy of this activity lies in different types – material, social, intellectual and emotional. Among these which make an individual to be a successful teacher, what constitute effective teaching and what are the distinguishing characteristics of a competent teacher are perplexing and recurring questions. But, till today there is no comprehensive technique and no generally accepted criteria for evaluating teacher competence and aptitude.

Teaching is acclaimed as the noblest profession. A person who is in this profession as one who is in any other profession will curiously question himself. “How can I be successful in my profession?” Besides putting a question like this, he should keep many things in his mind to achieve success, in his profession. The positive way in interpreting failure is the important aspect in achieving success, keeping failure in mind a tendency to withdraw from the activity will make him dejected and quit the job. A strong desire to get success and interpretation of failure will pave a clear way to success. Doing constant practice in the field work and treating the practice as a prayer, one can achieve success. An intention to get joy to review and to be self-motivated with a dedicated mind will make us perfect in acquiring skills. Without being product oriented, one should strive hard with self-motivation, competence and aptitude to achieve success. So, the teacher
who knows the quality of his profession, who practices his skill of teaching, who knows pupil’s psyche, who graduates his competence and attune his ability of teaching according to the current needs of the learner, who accepts his profession totally i.e. his aptitude for the profession, who teaches to reach out, who understands the phenomenon “the classroom climate”, who has a mastery of giving the ‘paper’ feedback in his communication, who knows and tries various techniques, methods and approaches to the process of teaching, who motivates himself to teach and has an ability to motivate his pupil to learn, who grows out of his/her relationship and create a healthy ethics around him/her, who has a sense of time management and class management, who has an ability to question and probe questions with a thoughtful attitude and a ceaseless aptitude to grade-up his knowledge and who builds in a ‘self-renewal’ processes in himself can become a successful and competent teacher.

From this it could be deciphered that a successful and competent teacher would have an aptitude too far the profession to initiate the desired learning outcomes. Though teaching competence has been recognized as an important component of teaching-learning process, relatively little effort is made to define the term. A glimpse at the literature of teacher effectiveness deciphers, many related terms such as ‘teaching success’, ‘successful teacher’, ‘effective teacher’, ‘teaching efficiency’, ‘teacher performance’, ‘teacher competency’, etc.

Enormous investigations reveal several relevant terminologies synonymous to teacher competence, writes Barr (1961), one finds various terms used to designate or describe the successful teacher. Frequently the word ‘efficiency’ is used. The terms are often applied to teacher as: teacher efficiency, and sometimes in the teacher behaviour as in the teacher efficiency. Donald M. Medley (1982) states that the teacher competency as those of knowledge, abilities and beliefs – a teacher possesses and bring to the teaching situation. Teacher competency differ from teacher performance and teacher effectiveness in that it is a stable characteristic of the teacher; that does not change appreciably when the teacher moves from one situation to another. By this, it is evident that the knowledge of subject matter, teaching skills, beliefs and feelings of teachers may be considered as components of teaching competency that a competent teacher is supposed to possess.
Biddle (1964) advocates that disagreement and vagueness with respect to the description of teaching competence are to be expected and cannot entirely be avoided because competent teaching is unhesitatingly a relative matter. The term competence, has been used by some investigators to refer to training process, properties of teachers, behaviour exhibited by teachers and efforts produced by teachers. The same variables have been termed by other investigators as effectiveness, criteria of competence, ability to teach and host of other terms – teacher success, teacher effectiveness, teacher efficiency, teacher performance, teacher competency, etc. are used simultaneously by investigators.

Ryan (1960) states that “What constitutes effective teaching? What are the distinguishing characteristics of competent teachers? are some proactive and recurring questions. Unfortunately no universally acceptable/definitive answers can be given to these complex queries . . . Embarrassing as it may be for professional educators to recognize relatively little progress has been made . . . ! Similarly Biddle and Ellena accepted in 1964 that nobody knew who a competent teacher was, they stated – probably no aspect of education has been discussed with greater frequency, with as much deep concern or by more educators and citizens than has that of teacher effectiveness . . . How to define it, how to identify it, how to measure it, how to evaluate it and how to detect and remove obstacles to its achievement . . . finding about the competence of teachers are inclusive and piecemeal and little is presently known for certain about teacher excellence.

Jangira (1979) states “teacher effectiveness has been considered into its three separate components for the convenience of presentation. It should not be taken those components are water tight components. It also follows that there are no clear-cut laws to distinguish one component from the other.

1.3 THE CONCEPTS OF TEACHER AND TEACHING

Teaching is a comprehensive phenomenon which constitute thinking, planning and practice along with decision making of teachers. Every successful educational enterprise requires an optimum utilization of human capabilities available to the system. Consequently, every such enterprise or activity needs periodic assessment and review. This has to be followed by search for better conceptual understanding, implementation strategies and practices. While it will be necessary for the teachers and teacher
preparation systems to ensure regular acquisition of new skills and upgradation of existing skills. The assessment of performance of teachers shall also remain an essential precondition for enhancing the efficacy of educational processes. (Rajput, 1994)

Teaching is to assist in the development of adoptable, rational, creative and cooperative individuals, who are capable of coping with the world in which they live, who are prepared to be productive citizens in the world of tomorrow and who possess an awareness of moral, spiritual and social values.

Teaching is to develop students, who are capable of and dedicated to be life time learners. This means helping them define their most pressing needs and interests and problems and also help students to develop competence, autonomy, purpose, integrity, interpersonal relationship, identity and management of emotions. To achieve these basic objectives of teaching the teacher will have to develop certain personal qualities. A teacher cannot expect to awaken in his students a lively response to something that he does not really get excited about himself. He cannot arouse interest in his students for anything in which he has no great interest in himself. His primary responsibility is to stimulate the quality of imagination. In his classes, he has to spark the imagination of his students, and this he can do by introducing novel ways of looking at the world. Accordingly, he has to spend more time raising questions, and encouraging students to raise them and less time “presenting the subject”.

Falk and Dow (1971) viewed, “Teaching in the formal sense of institutionalization is deliberate. It is directed towards a goal, the attainment of which normally involves attention and effort and provides a relevant definition of success. The ‘verb to teach’ may be used either in an ‘intentional’ sense or in a success sense and if the former sense is used one means a goal directed action, teaching somebody, something whether the learning takes place or not. If the success sense is used one teaches student, to parse, if and only if he attains the defined goal of parsing if the intentional use is stipulated them to failure to learn on the part of the student may be attributed to the factors other than defects for which teacher can be held responsible. Student learning would not be the sole criteria whether the behaviour and the personality of the teacher were good for job. As an active and enthusiastic teacher and on the basis of exhaustive survey made by the Investigator, he was often puzzled by many queries such as:
a. Whether teacher motivation correlates with English Language Teaching Ability? If so to what extent?
b. At the micro level what dimensions of teacher motivation can enhance his/her English Language Teaching and to what extent?
c. How does teachers’ motivational abilities affect the standards of his/her English Language Teaching Ability?
d. How can the teachers be classified on the basis of their motivation, competence and aptitude?
e. What dimension of teaching competency improve the English Language Teaching ability of the teacher and to what extent?
f. What dimensions of teaching aptitude improve or influence the English Language Teaching ability? To what extent?
g. What are the various correlates of teachers’ English Language Teaching Ability?
h. Is there any significant relationship between the teachers’ English Language Teaching Ability, and age, experience, sex, qualification. If so, to what extent?
i. Do the marital status and sex of the teacher affect their English Language Teaching Ability?
j. Is English Language Teaching Ability of teachers influenced by the type of institutions such as private or Government?
k. Is there any relation between the motivational abilities of teachers and their English Language Teaching Ability?
l. Whether demographic variables such as sex, age, marital status influence, motivation, competence and aptitude of the teachers? If so to what extent?
m. How do professional variables such as qualification, subject of teaching, experience, designation, etc. influence the English Language Teaching Ability?
n. Do the teachers of Government and private schools differ in their motivation, competence and aptitude? If so to what extent?
o. What is the relation between motivation, competence and aptitude and their English Language Teaching Ability?
p. How can we classify the teachers based on their English Language Teaching Ability?
q. Do motivation, competence and aptitude have a say on the English Language Teaching Ability of teachers?

r. Do all the teachers in general differ in their English Language Teaching Ability? If so how do they differ? and to what extent?

Above are some of the questions which prompted the Investigator to take up the present investigation, so as to answer the queries raised above, the problem is studied in relation to different demographic and professional variables.

The answers to the above thought provoking questions may help the Investigator to draw a few important conclusions in respect of studying different components of motivation competence and aptitude in relation to English Language Teaching Ability among the teachers of West Godavari, East Godavari and Krishna Districts of Andhra Pradesh?

In the light of the above questions the objectives of the study and various hypotheses with the help of which the above questions may be answered are formulated for the purpose of the present investigation.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“INFLUENCE OF MOTIVATION, COMPETENCE AND APTITUDE OF THE TEACHERS ON THEIR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING ABILITY”

1.5 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Teachers are the persons from whom society and the nation expects a lot. They are the makers of the pillars of the nation. They have the responsibility of moulding and motivating the students, according to the requirements of the society and the nation. Teachers must have special qualities of leadership. Only then can make their students become leaders in the future. As is the teacher, so are his students. Above and beyond the personal qualifications, professional experience and the qualities of leadership, the work of the teachers demands that they can be competent in self-direction possess patience and perseverance, be experiment minded and well adjusted to themselves and to others.

A teacher enters the class. A good teacher enters into the heart of students, and a missionary teacher enters the very life of the community. To become a missionary teacher, one apart from the main work of teaching should willingly come forward to
guide and counsel his students, keeping in mind the fact that the future of the nation is in their hands.

Teaching needs three qualities. Knowledge is the first. The ability to pass it on to others, what we usually call ‘communication skill’ is the next. Aptitude is the third. Communication skill cannot be found through a test either. This grows with experience. So to have this one has to become a teacher. But to become a teacher one needs this, it looks like a ‘vicious’ circle.

Knowledge is more important for a teacher of a postgraduate class. The students of the class are filtered stuff and they need more information than mere presentation. But if one is teaching in a school or plus two class, the ability to communicate is more important than the knowledge. Here teaching is an innovation. In a school classroom teaching has to be a dialogue and not a monologue. This would mean we should have patience towards questions no matter how silly they are. Those who are successful in these respects alone can become good teachers. The aptitude for teaching too can be decided only by the persons themselves. One has to decide to become a teacher out of sheer interest. Only those motivated to the teaching profession opt for it. The motivation sets in early. Sitting in a good teacher’s class those with aptitude always probe whether they can teach like this and then believe they can. Similarly, sitting in a poor teacher’s class experience might dissuade even those with possible aptitude for the profession. Similarly the student’s aptitude to learn is well influenced by the classes he sits in and the teachers who teach him from primary school to college.

Usually many teachers use the living human computer available in the child only for storing information and retrieving the same verbatim at the time of examinations. Teaching and learning becomes memory oriented and focused only on the public examinations for obvious reasons. The challenge before the teachers is to plan for education towards the development of human resources from a holistic perspective for nation building in our pluralistic secular society. So, there is a big mission ahead of teachers especially for a language teacher whose responsibility is to develop substantial communicative skills among the pupils. It is with proper communicative skills one can express his/her ideas in a vivid and clear manner. It is possible if and only if proper level of language acquisition has taken place in a pupil. The sheer responsibility of inculcating
proper language skills lies on the shoulders of teachers. Teachers with proper motivational abilities, good competence and reasonable aptitude for the profession would deliver quality goods which would be useful to build a better and prospective nation.

As the entire investigation is to know various factors influencing the teachers’ English Language Teaching Ability, there is a need to know something about the importance of language with special reference to English Language and also about teaching English language – A present scenario is mentioned in the following pages.

**English Language Teaching**

Language is unique to man. No other species possess a truly symbolic means of communication and no human society, however simple its material culture, lacks the basic human heritage of a well-developed language. Language is the pre-requisite for the accumulation of other cultural traits. Such fundamental aspects of human society as organized political life, legal systems, religion and science are inconceivable without that basic and human of tools, a linguistic system of communication.

Language is not only a necessary condition for culture, it is itself a part of culture. It, like other shared behavioural norms is acquired by the individual as a member of a particular social group through a complex process of learning. Like other aspects of human culture, it characteristically varies from group to group and under goes significant modification in the course of its transmission through time within the same society.

So intimate is the relation between a language and the people who speak it that the two can scarcely be thought of apart. A language lives only so long as there are people who speak it and use it as their native tongue, and its greatness is only that given to it by these people. A language is important because the people who speak it are important – politically, economically, commercially, socially and culturally. Sometimes the cultural importance of a race or nation has at some former time been great that their language remains important among cultivated people long after it has ceased to represent political, commercial or other greatness.

“A language consists of symbols that convey meaning, plus rules for combining those symbols, that can be used to generate an infinite variety of messages”. This definition includes four critical properties of a language.

First, language is symbolic i.e. people use spoken sounds and written words to
represent objects, actions, events and ideas. The symbolic nature of language greatly expands what people can communicate. Symbols allow one to refer to objects that may be in another place and to events that happened at another time. Language symbols are flexible in that a variety of somewhat different objects may be called by the same name.

Second, language is semantic. The symbols used in a language are arbitrary in that no built-in-relationship exists between the look or sound of words and objects they stand for.

Third, language is generative. A limited number of symbols can be combined in an infinite variety of ways to generate an endless array of novel messages. Everyone has some “stock sayings” but everyday we create sentences that we have never spoken before.

Fourth, language is structural. Although people can generate an infinite variety of sentences, these sentences must be structured in a limited number of ways. There are rules that govern the arrangement of words, into phrases and sentences. Some arrangements are acceptable and some are not.

**Language as Rule – Governed Behaviour**

Learning a language is primarily a problem of establishing a bond between a language form and its meaning and this is sometimes sought to be explained in terms of the psychological process of conditioned learning in animals. But, human being cannot be explained away by such a simple mechanistic theory of stimuli and responses. Nor is language learning entirely a matter of habit. The difference between animal learning and human language learning can be easily seen if we observe a parrot learning language. If a parrot is taught, for example to say: Lakshmi is playing, when a girl named Lakshmi is playing, and to say Meera is reading; the parrot would be able to produce the two sentences correctly on these two specific occasions. But if on one occasion the girl happened to be reading (instead of playing), the poor parrot would not be able to substitute her name in the second sentence and create a new sentence to fit the occasion. Lakshmi is reading. A human child is capable of making this substitution because he can grasp a system which an animal or a bird cannot. In learning his mother tongue, though the child makes numerous mistakes at first, in course of time he unconsciously makes his own generalizations and *ad hoc* rules about the major systems of his language to produce
a new sentence and avoid incorrect constructions.

The number of possible sentences in a language is infinite. Many of these sentences have already been uttered and many more will be uttered, but at any moment in time there will still be an infinite number of sentences that have not been uttered. It is, therefore, even theoretically impossible to establish a bond between every sentence and its meaning. But even so, a child of four years old ‘knows’ all these infinite number of uttered sentences in his mother tongue, for he is able to understand and produce anyone of them when the occasion arises. In fact, he produces a new sentence every time he speaks, because we hardly say the same sentence twice in our life. This is possible because the systems that control the various language forms are finite. They have to be finite in order that man may learn them within a reasonable period of time. These few patterns are used over and over again, in what is known as ‘recursive patterning’ to form larger constructions and a child completely masters these patterns of his mother tongue at a fairly early age.

This unconscious assimilation or internalization of grammar usually takes place in what is known as ‘critical period’ of learning. This is the period in the growth of an organism in which it is prone to learn certain specific skills naturally. In this period the organism is instinctively motivated to learn the particular skill, which makes the learning easy and natural. This critical period for language learning in a human child is said to lie between the age of two years and adolescence. It is because of this internalization of grammar into automatic habits that language is sometimes viewed as rule – governed behaviour.

**Knowing a language**

Knowing a language is not the same thing as knowing about a language. A child or an illiterate person generally does not know anything about his mother tongue, yet he can use it with perfect facility. On the other hand, a grammarian may know a great deal about the grammar of a foreign language and yet he may not be able to use it with the same facility as a child or an illiterate native speaker does. Knowing a language not only implies the ability to produce the sounds and the structure of the language as a matter of automatic habit but also the ability to hold under attention the entire utterance. The latter ability is called monitor function. Robert Lado defines a person who knows a language as
the one who can use its structure accurately for communication at will, with attention focused on the content, recalling automatically the units and the patterns as needed, and holding them for a normal memory span at conversational speed, noticing any errors that occur.

**Language as skill**

Language is often called a ‘skill’ rather than a ‘subject’. Though a skill does not altogether preclude intellectual activity, it is more a matter of ‘doing’ than of ‘knowing’. In learning the mother tongue, the first skill that a child acquires is the ability to understand the spoken word: the skill of listening. Next, he tries to produce these sound sequences to express his own desires and needs and thereby acquires the skill of speaking. For an illiterate person, these basis skills constitute the language ability of the person. The ability to read and write is a matter of literacy. But since we want our pupils to be literate in the language, the skills of reading and writing are also included as basic language skills in the secondary school course.

**Nuances of imparting skills**

Given the fact that India is a polyglot nation, it is surprising that so many children find learning a language in school so difficult even after receiving ten years of instruction in a second or third language, many students are barely able to speak a single grammatically correct sentence in it. Children in the metropolitan cities speak, read and write in English fluently, and can also speak their mother tongue. However, most of these children cannot read the script of their mother tongue as they opt for Hindi as the “Second Language” in School. While they learn to read and write in Hindi, these children are unable to converse in it. Likewise, there are a number of first generation learners in English who attend “English Medium” Schools but cannot construct grammatical sentences in English even after receiving education in the language for six or seven years. These children are more comfortable speaking in the vernacular, but do not achieve the same level of fluency in English.

Thus, regardless of the language in question, many children in schools fail to become proficient in a non-dominant language. Yet, many people in India speak more than one language fairly fluently if they learn the language in a “natural environment”. We need to examine the process by which a language is learnt in the natural context and
see how classroom instruction can be improved to mimic an immersion environment. Children by virtue of their age, are at an advantage compared to adults as there are critical periods of acquisition of syntax and pronunciation of a language. A critical period refers to a window in an organism’s development when nature favours the acquisition of certain skills, provided the person receives the necessary stimulation from the environment. While it has been established that the critical period for language acquisition, especially syntax, extends to about 12 years, why are so many children failing to speak fluently in a second language? Of course, a person over 12 years can learn a new language proficiently – but it takes a lot more effort, and an adult learning a new language usually imposes the accent of his/her dominant language on the new language.

How does one acquire a second language? A very simplified view would involve associating words in the second language (L – 2) with words in the first language (L-1), which are in turn, associated with corresponding concepts. However, according to the revised hierarchical model proposed by Kroll and Stewart (1994), words in the second language may be directly linked to corresponding concepts. In fact, L-2 words are remembered better if they are directly linked in concepts as opposed to using the first language to explain concepts. While using L – 1 to teach L – 2 may aid understanding in the initial stages, when a person has sparse vocabulary in L – 2 the long-term gains are greater when words in L – 2 have independent association with the concepts.

One reason why people pick up a language in an immersion environment is that they are exposed to the language all the time. In addition to high frequency of exposure, another possible reason why people pick up a language better in a foreign country as opposed to learning it in a classroom is that the person is also exposed to culture – specific cues, which may aid the acquisition of second language vocabulary. These culture – specific cues help people learn words in their non-dominant language faster and better. The second tenet of L – 2 instruction is that it should take advantage of culture specific cues to enable the learner to form direct links between L – 2 words and concepts. Another reason why children do not succeed in speaking L – 2 fluently is that, instruction in schools is largely vocabulary driven. In a typical classroom the teacher reads aloud or asks students to read parts of it in turn. She then asks students to make a list of words and
meanings and usually given meanings in L – 1. Finally, the students are asked to answer a set of questions at the end of the lesson, the answers to most of these questions can usually “be lifted straight from the text”. When it comes to preparing for the test, students memorise the words and meanings and learn the question and answers by rote. This method of language instruction is more of a memory drill than an exercise in language learning.

Knowledge of the various components of language can help teachers lay an emphasis on different aspects of language that are crucial for its mastery. Phonemes the smallest units of language refer to single sounds within a language that help differentiate meaning. For example while k and kh constitute two phonemes in Hindi, they are not considered as two separate phonemes in English as the two sounds can be inter-changed; without changing the meaning of a word. Thus the word ‘cat’ whether it is pronounced as kat or khat does not alter its meaning. The phonic approach to reading instruction teaches the phonemes of a language explicitly. The next linguistic unit is the morpheme which refers to the smallest sound units that represent meaning. A single word, prefix or suffix can constitute a morpheme.

For oral language development we are concerned with the larger units of language. A language’s lexicon consists of all the names of words in the language. While semantics of a language refers to all possible meanings of the words of the language, syntax refers to the rules by which words can be strung together to form grammatical sentences in a language. Every language has syntax or a set of rules that delineates how words can be used to form sentences. Syntax does not refer to formal grammar which is taught in many schools. A child may not be able to tell the differences between a noun and verb; but at the same time, may be adept at speaking fluently in a language.

In this case, the child has acquired the syntax of the language, but has not been able to learn formal grammar. Furthermore, lessons in formal grammar do not necessarily promote syntactical development. Language instruction in schools should encompass all the components and aspects of language development. Memorising a list of words and meanings may promote students’ vocabulary, but this activity does not help them build their syntactical skills. Students should be given activities where they work on constructing sentences, and not merely learning a set of prepared answers by rote.
Students should be given many opportunities to speak and use the second language in multiple contexts. Activities like role-play, skits and dramas emphasise prosody and help students gain a command over the second language. Language acquisition involves the active participation of the learner. Unlike acquiring knowledge in any field which can be attained by listening to a lecturer or reading a book. Learning a language requires the learner to “use” the language. The close the usage is to a real-life situation, the greater the likelihood that the person will master it. The purpose of acquiring a language is to communicate-language teachers should design such instructions that children learn to communicate effectively in both, oral and written forms.

**English in transition**

English occupies an important place in our education system and life. It is the language that continues to dominate the national scene. It is the language of opportunity. Its transitional status proves without doubt that English has slipped from the hands of the British and today belongs to anyone who can use it effectively. Maturity of mind among the users of the language and the intervention of the printing press were the two instrumental factors, English became a proliferate language with foreign words finding a free entry into its portals. The language wriggled and struggled to answer to the requirements of scientific and technological advancements. The innate generative capacity of English has enabled it to accommodate may changes through various processes of simplification, functional shifts and morphological use of affixes. The gap between the teachers and learners of the language and the users of the language should be bridged. English possesses a pre-eminent degree of inflectional simplicity. The evolution of language, at least within the historical period, is a story of progressive simplification. The farther back we go in the study of the languages to which English is most closely allied, the more complex we find them. In this process of simplification English has gone further than any other language. In spite of its inflectional simplicity, it is to be recognized that a foreign student encounters difficulties in learning the language. One of these difficulties is the result of that very simplification of inflections which have been considered assets of English. It is the difficulty of which foreigners often complain, of expressing themselves not only logically but idiomatically. Another serious criticism of English by those attempting to master it is the chaotic character of spelling and frequent
lack of correlation between spelling and pronunciation. These vital problems are to be dealt with effectively in order to find out suitable solutions, and the responsibility in turn rests on the shoulders of classroom managers.

**English language teacher today**

Today the challenges of the teachers are many. The academicians have to update their knowledge and ensure that their students get the best of them. Teacher training programmes fine-tune their capabilities as teachers of merit and service. The teacher has recently been at the receiving end of a plethora of methods and techniques, he must be appreciated for the complex role he is called on to play. Any innovation at the classroom level must happen from the ‘bottom up’ where the focus is on what is done i.e. as an outcome of perceived needs of the classroom situation. This obviously implies the role of the teacher as the decision maker and the researcher in the classroom. Swaffer et al (1982) said that teaching is a dynamic process in which the teacher’s method is a cumulative result of activities and processes that evolve over a long period of time. Therefore the teacher is not a neutral factor who can be imposed on by the theoretical linguist and methodologist – he is a force to be reckoned with.

Over the years a marked change in prospective on the teacher’s role from authoritarian to manager is indicative of a shift in emphasis from the teacher and the subject to the learner. Greater classroom autonomy has passed on the initiative of the instructional process to the learner who takes the responsibility for learning. This learner centered approach has transferred the role of the teacher from the authoritarian source of all knowledge to the facilitator of learning. In the instructional process the learner takes the responsibility for his learning which in no way diminishes the teacher’s importance. The teacher becomes the manger of learning. Numan (1988) synthesizes theoretical models and recent empirical studies and looks at the language learning process from the teacher’s perspective where the decisions are taken collaboratively and the teacher’s role is that of a manager and facilitator.

The negotiated curriculum (Breen and Candlin 1980), Process (Breen 1984) and task based syllabus (Numan 1989) emphasize the role of the teacher as a co-participant and negotiator, where the teacher is empowered to exploit the resources of the learner to create an efficient learning environment. The teacher and learners collaborate to negotiate
a curriculum which encourages interaction with a view to enriching the classroom process that assumes greater significance than the product and learning outcomes are negotiated in keeping with learner needs.

Action research (Numan 1990) and exploratory teaching (Allwright 1991) mark an important development as the teacher researcher turns critical and experimental in the classroom exploring strategies and needs and investigating problems that obstruct the teaching learning process. The teacher as a researcher, refusing to be directed, seeks to increase their understanding of classroom interaction, thus narrowing the gap between research and practice. The classroom findings arising from the observation of interaction (Vanlier 1988) are different from classroom evaluation. Research enhances the teacher’s understanding of what really goes on in the class.

The notion of reflective practitioner (Schon 1987, Zeicher and Liston 1987) again views the teacher as a professional practitioner following the spirit of enquiry to improve the practice of teaching. It entails a thoughtful analytical reflection by the teacher on the aspects of classroom situation in the light of past experiences and evolving an alternative means of achieving his objectives. Vital to this is creating greater teacher involvement through analytical consideration and diagnosing problems thereby arriving at informant choices.

**Teacher’s role – all encompassing**

Ideological labels like manager, facilitator, decision maker and so on are many but they are the manifold components of the teacher’s role. These terms represent only the myriad aspects of the teacher observed from the point of the view of his various roles. Traditionally the teacher’s role included these various roles within itself but modern move towards increasing specialization and atomization has merely given prominence to the parts of the whole. Resistance to change and apathy has blunted the roles of the researcher and innovator, which are key to teacher effectiveness. Fear of the unfamiliar fosters blind traditionalism and strange ELT jargon derives the teacher to seek comfort in familiar traditionalism, This obviates the need for increasing the teacher’s familiarity with modern concepts.

The exploratory teaching concept (Allwright 1991) focuses on teacher initiated research, confined to localized contexts aimed at understanding and not necessarily
solving problems enhancing teacher-learner understanding of the pedagogic situation, whereby, the teacher as the principal agent of curriculum development leads to simultaneously improved understanding and pursuit of excellence. Applied to the essentially Indian classrooms, the concept of teacher researcher and exploratory teaching thus present excellent prospects for an in depth understanding of localized classroom interaction-invaluable for evolving teaching strategies to suit specific needs considering the unpredictability of classroom research aimed at understanding rather than the problem solving provides the teacher freedom to seek contextually relevant options.

The concept of teacher – researcher spells freedom for the individual teachers from culturally alien theories and methods. It promises greater teacher autonomy while making the teacher more responsible and innovative and the other hand promoting self improvement and a general awareness of the latest ELT ideas and concepts.

**Teacher central to Learner – centered learning**

With the recent focus on learner centered classrooms calling for greater learner autonomy, the question regarding the role of the teacher assumes significance. Does the term “learner centered” spell too easy a dichotomy between the teacher and the learner? The term learner centered apparently seems to exclude the teacher. However, the principles underlying the concept emphasize the indisputable importance of the teacher in realizing the objectives. Learner centered learning is invariably teacher dependent for its realization. Just as the doctor and diagnosis are crucial to the patient, so also the teacher and his strategies are crucial to the learner. Davies (1971) opines that “in many a instance, it will be necessary to employ a teacher-centered style to lay the basic frame work and teach the basic facts and then employ some more permissive styles to realize the higher order and effective objectives.

Therefore, a teacher – centered style is essential even to a learner centered approach and cannot be ruled out however learner autonomous a syllabus may be. The strategies employed by the teacher are vital to the success of the teaching-learning process. Conversely, the teacher has the prime responsibility for the proper choice of effective teaching strategies.
What ails English language teaching

It is paradoxical that the importance of English is acknowledged, its study sought after by the majority of the people, its status as an official language of India has been maintained for an indefinite period and it is accepted as pipe-line for the stream of knowledge in all branches of learning. And yet, under sentimental urges and for other domestic reasons we are giving up English. Thus we risk cutting ourselves off from the living stream of ever growing knowledge. Inspite of knowing all the above cited facts we are yet to develop language competence among our pupils that too at school level. There is a sharp contrast between the students of regional medium schools and the students of English medium schools when the two streams come together at collegiate level.

The teaching and learning of English is riddled with several inherent paradoxes, contradictions and controversies. A teacher can only facilitate learning. The learner is the nucleus of the whole process of instruction and his age, previous learning experiences, aptitude, interest, the time he devotes to the learning of a foreign language and other socio-economic factors determine the suitability of curriculum, course materials and methods of teaching. Any instruction that does not take into consideration of the imperative needs of the learners, fails to achieve the desired objectives. It is therefore obvious that the decline in the standard of English in India is the consequence of the inadequacies of various degrees and at various levels in our educational system.

So, we must be clear about the specific objectives of teaching English or the methods to be adopted to make English teaching more meaningful and effective. It is only by examining the needs of the learners according to their priorities, that general goals can be translated into more specific claims of what the language course should set out to achieve. In framing a heavily content based syllabus academicians seem to be acting on the assumption that teaching literature will automatically help the acquisition of language skills. Here again, we can see that the paradox persists. While the aims of teaching literary master pieces are high and noble the achievements continue to be low. This aspect is to be more carefully dealt with for suitable and fruitful solutions.

Therefore, it is our responsibility to find out the areas of lapses. So, there is a need for undertaking a study on various aspects of language teaching standards. In teaching-learning process, teachers should have apt level of Motivational abilities, Competence
and Aptitude for the profession i.e. a teacher should enter the profession by choice not by chance. Teacher who enters by choice will have the qualities like proper motivational abilities, required level of competence and judicious degree of aptitude for the profession. The learner should have strong inclination towards learning and that in turn depends on how best the teacher is at his motivational abilities, competencies, liking his profession, etc., The present study is a humble attempt to find out the extent of the influence of teacher’s motivational abilities, his competence or command over the language and his predilection or aptitude for the profession, over his language teaching ability.