CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The teacher introduces the language in the classroom; this exposure to language brings awareness among the learners. Hence it leads to the development of skills when practiced. The speaking skill requires language use. For learners to pick up language, they need to retain what is spoken and how it is spoken. It becomes difficult for learners to retain language because what the teacher speaks in class fades away after the class. Therefore, the teacher cannot be ignorant of the fact that whatever language he/ she uses in the classroom is going to serve as a model for the learners. The more language is heard and spoken to, the more it is learned. Hence, this study on Teacher Training emphasizes the language spoken by the teacher in the classroom in delivering lectures, discussions, student- teacher exchanges, explaining, etc. to attain communicative competence among learners. Furthermore, students completely rely on their Teacher for Language inputs, therefore the responsibility of the English Language Teacher is immense, and he / she cannot afford to be wrong or incorrect. This study is intended to investigate the Teacher Training Programme. The thesis intends to look into the teacher training from the dimensions of:

1. Trainer to trainee.
2. Trainee to learner.

The Trainee Teacher (TT) has to apply the theory of teaching inorder to practice under the supervision of a proficient teacher. The supervisor reflects on the teaching methods of the trainees and guides them to the areas which require improvement. But even after much effort, the teaching of speaking skill remains a challenge for both teachers and teacher trainers.

1.1. AIM

The present study, entitled: “English Language Teacher Training- Proficiency in the Spoken Skill”, intends to focus on the teacher training programme offered to the students of M. A in English Language Teaching (ELT) at the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh.
Making the teaching of Speaking relevant to learners and trainee teachers is a very significant part in a teacher training programme. Richard (1990: vii) cited in Crandall (2000) remarks, “Teaching depends on appropriate theory, the development of careful instructional designs and strategies, and the study of what actually happens in the classroom” (p. 37). Teaching is therefore, a reflective process that is planned and executed. The process includes: planning, delivery, extent of learning, expectation and reflection.

The University offers two courses in English at the Post Graduate level:

1. M.A English Literature with an optional paper in Applied Linguistics;

2. M.A English Language Teaching (ELT).

The M.A in ELT is a unique course that produces experts in English language, preparing the students for taking up teaching and research in the subject. The course offers a thorough preparation of theoretical knowledge and skills. There are wide options from which students can choose their field of interest. By the completion of the course, a group of students is equipped with all the skills of teaching English at the various levels.

This research is expected to look into the structure of the M. A. ELT programme with special focus on the Trainee Teachers’ delivery of spoken language. The observations in this research were made and analyzed on the basis of the practice teaching classes. The TT under observation was assessed on the basis of his/ her spoken delivery irrespective of the content of the lesson taught in the class. Therefore, the study was planned to reflect on the observations made by the supervisor, learners as well as practising teachers.

1.2. SCOPE

The research includes various aspects of teaching speaking skills in order to give useful insights to trainers and trainees. This study is focused on the specific course offered at AMU as mentioned above. It is hoped to be productive for the entire teaching community since it empowers them with proficient speaking skills thus making their students equipped with effective communication strategies. The M. A. ELT programme is designed to meet the requirements set within the time limit of the course guiding the trainers to deal with different teaching situations. The present
study intends to focus on how it is done, leading to successive feedback and development through the teacher trainer.

1.3. **CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

The context of the study is of great importance in order to understand the research that includes its contextual conditions in which the teaching and learning process takes place. It is considered essential to bear in mind the background of the participants (trainer and trainees) which influences their work as ELT teachers. The context of their background and the specific context in which they are trained are therefore taken into consideration. Hence a brief outline of the educational background reveals the context of the study.

1.4. **ENGLISH AT AMU**

Even after a compulsory paper of English at the 10+2 level and graduation level for promotion, there is little focus on oral competence or its evaluation in the examination system. The examinations based on the documentation of language does not ascribe for oral language. The teachers adopt teaching approaches satisfying the demands of the examination system which does not focus on oral communication of the students. Analysing the existing issues of compulsory English classrooms in a study (Ph. D thesis) conducted by Zafar (2014), it was deduced that the anxiety level of the students was high when they were asked to speak as compared to other skills. The students accepted that they did not have good pronunciation and a good range of vocabulary; therefore they were hesitant and conscious in speaking English. It was also found that the students were not satisfied with the compulsory English syllabus for instilling speaking skills among them. (p. 198-199)

The reasons for inadequate speaking proficiency are:

1. Lack of motivation among students to practice speaking. Learning to speak requires one to receive input higher than one's own level to get accustomed to new language and comprehension. The only exposure to language in the classroom is when lessons are read aloud and when the teacher is delivering in the classroom.

2. Lack of target language environment. The students are learning in a second language context. Another factor is the heterogeneity of backgrounds in a classroom
3. The patterns of spoken language are not known. It becomes difficult to practice speaking under the constraints of academic pressure for cooperative learning.

4. English teachers find it difficult to incorporate oral communication in their classroom time. This makes learners lack social strategy of speaking. The students are exposed to a specific genre of classroom language. They do not feel comfortable with any other genre.

The above conditions are adapted from the language learning proposed by J. Willis (2002):

1. Exposure to a rich but comprehensible input of real language.

2. Opportunities of real use of language.

3. Motivation to listen and read, i.e. to process the exposure for meaning, in order to use the language to speak and write.

4. Focus on language — for preventing fossilisation, and challenging learners to strive for individual improvement they need chances to reflect on language and to try to systematize their knowledge.

1.5. **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

It is expected that the results show the extent of enabling effective ways of instilling spoken proficiency. How teacher educators infuse skills and how the trainees execute it in their classroom teaching. Because the investigation and analysis are concerned with trainee teachers speaking skills, the results of the research may not be generalised to other teachers or practices. This basically deals with incorporating speaking in everyday classroom situation and the extent to which trainee teachers of M. A. ELT are prepared to do so.

This research will benefit persons who are interested in the operationalizing of effective teaching. It will further guide teacher trainers and educators for improving ways in which each language skill can be included in the practice teaching. Teachers may utilise these strategies that have been demonstrated in the thesis. This research may also open opportunities for comparative study of teacher training programmes within institutions. This research aims to establish a platform for continued exploration into effective teacher training.