CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Present Study

The study results from an analysis and personal knowledge of the difficulties the under-graduate students in Kerala encounter when communicating in English. The research is primarily focused on the oral communicative competence in English at the tertiary level in Arts and Science Colleges under the University of Kerala and simultaneously reflects on the educational climate of the state. The study highlights the students' incompetence to communicate verbally with confidence, in spite of several years of English instruction.

Language skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening in English are still improbable in action and reality to a large number of learners at the degree level where General English remains a compulsory subject till the second year of the three year degree course. The language instruction in Kerala has failed to equip learners with communicative skills necessary for social interaction and individual career achievements. The student feels deeply frustrated when he realizes that all the years of studying
English have not equipped him to negotiate successfully ordinary day to day encounters that demand the use of English. For most students English remains a burden intellectually and a non starter functionally.

The research is geared towards examining the underlying factors or root causes that directly or indirectly necessitates both the poor performance and speech of the English language at the under-graduate level in a more integrated format and later recommends possible solutions to improve performance in oral communication for the realisation of better results. A sample of learners from six Arts and Science Colleges located in districts within the limits of the University of Kerala was chosen as informants. The findings suggest lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on language learning, a basis on which other factors stand. Therefore the question is: Is English still an alien language for these users? In what way can they use English creatively in an Indian context and still not deviate from the American or British model?

1.2 English as a Global Language

The emergence of English as a genuine world language achieved special prominence during the 1990s. The possibility of such a status for English had been recognised as early as the eighteenth century. In 1780, the future US President John Adams said: "English is destined to be in the next
and succeeding centuries, more generally, the language of the World than Latin was in the last or French is in the present age” (Crystal 1997 p.74).

English is spoken as the first language in the USA, Canada, Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, several Caribbean countries and a few other territories, but mother tongue use by itself cannot give a language global status. To achieve such a status, a language has to be taken up by other countries around the world. The influence of English in other countries has become an integral part of their communities that English has become the medium of communication in such domains as government, the law courts, the media and the educational system. It has some kind of administrative status in over seventy countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, India, Singapore and Vanuatu. A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country.

Secondly a language can be made a priority in a country’s foreign language teaching, even though this language has no official status. Such a language is often described as a ‘second language’ (L2), because it is seen as a complement to a person’s mother tongue, or ‘first language’ (L1). English is now the language most widely taught as a foreign language in over 100 countries, such as China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt and Brazil. In most of these countries it is emerging as a medium of instruction in schools, often
displacing another language in the process. In 1966, for example, English replaced French as the chief foreign language in schools in Algeria (Crystal 1997).

A language does not become a global language because of its structural properties, the size of its vocabulary, or because it has been a vehicle of a great literature in the past or was once associated with a great culture or religion. A language has traditionally become an international language for one chief reason, the power of its people especially their political and military power. But international language dominance is not the result of military might. It may take a militarily powerful nation to establish a language, but it takes an economically powerful one to maintain and expand it. With economic developments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, beginning to operate on a global scale supported by new communication technologies, new mass entertainment industries, progress in science and technology, international marketing and advertising fostered a supernatural status to the English language.

It is therefore natural for a lingua-franca to emerge thereby encompassing the countries world wide. English is manifestly international. It has been lauded as the most successful language ever with 1500 million speakers world wide. The mother tongue speakers of English are estimated
to be over 400 million and the number of users of English as a second language is about 300 million. English learnt as a foreign language rises to about 700 million speakers. David Crystal has called for a broader view of who should be counted as “English users” to include “all those who use English even on a limited scale” (Crystal 1997 p.13). Crystal has estimated it to be between one billion and two billion.

English is used by more people than any other language on the Earth. Its mother tongue speakers (Native Speakers NS) make up only a fifth of this total number. This happens so because there exists in several parts of the world in South Asia, in parts of Africa, in the far East, even in Europe, communities of English users in which native speakers are outnumbered by non-native speakers. English is a young language compared with Chinese, Greek or Sanskrit. Yet it has come to occupy a unique position. The development of the English language had to pass through several stages of development since 1600 which cumulatively led to its present status. The influence of the Norman French occupation and the Norse and Scandinavian invaders for almost 300 years had their dialects assimilated into the English language. For 250 years until 1600 English was spoken only in England probably not by all the seven million inhabitants. It was between 1600 and 1750 that the seeds of today’s global spread of English were sown as
explorers, merchants, traders, settlers, buccaneers and administrators went out from Britain to begin settlements and colonies overseas. All these settlers began to regard themselves as English speakers from Britain who happened to be living overseas.

The native English speaking settlements greatly increased in size and became states with governments. In the United States and in Australia the colonies began to take their independence from Britain and along with it the language came to stay. As these possessions prospered quite a number of non-native speakers of English had to learn English to survive, or to find employment with the governing class. The non-native indigenous speakers in India were Hindus and Muslims, in the United States settlers of other European origins such as the Dutch, the Spanish and the French immigrants. Learning English became a major activity and the spread of it even at a more increasing pace when the colonies began to build schools and offer education in English language classes for immigrants.

By 1945 nearly all colonies of Britain became independent states and the role and function of English changed from being an instrument of subservience to being a window on the World of Science and Technology. Further with World movements as the establishment of the
United Nations, The International Agreement to adopt English for air-traffic control and the telecommunication revolution, the English language established its foothold in the World global means of communication. Therefore developments in science and technology, communications and the global trade reinforced the importance of English.

1.3 The Diffusion of English

English is used as an official or semi-official language in over sixty countries and has a prominent place in a further twenty. It is either dominant or well established in all six continents. It is the main language of books, newspapers, airports, international business and academic conferences, medicine, diplomacy, sports, international competitions, music and advertising. Over two thirds of the World’s scientists write in English. Three quarters of the World’s mail is written in English. Of all the information in the World’s electronic retrieval systems, 80% is stored in English. English radio programmes are received by over 150 million in 120 countries. Over 150 million children study English as an additional language at the primary level, and over 80 million study it at the secondary level (these figures exclude China).

By the middle of the twentieth century, English was the language of half the World’s magazines, newspapers and three fifth of its radio stations.
Since then the trend has continued into the rest of the century having gathered momentum through the export of films, popular songs, video cassettes, computer software and recently the expansion of the internet. The English language is the language of the Internet; it is estimated that nearly eighty percent of all websites use English and three quarters of the World’s mail, telexes and cables are in English. The USA has far more computers than the rest of the world combined and the USA uses English; English literacy and computer literacy have become inseparable and interdependent. The bulk of software is in English and all the IT giants, like Microsoft and IBM, are based in English speaking countries. Even countries like China and Japan that are strong in computer technology and hardware are forced to use English. The world has become not only Euro-centric but also windows-centric (Phillipson 1992). A number of attempts have been made to rate aggregate international counts of language speakers. Crystal’s attempt at dividing the English language speakers into concentric circles representing three types of English speakers (mother tongue, second language and foreign language) was in accordance with the classification given by Braj Kachru (1985), an Indian linguist teaching in the USA.
1.4 The Three Circles of English

Figure 1.1

The Three Circles of English

Expanding circle

Outer Circle

Inner circle
e.g. USA, UK
320-380 million

e.g. India Singapore
150-300 million

e.g. China, Russia
100-1000 million

(Crystal 1997 p.54)
David Crystal reserves the inner circle for countries of mother tongue or first language (L1) speakers. He refers to this circle as the ‘primary language’ circle, in which he includes the following countries - U.K, USA, Australia, Canada, Ireland and New Zealand.

The second circle is the ‘outer’ or extended circle and covers those countries where English has played an important role as a speaker’s second language. English is also an official language of administration or education in this circle. Countries such as India, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore and fifty other territories belong to this circle.

The dynamic expansion of English is evident in the ‘expanding circle.’ In many countries English is recognized as an important lingua – franca and usually learnt as a foreign language. For countries of this category English does not have a history of colonization, nor is it given an official status. The expanding circle includes the majority of English speakers such as people from China, Japan, Israel, Germany, Switzerland, Russia and many more.

1.5 Varieties of English

It is commonly accepted that the label English can be applied to many forms of the language which are entirely different from each other. They include American English, British English, Indian English, West African English, Singapore English and Australian English. These varieties do not
differ in grammar and vocabulary but there are marked differences in pronunciation. There is one group in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka often collectively called South Asian English. The trend in referring to different forms and varieties is to accept differentiation within English and even to employ new plural Englishes. These new Englishes are somewhat like the dialects except on an international scale.

English attains new varieties when non native creative writers adopt the language for literary purposes. They then change it to meet their needs, thereby giving it their own forms. So English is twice born because the language was transported from its native soil (the UK) into an alien soil (India, for example). Thus many non varieties of English are born. “The new users of English exploit the potential of English and make it their own to satisfy their communicative needs. They borrow it and recreate, stretch, extend and indigenize it” (D’souza 2001 p.15).

Some people think that they already see signs of the break-up of the language when they face difficulty in understanding the English used in India, West Africa or other parts of the world. Even at times in the British and North American variation, can also be seen in the written language, a distinctive regional lexicon.
Up to the 1980s, only 3% of Indians spoke English but a survey showed that about 33% of Indians are now able to hold a basic conversation in the language which would indicate a total in the region of 350 million people. This, Prof. Crystal observes, makes India the country with the largest English speaking population in the world.

When so many bilingual Indians start to use English in daily life, elements of native language creep in making Indian English so lively and unique. English is used and reused here in so many interesting ways that experts already feel that the Indian version may take over the world. David Crystal predicts that with so many Indians using a dynamic variety of the language in such a fast growing economy, Standard English of the future could be influenced by Indian usage and pronunciation.

The term Indian English refers to the non native, non standard regional dialect and accent. It is a cover term for the varieties and range of English used in the sub continent as a whole. The question as to what should be the standard for Indians in learning English is often debated.

This variation raises the question mark against the notion of the word English. With so many varieties, which one should be used as the international medium? Should it be American, British, Indian or Australian? Teachers in particular are faced with a conflict of aims. Should they teach
British or American English or both or neither, focusing on the variety found in their own country? What effect will their decision have on the ability of their students to communicate at an international level?

In The Future of English, David Graddol (1987) explains the dominance of English worldwide as a result of inherent characteristics of the language. “English is remarkable for its diversity, its propensity to change and be changed” (1987 p.6). Some analysts see the hybridism and permeability of English as defining features, allowing it to expand quickly into new domains and explaining in part its success as a World language.

Another explanation for the position of English in the World is the supposed ease of learning English compared to French and German.

1.6 The Advent of English Education in India

The history of English Language and Literature in India starts with the advent of the East India Company. It all started in the summers of 1608 when Emperor Jahangir, in the courts of Mughals, welcomed Captain William Hawkins, Commander of British Naval Expedition. It was India’s first tryst with an Englishman and English. Jahangir later allowed Britain to open a permanent port and factory on the special request of King James IV that was conveyed by his ambassador Sir Thomas Roe. The English were here to stay.
In 1813, the East India Company Charter was renewed for twenty years and two decisions were taken that affected both language and culture of the nation. The long standing ban on missionaries was removed and the British officers allowed a rapid penetration of Christian missionary organizations into company territory. An annual expenditure of government funds for education was allotted in the new Charter. As a result, the different objectives of the Orientalists and Anglicists sparked a ceremonial debate as to what kind of education, English or classical Indian should be funded in the country. The Anglicists group included Charles Grant (1746-1823), Lord Moira (1754-1826) and T. B. Macaulay (1800-1859). H.T. Prinsep (1792-1878) headed the Orientalists group (Kachru, 1986).

During the governor-generalship of Lord William Bentinck (1828-35) this debate was formally settled and in 1835, Thomas Babington Macaulay’s decree on Education condemned the use of South Asian languages and the study of Indian languages was not encouraged. It was the duty of the British-Indian government to fund an education that was English in content and language. The promotion of western education in British India was mainly credited to Thomas Babington Macaulay. He predicted the creation of a class that would act as a link between the rulers and ruled, as well as be a source of low cost manpower for the lower levels of administration. Even
before this debate was concluded, the transfer to English language was well under way.

By the second decade of the nineteenth century, a new anglicized privileged class began to establish institutions to serve its own interests. In 1816, they formed the Hindu College in Calcutta. The instructions given in this school included elements of both the Orientalists’ concern for classical languages and the Anglicists’ aspiration to communicate in English.

In 1824, the British officers launched the Sanskrit College, an institution that also taught English and western science. Development of educational facilities proceeded at a steady pace. In 1829, Gour Mohan Addy opened the Oriental Seminary, a Hindu supported school that taught English language and literature, western mathematics and sciences. Unlike some of the earlier schools, the oriental seminary was open to all castes. The missionaries that reached a new degree of effectiveness and notoriety sponsored a third source of English education. When Alexander Duff inaugurated his school in Calcutta, a new wave of enthusiasm was seen among the students. Duff offered free English Education for anyone who wished to attend this school. Thus the educational institutions in the British period proved to be of great benefit for the Indians.
1.7 Background to English Education in India

In 1835, British Government in India designated English as the medium of education for schools and Universities. Over a century of British rule, English grew in popularity as a language of power, prestige and convenience. Although it was a foreign language at that time, native Indians were quick to take to the language, and even those opposed to British rule would voice their resistance primarily in English. Even after India gained its independence from Britain, English continued to be widely used and in fact, the new constitution makers deliberated and wrote the Indian Constitution in the English language. While Article 343 of the Indian Constitution designated Hindi as the official language of the Union, it also provided for the continued use of English language for all official Union purposes for a period of fifteen years.

After nine years, the Official Language Commission of India recommended extending the use of English: a recommendation that has been subsequently echoed by several other committees over the years. English came to be known as an ‘associate official language’ or an ‘associate additional language’.

When the British started ruling India, they searched for Indian mediators who could help them to administer India. The British turned to
high caste Indians to work for them. The British policy was to create an Indian class who should think like the British, or as it was said then in Britain "Indians in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, morals and intellect" (Bailey 1991 p.138). The British also established in India, Universities based on British models with emphasis on English.

The English Christian missionaries came to India from 1813 and they also built schools at the primary level for Indians in which the language of instruction was the local language. Later on the missionaries built high schools with English as the language of instruction which obliged the Indians who wanted to study to have a good knowledge of English (Mc Crum, Cran, and MacNeil 1986). The British rulers began building their Universities in India from 1857. English became the first language in Indian education. The 'modern' leaders of that era in India also supported English language and claimed it to be the main key towards success. Indians who knew good English were seen as the new elite of India. Many news schools were established in which the language of instruction was English. According to the British laws the language of instruction at the University level was English and therefore schools that emphasized English were preferred by ambitious Indians. Officially English was given the status of an
assistant language and was supposed to terminate after fifteen years of India’s independence, but it still remains the important language of India.

Even today schools in India that emphasize English are considered better schools and the same is the case at University levels, even though there is a trend towards Indianization. In the 1970s and 1980s about one third of the Indian schools had English as their first language. For most of these students, English is their first language and it is easier for them to communicate, read and write in English than in Indian languages, including their mother tongues.

English language in its different variegations continues to thrive in India. It is a major medium of communication in technical and scientific education, governance, personal interaction among the educated, public information, broadcasting, news media etc. Education in the medium of English language is still highly valued. It is the main language used in the field of computing and internet-related enterprise. It is an essential tool of interaction between a foreigner and an Indian. India has been hospitable to English and each benefit from the other.
1.8 The Beginning of Bilingualism in India

Lord Macaulay was the actual figure in the debate over which language ought to be used as the medium of education in India. The classical languages like Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic were favoured by the Orientalists, though these were not spoken as native languages. The Anglicists supported the use of English. Neither of these groups wanted to suppress the local mother tongues of the people. However both the groups welcomed the use of the vernaculars during the first year of education.

Macaulay's proposal was a success and the following year Lord Bentick expressed his full support for the Minutes declaring that the funds administered on public instruction should henceforth be employed in imparting to the native population, knowledge of English Literature and Science through the medium of the English language.

Macaulay's Minutes had far reaching effects. The Orientalists questioned the imposition of an alien language on Indians. But on March 7, 1835 the Minutes received a seal of approval from Lord Bentinck (1774-1839) and an official resolution was passed. This resolution formed the cornerstone of the implementation of a language policy in India and ultimately resulted in the diffusion of bilingualism in English. The Indian bourgeoisie was demanding English language education as much as the
missionaries and educators, seeing knowledge of English as an essential tool in gaining social and economic prestige (Pennycook 1998).

According to Bailey (1974), languages would be enriched by English so that they could become vehicles for scientific, historical and literary expression. “English gradually became the language of government, education, advancement and a symbol of self-improvement” (Mc Crum et al. 1988 p.325).

1.9 English in Independent India

India, after becoming independent in 1947, was left with the colonial language English as the language of the government. With the end of the British Raj, English was expected to die a natural death, but instead the English language penetrated deeper than ever into societies in South Asia. Nationalists wanted an indigenous language like Hindi to be adopted as official language since it had more native speakers than any other Indian language and was already widely used in inter ethnic communication (Fasold 1984).

Hindi was also thought to be a language imperative for political and national unity hence it was designated by the constitution as the language of communication between and within the states. Hindi was to replace English within fifteen years. The strategy was to promote Hindi as it would express
"the composite culture of India" (Spolsky 1978 p.56). But the plan met with violent protests mainly in southern parts of India as Hindi was unevenly distributed.

The dispute between the promoters of English, Hindi and regional languages led to the three language formula in 1956. It made the study of Hindi and a regional language compulsory at the school level. It made English mandatory as a second language or as a third language for a period of six years or three years in non Hindi speaking areas. The local milieu of every state could be taken into consideration and changes could be made to suit social needs. In Kerala, English as well as Malayalam as the medium of instruction has been offered up to the school level, though the medium of instruction at the higher education level is only English.

However though protests continued Hindi was declared as the official language of the Union of India and other Indian languages as the official language of the various states. English continued to be the associate official language. It continued to grow tremendously even after the departure of the British rulers from India. The number of Universities rose and so did enrolment in schools and colleges. Out of the sixty seven languages taught in Indian schools, English is the only language which is taught at every level (primary, secondary, higher secondary) and in every state.
English is used freely as a means of communication in Indian social circles at formal and informal levels. The English language and life style form an inseparable part of the educated Indians’ way of living. A good command of English is considered as a mark of education, sophistication and prestige.

1.10 Use of English in India

In India, the status of English manifests that it has been so widely accepted and integrated into the Indian identity. It is generally assumed that the average English educated Indian is reasonably comfortable and fluent in his English language use. In reality, considering the huge population of India, the number of those who actively use English in public is relatively small and those who use it in their private domains even smaller. The use in India varies from region to region and from urban to rural areas. To be educated by Indian standards is to be English literate and that alone speaks volumes for the prominence of English as a language of mental and intellectual cultivatedness in India. The print media in the English language has wider and larger readership than those in most Indian languages. Now English seems to have become so entrenched a language and such an integral part of India’s multicultural and urban culture that it can hardly be ignored or dislodged. Mastery of English is considered a social and
educational accomplishment and "Indians believe, if not openly say that competence in English makes a considerable difference in their career prospects" (Gupta 2006 p.76).

Many Indian students are eager to learn English so as to be upwardly mobile, to acquire well-paying professional jobs for establishing and achieving social and economic success. College students interviewed were well aware that knowledge of English can help them to gain access to educational opportunities or careers abroad in English speaking countries or succeed overseas as professionals. The advent of TV to the remotest villages in the beginning of this century and exposure to western English media channels has created great interest in the teaching and learning of spoken English.

English has now become an essential language in India. It is used for numerous purposes that Kachru (1983 p.215) broadly lists its functions into four broad divisions.

i) Instrumental Function

Education

➤ In primary, secondary and higher levels of education

➤ As medium of instruction, as a special subject and for purposes of examination and interviews.
Research

➢ In conferences, seminars and publications

ii) Regulative function

➢ In government administration
➢ In the legal system

iii) Interpersonal function

➢ Mass communication
➢ Press, Indian and foreign
➢ Radio and television, for purposes of entertainment and education
➢ Intra national communication
➢ As lingua franca among the various linguistic groups
➢ For travel within the country
➢ For trade and industry, in advertisement and business correspondence
➢ International communication
➢ Trade with other countries
➢ Travel outside India
➢ For technology transfer
iv) Imaginative Function

Creative writing

➢ Novels, short stories, poems, essays and translation
➢ Criticism and reviews

1.11 Review of Related Research

Research studies in the area of ELT has been so vast that it is difficult to touch upon all the aspects related to modern strategies that would help to build communicative competence. Many major research findings in the area especially on L2 acquisition, mother tongue influence, affective variables and CLT have been elaborately touched upon by earlier researchers. However a few of them are being reviewed

*Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction* by William Littlewood (1981) has its main roots in the so called communicative movement which has been influential in foreign language teaching since early 1970s. If developments since the 1970s have any special claim to the label “communicative” it is because the implications of this goal has been explored more thoroughly and explicitly than before. These implications form the subject matter of the book and two of the fundamental ones Littlewood (1981) states are:
A Communicative Approach opens up a wider perspective on language. In particular, it makes us consider language not only in terms of its structures (grammar and vocabulary), but also in terms of the communicative functions that it performs. In other words, we begin to look not only at language forms, but also at what people do with these forms when they want to communicate with each other. For example, as we shall see in, the form ‘Why don’t you close the door?’ might be used for a number of communicative purposes, such as asking a question, making a suggestion or issuing an order.

We can therefore combine the newer functional view of language with the traditional structural view, in order to achieve a more complete communicative perspective. This enables us to give a fuller account of what students have to learn in order to use language as a means of communication. It also suggests an alternative basis for selecting and organising the language items that we need to teach.

A Communicative Approach opens up a wider perspective on language learning. In particular, it makes us strongly aware that it is not enough to teach learners how to manipulate the
structures of the foreign language. They must also develop strategies for relating these structures to their communicative functions in real situations and real time (1981 pp. 13-14).

In *Second Language Learning: Theoretical Foundations* Michael Sharwood Smith (1994) approaches second language acquisition as a complex psychological process to be explored as a particular exploitation of human cognitive ability. He introduces a novel concept of heterogeneous competence as opposed to homogeneous competence which has been taken by some people to be the core concept in Chomskyan theory. An alternative view of native-speaker ability has arisen namely, one which views competence as heterogeneous in character. This means that linguistic rules vary systematically according to the particular use to which they are put. Language users do not, in this view, have a single competence which varies only when it is applied to real-life situations; rather they have a competence which contain usage information such as that rules are stated in terms of the various manifestations they have according to the situation and context and the speaker's communicative requirements.

Robert Phillipson (1992) is declarative in his reasons for writing his book *Linguistic Imperialism*. The book aims at unearthing some of the historical, political and intellectual roots of the language pedagogical
profession. This means that a major part is devoted to the colonial linguistic inheritance and the developments of the 1950s and early 1960s which helped applied linguistics and ELT to expand at the time and in the manner they did.

A welcome edition in the field of language pedagogy is the work: *Communicative Language Teaching: Then and Now* by Dr. Deepti Gupta (2006). She compartmentalizes the work into four phases: Period I (1880-WW 1), Period II (Interwar years to 1940), Period III (World war and post war decades to 1970s) and Period IV (1970s and 1980s). She thus presents a lucid and well written coherent account of the history of linguistics over a hundred years. At the end she discusses Hymes, Halliday, Van Ek, Wilkins Widdowson, Brumfit and Littlewood thus preparing the ground for a discussion on Communicative language teaching, with a focus on practical difficulties and concerns of ELT in under-graduate programmes in one of the leading Universities in India.

*Communicative Grammar of English* by Leech and Svartvik (1975) illustrates how a descriptive grammar can be rewritten to serve pedagogical needs. The authors claim that this pedagogical grammar was meant for those who know the rules of their traditional grammar, aiming at improving the range and extent of communicative skills of the learners.
The decade of the seventies saw a number of other publications in the area of Communicative Competence bringing in further clarity. They include Wilkins' *Notional Syllabuses* (1970) and Munby's *Communicative Syllabus Design* (1978). Widdowson (1978) compared language as a formal system and language use as a communicative event, associating the former with correctness, cohesion and the latter with coherence, appropriateness and utterance as an illocutionary act.

The positive effect of bilingualism on children's linguistic and educational development is an area well explored by J. Cummins (1981) where he is clear about the importance of bilingual children's mother tongue for their overall personal and educational development.

Baker (2000) also postulates the view that it is unintelligent to discourage children from developing their mother tongue. They believe that both languages (L1 & L2) nurture each other when the educational environment permits children access to both languages.

Zakia Sarwar (1985) in her research project entitled *Teaching English as a Foreign Language with Limited Resources in Pakistan* believed that a panacea for large classes could not be achieved. One of her aims was to experiment with communicative language techniques and activities that would be effective in large classes of 100 plus. Finding effective techniques
for large classes was a special concern in order to examine the teachers' popular beliefs that in large classes learning is nominal and the interactive approach is not possible. By incorporating individualization techniques her classroom research addressed three major problems - large classes, the dependent learners, lack of exposure to real-world English.

Antony Pitchai (1985) in his Ph.D thesis had made a phonological study of the segmental and some of the non-segmental features of English spoken by educated Tamilians with reference to the source and target languages. The present research highlights certain phonetic characteristics of the spoken English of the first year degree students with reference to the medium of instruction at the pre-degree level.

R.K. Bansal has made significant studies on *The Intelligibility of Indian English* (Bansal 1976). He examines the evolution of techniques of intelligibility tests as applied to connected speech, reading of passages, sentences and words. His aim is to test the efficiency of educated Indian English as a means of communication.

Kachru has made valuable contribution on Indian English over two decades (1960-1981). He has listed the features of South Asian English (under which comes Indian English) on the basis of phonetics, phonology, grammar, lexis, style features and tone.
English Language Teaching in its Social Context: A Reader (2001) edited by Candlin and Mercer is an in depth analysis into language learning, research, strategies and motives in classroom research. It provides key insights into contemporary knowledge of second language reading, the exploration of this knowledge in classroom action and subsequent assessment and analysis. By emphasising the social context of these processes and the relationship between them, the book provides a rewarding introduction to the interaction between theory and practice which lies at the heart of applied linguistics.

In A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English as a Second or Foreign Language. Wilga M. Rivers and Mary S. Temperly (1978) state that essential to all interactions is the ability to understand what others are saying. Even in the native language many people are poor listeners, whether through weak powers of egocentrism, concentration or short auditory memory. Yet it has been estimated that of the time adults spend in communicating activities 45 percent is devoted to listening, only 30 percent to speaking, 16 percent to reading and a mere 9 percent to writing. Apart from communicative interaction, much of the enjoyment in second or foreign language use comes from listening activities, watching films and plays or listening to radio broadcasts, songs or talks by native speakers.
Even in class, students learn a great deal from listening to the teacher, to tapes or records or to each other. Rivers (1983) elucidates that listening activities should be given top priority in the realm of CLT. Listening triggers speaking which in turn facilitates reading and writing.

Vanasco. L (1994) argues that more emphasis should be given to the neglected skills of listening comprehension, since most training in oral communication at the secondary and college level focuses on effective speaking. He gives guidelines for listening proficiency for second language acquisition and reviews research on the relationship between listening comprehension and language learning, auditory identification and discrimination, listening materials and the testing of listening skills. The importance of language laboratory in developing listening skills is emphasised and several teaching methods that can be used to improve listening skills are discussed.

Gottlieb, Margo (1985) studied the role of communicative competence in the first and second language achievement as demonstrated in the measure of essential communication and concept achievement. The purpose of the study was to examine the communicative and the academic proficiencies of the first and second language learners with the intent of improving current student assessment practices. The sample consisted of 304 intermediate
grade level students in the third target school district in Illinois. The findings indicate that the development of entry and exit criteria for educational programmes should rest on both theoretical research and classroom practice.

Saraswati, V. (1982) in her Ph.D thesis explored the nature of communicative competence in relation to learning a language for specific purposes; and on that basis, suggested guidelines for designing a course in English for Official Purposes (EOP) for undergraduates in Tamil Nadu, India. Thirty business letters were revised and changes introduced in them were analyzed. A questionnaire was administered to one hundred and twenty five business people at different levels of official hierarchy. A diagnostic test in written English was administered to sixty final year B.A./BSc. students and forty final year B.Com students of the Madras University. An outline of the course was designed on the basis of the responses gathered through the tools.

Leaver and Shekhtman (2002) made significant contribution to the field of second language acquisition by presenting core SLA knowledge in an accessible manner to undergraduates who have had little prior contact with this area. It also equips second language teachers with the necessary knowledge needed to make informal choices about language teaching methodologies. It is also intended to raise readers’ meta-cognitive awareness
of language learning, thus guiding them to plan achievable goals. Key areas pertaining to both the cognitive and meta-cognitive rules in the learning process including memory, aptitude and cognition are outlined. A variety of affective variables is presented which includes foreign language anxiety, test anxiety, motivation, self-efficacy and defence mechanism. It explicates interpersonal dynamics in the learning process describing student-teacher, student-student, student-group relationship in the classroom. Undergraduate students would find these issues relevant to their specific needs.

According to Schwartz and Sprouse (2000) on the use and abuse of linguistic theory in L2 acquisition, too much current L2 research uses linguistic theory to provide relatively sophisticated and detailed analysis of inter language data, without considering the logical problem of L2 acquisition. They suggest that such research do not help us to understand the nature of L2 acquisition or inter language competence. In contrast Hawkins (2001) argues that many researchers are overly preoccupied with logical problems of L2 acquisition. Instead he suggests that a better way to reach an understanding of L2 acquisition is to focus on differences between native speakers and L2 learners of grammar.

The selected works related to this study provide ample information from different perspectives on L2 learning and acquisition. They explore
new avenues and opens up possibilities for further research. The present study could be considered as a consequence to the works previously done.

1.12 Limitations to the Study

The present study is a reflection of the English learning situation in six Arts and Science Colleges in Kerala. It discloses the students’ attitudes, concepts, disillusionment, frustrations developed from their incompetence to communicate in English. The study is focused on a phenomenon that is very extensive and has current implications. In this research a topic of wide range has been carried out from a rather empirical perspective. The survey included thirty eight learners which is a limited number but for better efficiency the number had to be limited so as to include a sample of at least one college from every district set within the precincts of the University of Kerala. The investigation was limited only to Arts and Science Colleges. The informants especially in women’s colleges were hesitant to participate either due to fear or of exposure through recordings and personal data. So a good deal of persuasion had to be impacted by the investigator before the survey. Collection of data was also time-consuming for participants’ willingness was not very encouraging. Most of the data collection and proficiency tests could be conducted only during class hours. The teachers
were not included in the survey as the investigator being a teacher herself could gauge the issue from a teacher’s angle.

1.13 Tools for Data Elicitation

The tools employed for elicitation of data include proficiency tests, both written and oral, a questionnaire and text. A voice recorder (Model-Olympus Digital Voice Recorder VN-480 pc) was used to capture the verbal nuances of the respondents in the original.

1.14 Proficiency Tests

A passage from The Reader’s Digest, February 1996, page 13 entitled, ‘Just Another Day’ was chosen as text for reading aloud (Appendix II). The passage was a purely simple narrative, with a few dialogues, intended to test the students’ reading ability, pronunciation, intonation, stress, voice modulation, rhythm and ability for smooth, unaltering reading was tested.

The oral part of the test included an extempore speech for five minutes on any topic the student was interested in. The speech was recorded with a voice recorder for further analysis. The inhibitions, anxiety for anonymity, fear of ridicule and like apprehensions had to be allayed before coaxing the respondents to speak before a recorder.

A test of listening comprehension included a passage recorded by the investigator and played back to the informants. They were free to use head
phones if they wished so. A gist of the passage had to be written after listening to the recorded passage. The tests administered were mainly to assess the students' communicative competence in listening, reading and speaking. Moreover their pronunciation, intonation, mother tongue influence and other factors as self-confidence and self-esteem were also considered. A passage with five questions to be answered was given for the written comprehension test.

1.15 The Need and Significance of the Study

The study is the outcome of the anxiety and concern with regard to the unsatisfactory progress of the under-graduate students in English and the desire to understand the nature of their problems in learning English as a compulsory subject up to the tertiary level. As communicative competence in the present decade is synonymous with career achievements and success, it is the need of the hour to find solutions to activate L2 competency among the under graduate students. In spite of several years of English instruction a stagnant or downward stride in the progress scale of English needs serious rethinking. In order to provide effective guidance in developing communicative competence in English it is necessary to examine the factors affecting learners' oral proficiency. A simple questionnaire is designed to gather information on the socio-economic background, the career goals of
the learners, motivation and other components which could act as impediments towards success in L2. Since exposure to the target language is minimal, the learners are relatively poor at spoken English. Therefore learners need explicit practice and learning in speaking the target language but not enough attention is given to expel inhibitions or facilitate the production of speaking skills. This research is an attempt to explore these aspects to help language teachers devise strategies to develop communicative competence of the under-graduates.

The question most intriguing is to analyze the reasons for mass failure in general English over the years in the University of Kerala. Though the learners have entered the degree level with high percentage at the plus two examinations, in many cases the standard of English is truly pathetic. Many would have passed the subject English with the help of classroom spoon feeding coupled with help books of sub standard quality.

Therefore the situation at hand needs serious revamping. The curriculum needs to be flexible and mould its materials and methods of teaching to the advantage and requirements of the learners.

It is towards the latter part of the twentieth century that English gained such an impetus in Kerala. It boosted the overall motivation for learning
English. Most importantly, there is greater realization of the need for English in global, economic and political contexts.

The recent dramatic rise in computer expertise and the use of the internet technology has increased the importance of English, the preferred language of the global information highway and consequently its learning and teaching. The new generation of computer savvy middle and upper class Keralites, see English as a vehicle for upward mobility, not just within India but overseas. In this context it is imperative to bring in a radical change in the teaching and learning of English at the under-graduate level.

1.16 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study can be discerned as follows:

1. To assess the level of English communicative competence among the under-graduate students.

2. To find out the factors which inhibits or facilitates spoken English skills.

3. To state that the present syllabus in English is inadequate in language content and speech promotion activities.
1.17 Hypotheses

Hypothesis I: A majority of the under-graduate students lack oral communicative competence in spite of several years of English instruction.

Hypothesis 2: The present syllabus for General English at the under-graduate level is too elaborate in its literature content.

Hypothesis 3: Students who are highly motivated for an advanced career ahead are likely to acquire greater proficiency in English.

1.18 Organisation of the Thesis

The Thesis is organized into five chapters.

Chapter I forms the introduction to the Thesis. It includes general views and perspectives on communicative competency, the status of English in the world, its advent into India, methods and approaches in ELT.

Chapter II presents the theoretical aspects of communicative competence.

Chapter III deals with difficulties in teaching English as a second language.

Chapter IV is an explicit analysis of the data using statistical tools.

Chapter V summarises the work done and outlines the summary of the findings.