CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the unique possessions of man. What distinguishes a man from an animal is the language. Indeed, it is the language which makes a man good or bad. By using a language a person can win the hearts of others. With the same language, he/she can lose his/her dignity and degrade himself/herself in the society.

The speakers who have a good command over a language can attract a good number of audiences. The language helps a person in the development of his personality. Language is the flesh and blood of any culture. It helps in the preservation of culture and civilization. Language is a complex system; therefore, many have defined language in different ways. The Oxford English Dictionary (2005) defines language as “Words and the methods of combining them for the expression of thought.”

The development of Information Technology turned the world into a global village and links among people who make up the world community both desirable and essential. The world shrinks when people build bridges towards friendship, understanding and respect. Language is the basic medium of interaction without which human social life could not have emerged. Language which is in simple opposition to silence has traditionally been viewed as possessing intrinsically a mystic power and enmeshed in the spiritual development of mankind.

When one man recognizes another as a salient, thinking being similar to him, there arises the need to communicate his feelings and thoughts. It is through language
that has to be of use at all levels of activities and experiences in life. It bears relationship to mental behaviours like imagination and reasoning.

According to Halliday (1975), a child’s initial utterances have distinct functions,

- Instrumental function: using language to get things.
- Regulatory function: using language to control the behaviour of others.
- Interactional function: using language to create interaction with others.
- Personal function: using language to express personal feelings and meanings.
- Heuristic function: using language to learn and discover.
- Imaginative function: using language to create a world of the imagination.
- Representational function: using language to communicate information.

It is through the magical touch of language that the child, a biological animal – turns into a social being. It also functions as a vehicle of literature which teaches life in varying degrees. Among our goals there should be a strong commitment to fostering the teaching of languages. As styles of languages constantly change and are in a highly fluid state, we should adapt to the changes and thus fulfil communicative and cognitive functions.

1.1.1 Importance of English Language

The miracles of Science and Technology arouse the need for a great cementing force – a mutually intelligible language. With its elegance, grace and style, English, the Queen of languages, helps keep the wheels of the world turn. The world wide garden of English unfolds the folds of a dark curtain of ignorance. It is so adaptable and transparent a language that it can take on the tint of any country. A world language should be free from biological assertive functions, social elite selection and professional elitism. By the number of people using the language, geographical
dispersion and vehicular load, English enjoys a predominant position among world languages.

Popularity and worldwide distribution make it the medium of international communication. For better understanding among different nations, cultural give and take is necessary which is possible only through the international language. English acts as an International Language. It means a language that serves as a medium of communication between persons speaking different languages. Books on all branches of knowledge, more than 60% of world’s technical journals, news papers and periodicals are published in English. It also acts as a Library Language. Radhakrishnan Commission (1954), has aptly pointed out “our students who are undergoing training at schools … must acquire sufficient mastery of English to give them access to the treasures of knowledge.” In the age of globalization, every individual in every nook and corner of the world is being exposed every moment to the world at large. The window through which he/she can observe the world in change is nothing else but the transparency of English language. Making knowledge of the language is essential for access to the World Wide Web. The world is at one’s finger tip today if he/she can understand English. It acts as a Window to the World. “English would be the most useful library language in higher education and our most significant window on the world.” (Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66, p. 112).

1.1.2 English in India

Any language is as wide as the world and as deep as the mind because it has to contain the world and the mind. The myriad thoughts and experiences of man are expressed through language. The prestige that English language enjoys in India today
is attributed to the fact that the country was under the British domination and the language was the official language of the country in the pre-independent period.

English found its way into the warp and woof of the Indian national life; it came to open the gates for the emancipation of the souls – a subtle parallel to the power attributed to Sanskrit text.

The policy of the Government of India towards English has been decided by various Commissions. The Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49) under the chairmanship of Dr. S Radhakrishnan pointed out, “our students who are undergoing training at schools, which will admit them either to a university or to a vocation must acquire sufficient mastery of English to give access to the treasures of knowledge.” Report of the Secondary Education Commission (1962) stated, “… the present position of India in the international sphere is partly due to the command that the educated Indians have acquired over English.” Commenting on the role of English language, Kothari Commission Report (1964-66) stated, “…a working knowledge of English will be a valuable asset for all students and a reasonable proficiency in the language will be necessary for those who proceed to the University.” The Education Policy (1968) of the Government stressed the communicative functions of English at national and international levels.

1.2 DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

The development of English language teaching from old age to the present age is reviewed briefly in the following paragraphs in order to have a clear picture of the evolution of the teaching of English language and to have a sound basis for the current study. It is an attempt to bring out the conditions which existed in different periods and how they contributed in the development of the different approaches, methods and techniques of English language teaching.
1.2.1 Old and the Middle Ages

A close study of the history reveals that before the conception of the Roman Empire the Romans were made to study Greek as a second language. Thus, a Roman from his childhood itself started to learn both Latin and Greek. They learned Greek by having direct living contact with the speakers of Greek, by imitation and reproduction of the sounds, words and sentences.

In the middle age, as the pages of history reveals Latin claimed the position of an international language in the west. It became the language of the Church and the state. As Latin became the language of the state, it was taught first orally through imitation, later through extensive as well as intensive reading and writing. This historical importance of Latin in the development of language teaching is underlined by Mackey (1967):

“The first concern with language teaching method in Europe, therefore, had to do with the teaching of Latin. During the Middle Ages Latin was the language of teaching. Methods were mostly limited to Latin grammars designed to enable clerics to speak, read and write in their second language, the Language in which nearly all academic learning was done.”(p. 141).

1.2.2 Renaissance Period

The Renaissance was a land mark in the history of the teaching of a foreign language. Many attempts were made to improve the teaching of Latin. It by that time declined into the teaching of Latin grammar. Many people like Luther, Montaigne, etc. opposed strongly formal grammar and teaching of rules. At the same time famous Czech educator Jan Comenius devised new methods of language teaching based on the principles of imitation, repetition and practice in reading and speaking. He gave
the stress to sensory perception and intuitive learning. He introduced pictures and illustrations so that the child’s sensory perception would lead him first to ‘think’ and then to ‘express’. Like this grammar was acquired indirectly by induction. These scholars opined that the objective of teaching a foreign language was to get the learner to have normal, conversational practice, and to achieve accuracy of expression to meet the demands of trade, commerce and social relations. But the observations made by Comenius and Montaigne were overlooked and the teaching of Latin continued to be teaching of Latin grammar based on Latin classics. Thus, Latin language followed in the class rooms was quite different from the Latin spoken in academic Europe.

1.2.3 The seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

During this period John Locke and Basedow largely followed the ideas of Comenius and favoured the removal of grammar from any language learning programme. They advocated the natural method of learning a language which meant, by and large conversation practice in the target language and comparison of the first and second languages.

Since languages were not created by rules of grammar, but by the common usage of the common people, Locke maintained, they should be learned in the same natural way. Grammar should be taught only after the acquisition of the language.

Basedow, who followed the ideals of Comenius contributed a lot in this regard. Meidinger, who in 1783 published his ‘Praktische Französische Grammatik’ which advocated translation into the second language instead of vice-versa.

The teaching of Latin grammar had an end in itself by the end of the eighteenth century. It had began to influence the teaching of the modern languages, which as a result, came to be taught with the same methods as Latin and justified by the same arguments of mental discipline through intellectual exercise.
1.2.4 Nineteenth Century

In this century there were two opposing trends contesting for supremacy. One was teaching of languages by direct contact with them either on their neither oral nor written form, most often with both the forms. The second trend was the dependence on a systematic teaching of grammar based on various rules.

Following the lead of James Hamilton (1764-1829), Jacotot and Toussaint Langenscheidt, in the beginning of the century, encouraged a return to inductive grammar through the study of literary and biblical texts in the target language. But it was Ollendorf’s language courses which combined brief presentations of grammar points with massive translation practice that came into popular use around 1840.

In the middle of nineteenth century, Karl Plotz (1819-81), a German educationist, adapting Seidenstucker’s principles popularized the grammar translation method as the principle method of teaching modern languages in schools. Plotz’s method was divided into two parts: (1) rules and paradigms, and (2) sentences for translation into and out of the second language. Throughout the nineteenth century, language teaching in schools followed Plotz’s methodology.

In the second half of the nineteenth century there arose a number of reactions against the grammar translation method which finally developed into the Direct Method movement. In his Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching, Stern (1983), records the gravity of this reaction and its historical relevance:

“In the final decades of the nineteenth century grammar translation was attacked as a cold and life-less approach to language teaching, and it was blamed for the failure of foreign language teaching. The majority of language teaching reforms in the late nineteenth century and throughout the first half of the twentieth developed in opposition to grammar-translation.” (p. 454).
The Reform Movement in the last two decades of the nineteenth century was preceded by the work of a few individual reformers. Jean Joseph Jacotot (1770-1840) was the first to employ and recommend monolingual methods for the language classroom. In 1853 Claude Marcel (1793-1876) made a proposal to make the teaching of reading the first priority in foreign language teaching through his *Language as a Means of Mental Culture and International Communication*.

In 1866 Heness started a private school for teaching languages by a ‘natural method’ as an extreme reaction against the Grammar-Translation Method of Plotz, Ollendorf etc. In 1874 Suveur advocated the abolition of translation and grammar rules and emphasized the development of the four skills. In 1880 Francois Gouin (1831-96) published his *The Art of Teaching and Studying Languages* and held the view that the structure of a language text reflected the structure of the experience it described. He assumed that sequentiality was the primary feature of experience and that language could be best learnt in terms of sequential structures.

The major landmarks of the ‘Reform Movement’ were: the publication in 1882 by W. Vietor, of a pamphlet in German the title of which may be translated as ‘*Language Teaching must start Afresh*’; the setting up by P. Passy in 1886 of the Phonetic Teachers’ Association; the publication by H. Klinghardt in 1888 and 1892 of studies of the new methods following actual trial; the publication of W.H. Widgery’s *Teaching of Languages* (1888); Henry sweet’s *The Practical Study of Languages* (1899), and Otto Jespersen’s *How to Teach a Foreign Language* (1904).

The development of the Direct Method is closely connected with such practical teaching reformers like Gouin and Vietor on one hand and with the development in linguistic theory, philology and phonetics on the other hand.
1.2.5 The Twentieth Century

The beginning of the twentieth century had a great impact on the Direct Method. The text books began to follow a definite pattern. The typical texts totally neglected the learner’s first language. It started with the spoken language with the study of sounds through phonetic notion and then proceeded to reading and later to writing. The materials for reading were written in contemporary style. ‘The international congress of modern language teachers’ in Vienna in 1889, and the ‘Leipzig Congress’ of 1900 further tried to systematize the direct method principles. By 1902 the Direct Method was officially approved both in France and in Germany, and was introduced in England by Walter Ripman.

The principles of Direct Method started spreading across the countries. As a result of the popularity it gained, there was more and more compromise with the principles of the method. The countries which accepted this as the official method did not have enough trained teachers who possessed fluency and the techniques the method demanded. As a result, in Germany, France, Switzerland and Belgium, the method was adapted to more traditional language teaching and combined with the systematic study of grammar. This gradually came to be known as Eclectic Method. Mackey (1967) trace the denouement of the direct method in England, where it had remained in vogue between 1899 and 1924 in the following words:

“As it spread the average school, however, its use began to decline because it demanded highly competent teachers, willing to spend a great deal of time and energy on each lesson, for results which were not always worth the effort. Teachers gradually drifted back to some forms of the grammar translation approach.” (p. 147).
The teaching of English as a second language emerged as an individual profession during the first half of the twentieth century. English established itself as ‘a second language with a utilitarian function in the communication of the knowledge’. The monolingual methodology of the direct method and its applied linguistic base provided the foundation as well as the impetus for a number of teachers, phoneticians and linguists in Britain to evolve several methods. Daniel Jones published a number of books: *The Pronunciation of English* (1909), *The English Pronouncing Dictionary* (1917), and *An Outline of English Phonetics* (1918). Harold E. Palmer published a number of books on methodology such as *The Scientific study and Teaching of Languages* (1917), and *The Principles of Language Study* (1921). Michael West published *The New Method Grammar* (1938), *The New Method English Practice Books* (1939), and *General Service List of English Words* (1953). A.S Hornby’s *An Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* (1952), *A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English* (1954) and *The Teaching of Structural Words and Sentence patterns* and a number of books by others like Pit Corder established language teaching as a profession.

The above mentioned developments in the field of language teaching in Britain were paralleled by the growth of applied linguistics as a discipline in America. The Coleman Report (1929), published at this time as a part of modern foreign language study in the U.S.A, recommended the development of reading skill as the only reasonable objective for foreign language study in America.

With the works of anthropological linguists like Franz Boas and Edward Sapir, descriptive linguistics was introduced in America, at the beginning of the century. Leonard Bloomfield, the leading figure in Structural linguistics, had set out his *Language* (1933), a programme of applications of linguistics in the field of
education. His pamphlet entitled An Outline Guide for the Practical Study of Foreign Languages (1942) came to provide a model for a major programme of foreign or second language teaching to the American armed forces. This programme was known as Army Specialized Training Programme (ASTP). It proved to be very effective during World War II when American soldiers had to operate in different parts of the world. Later on a method called mimicry – memorization was popularized. Here the emphasis on imitation and practice also received theoretical support later from the behaviorist psychology of B.F. Skinner. The army method of American war time language programmes in World War II, the writings of Fries, Lado and others inspired by Bloomfeildian thinking, the new technology of the language laboratory, the influence of behaviouristic psychology based on B.F Skinner’s *Verbal Behaviour* (1957) and the grants made available for the language research were responsible for the development of Audio-lingual theory in USA. The Audio-lingual method, which was thus a reflection of the availability of audio-technology during 1950s and the structural views on language, retained its influence from about 1959 to 1966. From the beginning of this period, from 1964 audio-lingualism was challenged. By 1970 it was severely criticized on theoretical grounds, particularly after the attack on structural linguistics and behaviouristic psychology by Chomsky. Rejecting behaviourism and structural linguistics, language pedagogy began to seek in Transformational grammar and cognitive Psychology a basis for second language teaching. The cognitive theory which ensued as a consequence stressed the intellectual understanding of language as a system by the learner. The behaviouristic view of learning in terms of conditioning, shaping, reinforcement, habit formation and over learning has been replaced by an emphasise on rule learning, meaningful practice and creativity.
The cognitive method demanded creative construction that involved cognition and interaction, instead of expecting automatic command of the language and habit formation from intensive drill. Carroll’s assumption that the language using ability would ‘develop automatically’ in ‘meaningful situations’ has not been confirmed by subsequent experience and has ultimately led in turn to the questioning of the cognitive theory.

Dell Hymes (1966) introduced the concept of communicative competence in the USA. The British applied linguists such as D.A Wilkins, Christopher Candlin, Henry Widdowson, Christopher Brumfit and Keith Johnson drawing on the works of British functional linguists like J.R Firth and M.A.K. Halliday, recognized the functional and communicative aspects of language that a real shift took place in the language pedagogy. The goal of language instruction shifted to building up learners’ communicative competence. Making its appearance in the 1970s ‘communicative competence’ focused on sociolinguistic concerns and considered linguistic competence merely as an adjunct to communication. Besides mastering linguistic forms, the learners were expected to know ‘when, how and to whom it is appropriate to use these forms.’ A distinction was made between grammatical rules of ‘usage’ that enable users to construct correct sentences and the ‘use’ of language to accomplish some kind of communicative purpose. The familiar structural patterns remained, but they were ordered differently, and organized around functional headings. This meant building the language course around the uses or functions to which language is put. Wilkins’ (1976) book was the manifestation of this shift from the structural approach to a more functional approach.

The interactional view of Widdowson treats language as a vehicle for the realization of interpersonal relations. As a result of this shift from linguistic
competence to communicative competence, several communicative syllabuses have been proposed. Below mentioned are some of them:

**Table 1.1: Kinds of Communicative Syllabuses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of the Syllabus</th>
<th>Associated Name(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional</td>
<td>Jupp and Hodlin (1975)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures plus functions</td>
<td>Wilkins (1976)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notional</td>
<td>Wilkins (1976)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner generated</td>
<td>Candlin (1976)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional</td>
<td>Widdowson (1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional-spiral around a structural core</td>
<td>Brumfit (1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency based</td>
<td>Gronet and Crandall (1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task based</td>
<td>Prabhu (1983)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the transition period of the later 1960s and early 1970s there seemed to be something of a vacuum. Carroll, Ney and Marckwardt made a significant plea for prudent eclecticism, suggesting a synthesis of methodologies. Many others like Diller opposed this view and held that eclecticism is unable to endure for long. When methodological alternatives appeared, they have been found to be drawing inspiration largely from the humanistic movement in Psychology and Education. They expressed interest in the total person and not simply in the intellect. The interaction of emotions and intellect was closely examined.

### 1.3 APPROACHES AND METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH

Language teaching came into its own as a profession in the twentieth century. The whole foundation of contemporary language teaching was developed during early part of the twentieth century, as applied linguists and others sought to develop principles and procedures for the design of the teaching methods and materials, drawing on the developing fields of Linguistics and Psychology to support a
succession of proposals for what were thought to be more effective and theoretically sound teaching methods. Language teaching in the twentieth century was characterized by frequent change and innovation and the development of sometimes competing language teaching ideologies. Much of the impetus for change in approaches to language teaching came about from changes in teaching methods. The method concept in teaching – the notion of a systematic set of teaching practices based on a particular theory of language and language learning is a powerful one and the quest for better methods was a preoccupation of many teachers and applied linguists throughout the twentieth century. Common to each method is the belief that the teaching practices it supports provide a more effective and theoretically sound basis for teaching than the methods that preceded it.

The history of language teaching in the last one hundred years has been characterized by a search for more effective ways of teaching second or foreign languages. The commonest solution to “the language teaching problem” was seen to lie in the adoption of new teaching approach or method. One result of this trend was the era of so-called designer or brand name methods, that is packaged solutions that can be described and marketed for use anywhere in the world. Thus, the Direct Method was enthusiastically embraced in the early part of the twentieth century as an improvement over Grammar Translation. In the 1920s the Audio lingual Method was thought to provide a way forward, incorporating the latest insights from the sciences of Linguistics and Psychology. As the Audiolingual Method began to fade in the 1970s, particularly in the United States, a variety of guru-led methods emerged to fill the vacuum created by the discrediting of Audiolingualism, such as the Silent Way, Total physical Response and Suggestopedia. While these had declined substantially by the 1990s new “breakthroughs” continue to be announced from time to time, such
as Task-based Instruction, Neurolinguistic Programming and Multiple Intelligences and these attract varying levels of support. Mainstream language teaching, however, opted for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the recommended basis for language teaching methodology in the 1980s and it continues to be considered a plausible basis for language teaching. The following are some of the approaches in language teaching.

- Communicative Language Teaching.
- Competency-based Language Teaching.
- Content-based Instruction.
- Cooperative Learning.
- Lexical Approaches.
- The Natural Approach.
- Neurolinguistic Programming.
- Task-based Language Teaching.
- Whole Language.

Each of these approaches has in common a core set of theories and beliefs about the nature of language, of language learning and a derived set of principles for teaching a language. None of them, however, leads to a specific set of prescriptions and techniques to be used in teaching a language. They are characterized by a variety of interpretations as to how the principles can be applied. Because of this level of flexibility and the possibility of varying interpretations and application, approaches tend to have a long shelf of life. They can be revised and updated over time as new practices emerge.

A method, on the other hand, refers to a specific instructional design or system based on a particular theory of language and of language learning. It contains detailed
specifications of content, roles of teachers and learners, and teaching procedures and
techniques. Methods are learned through training. Teacher’s role is to follow method
and apply it precisely according to the rules. The following are examples of methods,

- Audiolingualism
- Counselling Learning
- Situational language Teaching
- The Silent Way
- Suggestopedia
- Total Physical Response

Compared to approaches, methods tend to have a relatively short shelf life. Because they are often linked to very specific claims and to prescribed practices, they
tend to fall out of favour as these practices become unfashionable or discredited. The
heyday of methods can be considered to have lasted up till the late 1980s.

1.3.1 Summary and Discussion

The salient features of teaching English as a second language as seen from the
historical survey done earlier can be summed up in the following fashion:

- The process of language teaching is shifting from the teacher-centred and custom-
designed approaches and methods. It has already started exploring the possibility
of non-analytical and participatory ways of language learning. It emphasizes the
communicative activities rather than learning of the language codes.

- The current language teaching methodology shows an affinity towards eclecticism.
  It feels free and always ready to adopt the best from diverse sources. It is distinct
in the present decade due to its acceptance that learners are ‘unique’ and the
teachers have to adapt their teaching methods to the kinds of students who attend
their classes.
• All the methods of teaching language provided new insights into the nature of language and language teaching. The direct Method rejects the theoretical distinction between language acquisition and language learning and assumes the learning of the second language as analogous to first language acquisition. The Grammar Translation Method shows that the first language can be maintained as reference system in the acquisition of second language. The Reading Method and Audiolingual Method demonstrate the possibility of analyzing the language ability into its component skills and the need for maintaining precedence over individual skills in the teaching sequence – the reading skill in the former and the listening skill in the latter.

• From the history of the second language teaching we understand that each method of teaching is evolved as a result of the reaction against the preceding one. The Direct Method developed as a reaction to the extension of the Grammar translation Method to the teaching of modern languages; Reading Method reacted against the simultaneous acquisition of all the four language skills aimed at in the Direct Method; the Audiolingual Method reacted against the neglect of oral communication in the Reading Method and so on.

• There were many shortcomings in the language teaching methods. Most of them emphasized a single aspect of language teaching. Then a shift in the language pedagogy away from single method concept towards emphasizing more on the interdisciplinary and multidimensional nature of learning.

• Language teaching through the ages has served three major aims: language for communication, language for artistic and cultural appreciation and language for linguistic analysis.
There exists no method or an approach of teaching English especially as second language on which a unanimous agreement is made by all. However it is a field where abundance of studies is carried out. (Bachman, 1995). Keeping in mind the theoretical background of the language teaching, in the following part the researcher attempts to look into the background for the present study taken up.

1.4 THE COGNITIVE INTERACTIONIST APPROACH

The cognitive interactionist approach strikes a balance between the linguistic autonomy of the learner on the one hand, which is largely innate, and the social interaction on the other, which takes care of the functional aspects of language. It is essentially within the constructivist paradigm.

1.4.1 The Paradigm

• Emphasizes learning and not teaching.
• Encourages and accepts learner autonomy and initiative.
• Sees learners as creatures of will and purpose.
• Thinks of learning as a process.
• Encourages learner inquiry.
• Acknowledges the critical role of experience in learning.
• Nurtures learner’s natural curiosity.
• Takes the learner’s mental model into account.
• Emphasizes performance and understanding when assessing learning.
• Bases itself on the principle of the cognitive theory.
• Makes extensive use of the cognitive terminology such as predict, create and analyze.
• Considers how the student learns.
• Encourages the learners to engage in dialogue with other students and the teacher.
• Supports co-operative learning.
• Involves learners in real life situations.
• Emphasizes the context in which learning takes place.
• Considers the beliefs and attitudes of the learners.
• Provides learners the opportunity to construct new knowledge from authentic experience.

1.4.2 Other Features of Second Language Acquisition Model

• Ensures the transaction of English through meticulous spiraling of discourses.
• Ensures the spontaneous construction of a variety of oral and written discourses such as conversation, description, poem, letter, diary, narrative, report, debate and speech without explicit teaching.
• Incorporates several strategies for the expansion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) of students.
• Makes use of number of activities meant for the development of multiple intelligence.
• Integrates various skills of language in a most natural way.
• Ensures the paradigm shift from the skill-based approach to the knowledge based approach.
• Makes use of continuous and comprehensive evaluation scheme
• Promotes creative and meaningful use of language rather than mechanical reproduction of language texts.
• Bridges the gap between the so called good and bad performers of language.
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• Bridges the gap between the so called good and bad performers of language.
• Ensures collaborative learning atmosphere in the class room.
1.4.3 Second Language Acquisition Programme (SLAP)

District Primary Education Programme had launched the Second Language Acquisition Programme (SLAP) in Kerala during the year 2002. The programme has capitalized on the convergence of theoretical linguistics and cognitive psychology and the tenants of activity-oriented, experiential pedagogy. SLAP is heavily dependent on Chomsky’s theory on innateness and the principles and parameters model of language acquisition. It makes use of cognitive intractionist approach as has been conceived by Dr. K.N. Anandan, in the context of Kerala (Anandan, 2000).

SLAP identified a number of issues in the context of second language teaching. These included psychological, emotional, methodological and linguistic problems in addition to the problems posed by the material and environment. They can be noted under the following heads:

- Problems faced by the students
- Problems faced by the teachers
- Problems posed by the learning materials
- Problems with the evaluation and
- Problems with the learning atmosphere.

The problems faced by the students while learning the English language is taken into consideration with utmost importance and measures were taken to sort out them. The students were treated as the most important elements in this context of learning a language. It looked at the process of language learning as an interesting and joyful process with the active participation of the students and making the learning process meaningful and note worthy. Another important matter of concern was the problems faced by the language teachers while handling the classes. The teachers were faced with a great a many problems in class room transactions. Solutions for
these two major issues of great concern were reached at. As in the case of already discussed two matters, problems regarding the learning materials were the other burning issue. The materials used so far were not adequate and appropriate for the students. The problems faced in connection with evaluation process and common learning atmosphere were considered in a detailed manner and solutions of different dimensions were suggested. The theoretical background of the Second Language Acquisition Programme is discussed in the following paragraphs as mentioned earlier with special emphasise on the identified areas of concern. The basis of the programme is explained below.

1.4.4 Theoretical Assumptions of SLAP

Deriving insight from Chomsky’s (1975) theory innateness, Vygotsky’s (1962) notion of the knowledge construction, Humanistic perspective on education and the norms of experiential pedagogy, the SLAP in its early stage of conceptualization made use of the following theoretical assumptions.

- The human child is genetically endowed with a language system, namely UG (Universal Grammar) and what we mean by language acquisition is the unfolding of this innate system.
- Language acquisition is non-conscious process, which is to be seen as distinct from the conscious process of learning language facts.
- Language is acquired not through imitation but through insightful theory construction.
- Repetition may be helpful for learning language, facts in isolation, but recurrence is relevant for acquisition.
- Language is not the totality of the four skills but the inner competence required for the performance of the four skills.
• Language acquisition is not a process of linear growth it is that of spiral growth.
• Acquisition progresses from whole to part. At every stage of learning, facts of language that constitute parts are to be conceived in relation to the language system as a whole.
• Static texts have little role in acquisition. What the child requires is a large variety of dynamic texts in the form of discourses.
• Acquisition becomes smooth when linguistic experience is real, holistic, relevant, need based and meaningful to the child.
• Overt corrections or expansions cannot facilitate acquisition. What is required is a rich linguistic atmosphere that will provide enough indirect negative evidence.
• It is not the quantum of exposure that matters but its quality. Acquisition takes place only if the learner gets comprehensible input through discourses generated inside and outside the class room.

These assumptions have implications in all areas related to second language facilitation. This includes material, methodology, environment, teacher-role, atmosphere, etc. (Anandan, 2000).

Language is the mental faculty or power of vocal communication expressing ideas and concepts as well as moods, feelings and attitudes. English language is spreading profusely into all walks of life. It will be considered as a ‘basic skill’ to be learned by everyone alongside the 21st century skills. As National Curriculum Framework (2005) emphasizes the goals for a second language curriculum are twofold: attainment of a basic proficiency and the development of language into an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition.
Language acquisition is a non-conscious process, which is to be seen as distinct from conscious process of learning language facts. Language is acquired not through imitation, but through insightful theory construction.

1.5 KERALA CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK (2007)

According to KCF (2007) the knowledge of language has an important role in empowering a person. English language should be given special importance in the curriculum as a language of global importance. In Kerala, learning of English as a second language starts from class I onwards. In the higher secondary classes, English is taught as the first language (Part I).

The current learning materials and teaching learning strategies, unfortunately don’t take into account the biologically endowed linguistic components and thoughts of the child. Contemporary academicians and educationists have understood the inherent limitations of language learning packages based on behaviourism. Yet, this fact is seldom considered in the discussions at the lower levels of linguistic competence acquired by our students. Such discussions often go wayward considering only the external factors responsible for the underperformance of language learners.

One should examine the real problems faced by the English curriculum and the classrooms instead of simply advocating a switch over to English medium. We have to accept quality English learning as our basic principle. The curriculum revision of 1997 was based on the principles of modern psychology, linguistics and experiential pedagogy. However, in the learning of English, certain principles of behaviourism like imitation and repetition were still followed. As a result, text books and teaching methodology which presented isolated letters, words and sentences, structured in a linear fashion persisted. The new approach recognizes the innateness of language.
1.5.1 The Basic Principles of Learning a Language

The basic principles of learning a language are given in the following lines:

- A child has an innate language system. Language learning is a natural growth of this innate language system.

- Language learning is a non-conscious process. This is radically different from the conscious learning of linguistic facts.

- Language learning doesn’t take place through imitation or mechanical repetition. Instead, there should be an insightful formulation of hypothesis.

- Language is not a totality of linguistic skills. There should be an internal linguistic competence for the expression of these skills.

- Language learning is not a linear development. It is a cyclical process.

- Language learning takes place from whole to parts and not from parts to whole.

- Static texts, which are filled up with linguistic facts and which do not communicate with children, do not have a role in language learning.

- The child should get meaningful and need-based language experiences which influence their emotional orbit.

- The quality of language experience received is more important than its quantity.

- Language doesn’t exist as isolated sentences or words. It exists as meaningful discourses. Hence it should be ensured that the linguistic experiences and expression of children should be at the discourse level.

- The discourse models to be focused upon in each class should be ascertained. The variety as well as the linguistic and stylistic spiriting of discourses at the higher levels should be ensured.

- It is not desirable to correct learner errors as and when they are made. Suitable editing processes have to be adopted to correct the stylistic, syntactic,
morphological and thematic errors made by the learners.

- Opportunities should be provided for expressing and sharing the free thoughts of the learners.

### 1.5.2 Primary Level

- An integrated approach should be adopted.
- Learners should construct simple discourses like dialogue, poems, rhymes, description and narrations.
- Writing should start only in classes III and IV.
- English Language learning can be started from Class I onwards. However there should not be any conscious efforts to teach English letters, words or sentences.
- The method of code switching can be used to provide the experiences of various discourses to our learners.
- Exams at the lower primary level should be avoided.
- At the upper primary level, oral and written forms of narratives, poems, descriptions, conversations, riddles, short stories, notices, letters, reports, posters and diary may be attempted.

### 1.5.3 Secondary Level

- Along with the discourses attempted at the upper primary level, plays autobiographies, travelogues, biographies, choreography etc. may be included at the secondary level.
- The discourse construction at this level should include learner interventions in social issues.
- The discourses at this level should have linguistic and stylistic spiraling and development.
1.5.4 Higher Secondary Level

- Besides the discourses included at the high school level novel, essay, screenplay, debate, scripts, symposium and seminar should be included at this level.
- The learners should critically examine the effectiveness of the media representations (both in visual and print media).
- The possibility of semiotics in manufacturing consent has to be explored and they should be effectively utilized.
- Today communicative English and English literature are taught as optional subjects in certain higher secondary schools. Since communication is an important component of any language learning, communicative English need not stand alone as an optional subject.

1.5.5 Issues Existing in the Field of Teaching English

Recently there has been much discussion on the deplorable state of the English Language Teaching (ELT) and Learning scenario prevailing in our country. A variety of learning materials and teaching techniques have been suggested and tried out in order to resolve the problems faced in this domain of the curriculum. A number of research programmes and teacher-training programmes have been going on at state, regional and national level institutions with a view to improving the ELT situation. A large number of institutions have come out with short term as well as long-term English courses. Book publishers have been in brisk work with one another in the production of English guides for all levels of learners. Above all, commercial ELT packages such as ‘Communicative English, Functional English’ are developed and promoted by the State as well as private agencies. These labels are accepted unquestioningly and nobody asks the question: ‘Is there any English that does not communicate?’ Similarly, nobody worries whether there are two varieties of mother
tongue namely, the ‘functional’ and the ‘nonfunctional’.

A host of problems have been identified in the context of second language teaching. These include psychological, emotional, methodological and linguistic problems along with problems posed by the material and environment.

The lack of a speech community around the children has often been pointed out as the biggest hindrance for the child in the acquisition process. The lack of exposure to English certainly is a hindrance. Nevertheless, it has to be borne in mind that it is not the quantity of exposure which matters but the kind of exposure that the child gets which facilitates language acquisition.

The existing English Language Teaching system followed in Kerala has a problem inherent in it. It grossly ignores the innate system of the child which enables him to acquire a language. Materials and methods are based on the behaviourist assumption namely that the mind of a child is an empty vessel and everything concerning language comes from outside. The ELT package reflects the contention that language is learned through imitation and reinforcement through repetition.

Another conspicuous flaw in the present model of language teaching is that it grossly ignores discourse level transactions narrowing itself to the transmission of isolated language items. It is to be borne in mind those words or even sentences in isolation; do not have any independent existence as these components function only in discourses. Language acquisition is accomplished through acquiring “structure-consciousness”. This can be brought about only through meaningful and need based linguistic discourses ensuring the recurrence of language items at the phonological, morphological and syntactic level, thus providing a continuum of language experience.
1.5.6 General Objectives of Teaching English

Here is an excerpt from National Curriculum Framework (2000, and 2005):

Language education must aim at encouraging independent thinking, free and effective expression of opinions and logical interpretation of present and past events. It must motivate learners to say things their way, nurture their natural creativity and imagination and thus make them realize their identity. There are reasons why learning of language ought to find a central place in the total educational process.

At this juncture the following points are to be seriously considered:

- Despite general acceptance of the central importance of language education in principle, practical effort for improving it has yet to be made at all levels in the country.

- The oral aspect of the language has to be duly emphasized in language education and oral examination in language must be made an integral part of the evaluation process.

- Emphasis will have to shift from the teaching of textbooks to extensive general reading and creative writing. This would need continuous guidance and monitoring.

- Due stress is to be laid in all language education programme on the ability to use the language in speech and in writing for academic purpose at work place and in community in general.

The term ‘Language’ referred to in the above excerpt is to be interpreted as mother tongue. Nevertheless what has been said above holds good equally for the second language. The Nation has accepted the “three language formula” in order to meet the challenge posed by the multilingual situation prevailing in the country. We would like to add the following points to what has been quoted above:
Language is a powerful tool for the empowerment of the individual. This tool becomes still more powerful and effective in the hands of a person who has mastery of an international language like English other than his mother tongue.

At the primary level, we expect our children to produce various discourses (such as conversation, description, letter, diary, report, narrative, poem and so on), both orally and in the written form. They should also be able to take part in discussions, debates and seminars on topics that are socially important and are within their experiential orbit. For this they must be well-versed with the craft of developing these discourses.

At the secondary and higher secondary level the learners should be able to use discourses as tools for creatively intervening in various social phenomena. This alone will help them realize their identity as a second language user.

1.5.7 The Changed Perspective in Teaching English

This perspective is decided by the following two aspects:


2. The baseline study conducted by the Focus Group on English for the revision of State curriculum finds that:

- The study on materials reveals that majority of the materials used in the field belong to the behaviourist paradigm. The insights derived from current understandings on language and language acquisitions are not reflected in them. They do not treat language as discourses but focus on fragments of language. Though a variety of discourses are introduced, the treatment is seen invariably at the sentence level or word level.

- The study on prevailing classroom processes reveals that most teachers still follow the mother tongue translation method. The classrooms continue to be
teacher-dominated. The focus is mostly on giving fixed information as input and taking out this as output. The concept of language teaching and learning has more or less narrowed down to asking comprehension questions and eliciting fixed responses. Discourse input and discourse output are by and large neglected.

- Learners at all levels seem to enjoy learning English. The constructivist turn in evaluation tools in classes 8, 9 and 10 has made the learning of English more enjoyable though the materials used in these classes continue to be of the behaviourist paradigm.

- The majority of parents in Kerala (72%) are in favour of introducing English in class I itself. Parents welcome learner-friendly materials and evaluation in English. There is a demand for supplementary reading materials too.

1.6 DISCOURSE ORIENTED PEDAGOGY

A discourse is a mode of communicating certain ideas meaningfully in a particular situation. Development of basic skills in language learning, i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing should be continued. But the emphasis at this level is on the use of varied modes of discourses through the basic skills. Learning experiences should be targeted to provide the learner sufficient scope for the integration of the basic skills in their language acquisition process. Language exists as different discourse modes. Moreover, one language function can be served through different forms of language and one form of language can have different functions. These possibilities should be addressed in the language acquisition process. To ensure this we have to make use of different modes of discourses.

This method emphasizes that learning is not teaching. It nurtures learners curiosity, supports co-operative and collaborative learning, ensures the transaction of
English through meticulous spiraling discourses, integrates the various skills of language in a most natural way and bridges the gap between the so called ‘good’ and ‘bad’ performers of language.

A student in upper primary class should be able to communicate ideas easily and effectively in English. No sentence conveys its full meaning in isolation. Hence the context is very important. The context will be a part of discourse mode. Therefore, discourse level of processing of learning experiences is necessary in language learning. This and only this helps the learner to read in between and beyond lines. Discourse level processing holds good to all basic language skills. The full meaning of the sentence lies in on the load of experiences received by the listener or learner. Therefore to have holistic language experiences, discourse level processing of activities is inevitable (Anandan 2006).

1.6.1 Learner Centered Language Acquisition

Classroom learning is encouraged when learners are engaged in activities and playing an active role in understanding tasks. For this the inputs should be crucial, relevant and comprehensible. A learner can start generating language of his own soon after entering into the languages. He can guess the meanings from familiar situations and start producing language with the limited knowledge he has. Optimal input for maximum output is to be provided rather than maximum input for maximum output. The learning experiences should be a step higher than the initial ability (General Cognitive Ability). Provide chances for the child to think a lot. Threefold levels of interaction will help them in thinking and drawing inferences. If learners work together as partners while tackling problems, they interact with each other and benefit from collaborative learning. Errors are to be viewed as natural steps to learning.
Regular and forceful correction affects expression or fluency. Therefore errors are treated not as signs of non-learning but as inevitable parts of the learning process.

Eleven distinct modes of discourses (stories, descriptions, dialogues/conversations, poems, riddles/puzzles/jokes/language games, narratives, notice/posters/advertisements, letters, reports, diaries, paragraphs) are identified for the upper primary classes. Listening with comprehension, speaking intelligibly using appropriate language forms, reading between lines and beyond lines and writing effectively are aimed at. Supporting skills like reference, collections etc. are integrated. The input that is given to the learners (irrespective of their levels) will be in terms of discourses and what we expect from the learners is the construction of discourses.

1.6.2 The Learners are Expected to

The learners are expected to do the following activities.

- Comprehend the artistry of stories by identifying the features and the mode of presentation from a variety of listening, speaking and writing experiences.
- Distinguish the style and language elements used in describing places, things, persons and events to make his own descriptions.
- Capture the style, diction and rhythm to express thoughts and feels poetically by appreciating various simple poems and composing rhythmic patterns and simple poems.
- Enjoy riddles, puzzles, jokes and language games and make new ones.
- Identify the features of a narrative from a variety of narrations including preparations and performances of his own.
- Identify the features and make these items related to various functions at school.
• Compare the letter in terms of the feelings of intimacy and write letters using different format.

• Identify various kinds of reports and write reports on incident and celebrations.

• Compare different samples of diaries and write improved diaries.

• Identify themes and sub themes of essays and prepare passage cohesively.

1.6.3 Narrative as a Pedagogic Tool

Narrative is proposed as a discourse that can be used to give the richest kind of linguistic input to the learners. A narrative is not just the parading of certain sequence of events. Nor is it equivalent to conventional story which begins at some point, runs through certain sequence of events and comes to a natural culmination. The narrative deals with human drama involving certain characters who the listeners can identify with and get emotionally attached to. They empathize with, these characters and share their thoughts and feelings. Since narrative meant to operate at the emotional plane of the listeners it makes use an emotive language; it breathes life. The overall aim of presenting a narrative is to create certain images in the minds of learners and to make them emotionally charged. It does not aim at creating situations for teaching vocabulary of certain strictures and functions though learners might register certain vocabulary items and structures non-consciously. The point is that if the linguistic experience is registered as emotional gestalts, then the role of a facilitator is to help learners develop such gestalts in their minds.

1.6.4 Pedagogic Claims on the Narrative

• It allows a holistic treatment of the second language.

• Unlike other discourse forms (essay poem, letter etc.) narrative as a discourse can accommodate all types of sentences quite naturally.
• Here the teacher can make use of all kinds of prosodic features like stress, intonation, modulation, etc. In this sense also narrative offers a holistic treatment of language.

• While presenting the narrative the teacher can pause at certain points thus creating ‘narrative gaps’ which can be filled in by the learners by constructing target discourses.

• Narratives can fruitfully capitalize on the emotive aspect of the language. This is of vital importance in the language class because experience is sustained in human minds as emotional gestalts.

• It can channelize the thoughts of the listeners so that they can perform the tasks assigned to them in a better way.

1.6.5 Learning Materials

1) Course books and practice books specially designed.

2) Authentic texts like notices, newspapers, magazines, etc.

3) Library books.

4) Materials developed by teachers and students.

5) Reference materials.

1.6.6 Evaluation

Language learning is a continuous process and hence assessment should be done then and there. Learning takes place in group discussions, pair discussions and individually. So the assessment also should be made individually, mutually and group wise. This will help the learners to compare his strengths and weaknesses and make modifications in his learning.

Assessment plays an important role in the learning process. It motivates student to become better learners and creates a healthy competitive spirit among them.
to improve their ability further. It also gives teachers valuable feedback on what their students have learned. In the traditional way of testing, where learners are expected to recall details from set texts write essays and do grammar exercises, their memory and not their language ability is measured or tested. A better approach is to test what the students have actually learned, for e.g., skills, the use of English for effective communication, fluency and skills acquired as a part of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE). This shift of focusing in testing from memory to real language acquisition shall be the major concern of the tests. The acquisition of the skills and not the ability to memorize chunks of texts should be tested. Question shall be based on curriculum objectives and design to test pupils’ proficiency in language skills and their ability to produce various discourses.

The Government of Kerala with the help of SCERT, Thiruvananthapuram under the guidance of Dr. K.N. Anandan introduced Discourse Oriented Pedagogy with learning materials for the same pedagogy in 6th and 7th standards in Kerala during the academic year 2006-07. The Department has been giving training to the teachers.

1.7 MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE

The theory of Multiple Intelligence conceived by Howard Gardner has a number of pedagogical implications. The National Curriculum Frame Work (2007) recommends the incorporation of this theory in the teaching learning process. The activities and discourses have been developed taking into consideration the class room implication of Multiple Intelligence theory.

1.7.1 Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence

All activities where the learners have to construct various discourses are capable of activating this side of intelligence.
1.7.2 **Logical-Mathematical Intelligence**

The ‘narrative gaps’ provided to the students by the teachers give them sufficient chances to develop this side of intelligence through the following activities.

- Predicting events based on the narratives they listen to and read.
- Establishing cause and consequence relationship.
- Selecting expressions appropriate to a given context.
- Sequencing various events for developing narratives.

1.7.3 **Visual-Spatial Intelligence**

Students are given quite a good number of activities in the class. By actively participating and performing these activities this part of the intelligence would develop. Following are some of the activities given to the students in this regard.

- Drawing pictures based on a story or a given information
- Interpreting a picture
- Preparing posters, greeting cards etc.
- Designing wall magazines.
- Deciding the layout of a chart.

1.7.4 **Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence**

Individual, pair and group activities performed in the classroom provide the students with opportunities to develop this intelligence.

- Role-plays.
- Manifesting body language.
- Miming.

1.7.5 **Musical- Rhythmic Intelligence**

Many activities given to the students in connection with rhymes, poems etc. help the students to enhance this side of the intelligence.
• Singing songs and rhymes.
• Adding lines to a poem keeping its rhythm.
• Identifying the rhythm of a poem.

1.7.6 Interpersonal Intelligence

Pair and group activities performed by the students in the classroom learning process help them to increase this side of the intelligence.

• Participating in discussion.
• Agreeing or disagreeing with other’s opinion.
• Asking questions to elicit information.
• Sharing ideas with others.
• Comparing mutually.

1.7.7 Intra-personal Intelligence

Many activities introduced in the class and many discourses, constructed while learning English contribute to this type of intelligence.

• Diary writing.
• Realizing one’s own potentials as well as limitations.
• Initiating linguistic activities.
• Creative language expressions.

1.7.8 Naturalistic Intelligence

Some of the classroom activities and discourses are predetermined to enhance this side of the intelligence.

• Developing familiarity with nature.
• Translating scenic details of nature into linguistic expressions of pictures.
• Talking about nature.
Thus, it is evident that the process of English language teaching through Discourse Oriented Pedagogy provides ample chances to integrate activities to enhance the multiple intelligence of the students.

1.8 ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT METHODOLOGY

Discourse Oriented Pedagogy is proposed at all levels of learning English. A discourse is a mode communicating certain ideas meaningfully in a particular situation. At the primary level development of basic skills in language learning i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing should be continued. But the emphasis at this level is to be on use of varied modes of discourses through the basic skills. Learning experiences should be targeted to provide the leaner sufficient scope for integration of basic skills in language acquisition process. Moreover, one language function can be served through different forms of language and one form of language can have different functions. These possibilities should be addressed in language acquisition process. To ensure this, we have to make use of different modes of discourses. At this level there should not be any written examination. Simple discourses like conversations, rhymes, descriptions, stories can be worked out at this level.

We expect the student at the upper primary level to construct more varieties of discourses, both orally and in the written form. The discourses constructed at this level should be linguistically at a higher level for which indicators are to be clearly defined:

For example at the upper primary level the following discourses may be targeted:

- **Stories**

1. Find out the difference in styles and messages by listening to a variety of simple stories.
2. Write simple stories on the basis of pictures and clues and narrate them with proper
expressions.

• Descriptions
1. Speak about things, places and persons by reading and listening to a variety of
short descriptions.
2. Write about things, places and persons in simple sentences using appropriate
language items.

• Dialogues (Conversations)
1. Identify the contents of dialogues/ conversations by listening to and reading a
variety of them.
2. Identify the form and functions of language used in dialogues/ conversations and
interact effectively with others.
3. Write dialogues/conversations suitable for different contexts/ situations and
engage in performing role-plays.

• Poems
1. Listen to and read simple poems and recite them with proper expressions.
2. Read simple poems and appreciate the art in them.
3. Identify the images, thoughts, feelings and messages in simple poems.
4. Write a few lines following the pattern.

• Riddles, puzzles, jokes and language games
1. Engage in riddles, puzzles, jokes and language games.

• Narratives
1. Identify the features of narratives by listening to, and reading, a variety of
narratives.
2. Develop a variety of language forms to express what the characters are saying or thinking.

3. Prepare narratives in writing, by fixing and blowing up a sequence of events.

4. Present them with appropriate voice modulation, gestures and facial expressions.

- Notices, posters and advertisements
  1. Identify the features of notices, posters and advertisements by reading and listening to a variety of them.
  2. Make notices, posters and advertisements related to school events.

- Letters
  1. Read different types of letters and identify their features.
  2. Write letters for various occasions.

- Reports
  1. Read and identify the features of various kinds of reports.
  2. Write reports on school activities and celebrations.

- Diaries
  1. Draw ideas by comparing different samples of diaries.
  2. Write diaries on incidents and projects on their own.

In addition to the above mentioned discourses, the learners are expected to carry out the following activities also.

- Projects
  1. Identify issues.
  2. Decide appropriate methods for investigation.
  3. Develop appropriate tools for collecting data.
  4. Analyze data and reach conclusions.
  5. Prepare project report.
  6. Present the findings before an audience.
• Creative collection
  1. Maintain a collection of various discourses constructed as part of learning experience.
  2. Collect specimens of stories, poems, pictures, etc.
  3. Keep a record of one’s own impression on the collections.

• Assignment
  1. Construct various discourses as home assignment as an extension of the classroom experience.
  2. Undertake editing task (structural, morphological, and spelling errors)

    Since curricular objectives are defined in terms of discourses and not in terms of structures and their relevant communication functions, the level of each discourse is to be identified clearly. Take for instance, a discourse like conversation. We expect learners at all levels (lower primary, upper primary and high school classes) to produce conversations. How will we differentiate the conversations constructed by a learner at the Upper Primary level from that constructed by a High school student? We can do this by identifying various linguistic levels of the discourse.

    A mere initiation and response will be enough for the beginner but as she goes up to higher levels, we expect conversations refined structurally and stylistically. The conversation constructed at the primary level may not have discourse markers or tags in it. But a conversation constructed by a high school student will necessarily contain these linguistic elements. Such a differentiation will be necessary for the other discourses also. Apart from deciding the level of each discourse we will have to decide on the variety of discourses that are to be targeted at each level. What has been given above is the list of discourses chosen for class VI. As we go to higher classes, we can select higher order of discourses such as debates, journalistic writing, essays, skits, screenplays, e-mailing and so on.
The Course book and Sourcebook have been prepared based on the following guidelines:

Knowledge is a construct emerging from the learner’s mental process based on the needs of the social, physical and cultural environment in which he lives. This is a product of activity and counter activity. It reflects the features of the locality and gives scope for linking through and action. Such constructed knowledge can transform the society. Learning, for us, means the process of transformation.

Knowledge is a construct, which involves information and at the same time knowledge stands above information. In this context the textbook should be a powerful tool which leads the learning activities forward. It has a prominent role among the different materials which help the child to construct knowledge. It should be arranged in such a way in the classroom that it becomes a chief resource for the construction of knowledge within the classroom. The textbook should contain all the basic information needed for knowledge construction as well as hints for various activities in the classroom.

1.9 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Teaching of English language has been an area of experiments and so far many approaches and methods have been tried out in the field. Many of them lost their dominance on one or the other ground and new practices came in the place. This field still remains as a field of experiment.

It is felt that English, henceforth, is to be taught principally as a language of comprehension rather than as a literary language. Most of our students need only a functional or working knowledge of English to comprehend books written in the language and to express themselves clearly in English. Analyzing the situation, the Official Language Commission (1956) remarked, “Since we need knowledge of
English for different purposes, the content and character of that knowledge as well as the method of imparting it have to undergo a change. English has to be taught, hereafter, principally as a language of comprehension rather than literary language.”

The National Policy on Education (NPE) adopted by the Government of India in 1968 stressed the importance of the study of English in these words, “special emphasis needs to be laid on the study of English and other international languages. World knowledge is growing at a tremendous pace, especially in science and technology. India must not only keep up this growth but also make her own contribution to it. For this purpose, study of English deserves to be specially strengthened.”

The Commission also remarked, “The requirement of knowledge for comprehending English is mainly a matter of understanding the basic grammar and structure of language.”

Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitation, distractions, shifts of attention and interest and errors in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance (Chomsky 1965:3).

Language is not a habit structure. Ordinary linguistic behaviour characteristically involves innovation, formation of new sentences and patterns in accordance with rules of great abstractness and intricacy (Chomsky 1966:153). Sentences are not learned by imitation and repetition but ‘generated’ from the learner’s underlying ‘competence’.
In Hyme’s (1972:281) view, a person who acquires communicative competence acquires both knowledge and ability for language use with respect to

- Whether something is formally possible.
- Whether something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available.
- Whether something is appropriate in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated.
- Whether something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails.

Stephen D. Krashen’s Monitor Model of second language development (1981) is an example of a learning theory on which a method (Natural Method) has been built. This theory also addresses the conditions necessary for the process of ‘acquisition’ to take place.

British applied linguists stated that what is required is a closer study of the language itself and a return to the traditional concept that utterances carried meaning in themselves and expressed the meanings and intentions of the speakers and writers who created them (Howatt 1984: 280).

Johnson (1984), and Littlewood (1984), consider an alternative learning theory that they also see as compatible with CLT- a skill learning model of learning. According to this theory the acquisition of communicative competence in a language is an example of skill development. This involves both a cognitive and a behavioural aspect:

The cognitive aspect involves the internalization of plans for creating appropriate behaviour. The behavioural aspect involves the automation of these plans so that they can be converted into fluent performance in real time.

‘Interaction’ has been central to theories of second language learning and pedagogy since the 1980s. Rivers (1987) defined the interactive perspective in
language education: “students achieve facility in using a language when their attention is focused on conveying and receiving authentic messages (i.e., messages that contain information of interest to both speaker and listener in a situation of importance to both).” This is ‘interaction’ (Rivers 1987:4). The notion of interactivity also been linked to the teaching of reading and writing as well as listening and speaking skills. Carrell, Divine and Esky (1988) use the notion of ‘interactivity’ to refer to the simultaneous use by effective readers of both top-down and bottom-up processing in reading comprehension.

The Whole Language Movement argues that language should be taught as a ‘whole’. If language isn’t kept whole, it isn’t language anymore. (Rigg 1991:522).

Casey (1992) has found out that there exist highly positive relationship between proficiency level in English and method of teaching at the basic and intermediate levels.

The process of second language learning should be in accordance with the particular class room situation where locale of the school, the socio-cultural factors etc. have great influence. In an investigation, Tang (1996) has found that the chances of informal exposure to the second language outside the class room promote its acquisition. Study of English has acquired permanent place in our socio-economic behaviour which is controlled by the urban, semi-urban and rural population. The latter group is found to have markedly low standard in English. We need careful investigation and experimentation before adopting a particular method or approach as language learning is situation cum environment oriented.

One should clearly understand the role of English in India and evolve suitable methods for teaching English in contexts in which it is used. The approach is to be realistic and practicable in the Indian context. Very few attempts have been made on
studying the effectiveness of different methods and approaches on achievement in English at upper primary level (Jessa 2005).

Approaches and methods are often based on the assumption that the processes of second language learning are fully understood. In this field only a very few books are based on second language acquisition research or have been empirically tested. Much of such research does not support the often simplistic theories and prescriptions found in some approaches and methods. Skehan, for example, commenting on the standard lesson sequence in Situational Language Teaching as well as other methods consisting of a Presentation phase, a Practice phase and a Production phase, points out that such a sequence does not reflect principles of second language acquisition. (Skehan 1996:18)

The role of meaningful language exposure or ‘input’ for the mind to work on is acknowledged by all cognitive theories of language and language learning. The “burden of languages” is the burden of incomprehension. This happens when language is taught for its own sake as a set of forms and rules; and not introduced as a carrier of coherent textual meaning; it becomes another ‘subject’ to be passed. The language environment needs to be enriched in particular ways (NCF Position Paper on Teaching of English, 2005).

To understand suitable methods for teaching English is a major concern for the teacher educators and teachers. The approach and methods to be followed should be realistic and practicable in Indian context and also should be learner friendly. Very few attempts have been made on studying the effect of different approaches and methods on teaching of English at upper primary level.

The review of related studies also has revealed that the area is not fully explored by the Indian researchers.
Considering the above mentioned issues a study was planned and which analyses the status of the implementation of Discourse Oriented Pedagogy in English language teaching in 6th standard in Kerala and its impact. This study would give a feed back about this pedagogy in the formative stage, which will help in taking key decisions regarding the improvement of it, which in turn be very much helpful to the administrators, teachers and students and teaching community in large. The study could also help to add some knowledge base to the quality improvement in English language teaching in Upper Primary classes.

1.10 THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study is envisaged as a study to know how the Discourse Oriented Pedagogy is carried out in teaching of English in 6th standard in Kerala state. The implementation of this pedagogy is studied first. The study tried to look into the Discourse Oriented Pedagogic awareness of the teachers and their attitude towards Discourse Oriented Pedagogy. In addition the study also explored the inherent strengths and weaknesses of it. Effect of the pedagogy on acquisition of English language skills among students is assessed. The study also intends to recommend suggestions to improve the effective use of the pedagogy.

Thus, the title of the present study is “Effect of Discourse Oriented Pedagogy on Acquisition of English Language Skills among Upper Primary Students of Kerala.”

1.11 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Discourse Oriented Pedagogy

A discourse is a meaning making process. It is a mode of communicating certain ideas meaningfully in a particular context. Discourse Oriented Pedagogy refers to the discourse level of processing of learning experiences in teaching of English adopted in the state of Kerala. Here the English language learning is based on the
discourses (such as diary, notice, letters, posters etc) identified for different grades of students. The students construct different types of discourses according to the contexts provided to them and through the construction and the use of these discourses they acquire the target language.

**English Language Skills**

English Language Skills refer to the four basic language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW). In this study, the acquisition of four language skills i.e., listening with comprehension, speaking with fluency, reading with comprehension and writing with clarity by the sixth standard students.

**Self Efficacy in the Use of English Language Skills**

Self efficacy in the use of English language skills refers to the judgement of the capability of an individual to use the four basic language skills i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing when ever and where ever required. In the present study self efficacy refers to the overall confidence shown by the students in identified areas of English language use assessed by the self efficacy scale developed for the study.

**Discourse-Oriented Pedagogic Awareness**

Awareness refers to the knowledge or perception of an individual on a thing. In this study, Discourse – Oriented Pedagogic awareness refers to the knowledge possessed by the English language teachers of Discourse Oriented Pedagogy.

**Attitude Towards Discourse Oriented Pedagogy**

Attitude refers to the mental pre-disposition of an individual expressing favour or disfavour towards a thing. In this study attitude towards Discourse Oriented Pedagogy refers to the positive or negative attitude shown by the teachers towards the use of the pedagogy measured through the attitude scale developed for the study.
1.12 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives have been formulated for the study.

- To study the implementation of Discourse Oriented Pedagogy in teaching of English at upper primary stage in Kerala.
- To find out the effect of Discourse Oriented Pedagogy on students’
  - acquisition of language skills.
  - self-efficacy in using English language.
- To determine the Discourse Oriented Pedagogic awareness of the teachers of English language and their attitude towards the pedagogy.
- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of Discourse Oriented Pedagogy in teaching of English at the upper primary stage, as perceived by teachers and District resource persons.

1.13 RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

The following research questions have been framed for this study

- What are the arrangements made for the implementation of Discourse Oriented Pedagogy in teaching English at the upper primary stage in Kerala?
- What is the effect of Discourse Oriented Pedagogy on acquisition of language skills and self efficacy in using English among the upper primary school students?
- To what extent do the teachers at upper primary stage possess the Discourse Oriented Pedagogic awareness and what is their attitude towards the pedagogy?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Discourse Oriented Pedagogy as perceived by teachers and district resource persons?
1.14 VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

**Independent Variable**
Discourse Oriented Pedagogy

**Dependent Variable**
Students’ Acquisition of Language Skills
Students’ Self-Efficacy

1.15 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses were formulated for carrying out the study. All research questions do not have corresponding hypotheses. The second research question has eight hypotheses.

- There is no significant difference between mean pre-test and post-test scores of listening skill.
- There is no significant difference between mean pre-test and post-test scores of speaking skill.
- There is no significant difference between mean pre-test and post-test scores of reading skill.
- There is no significant difference between mean pre-test and post-test scores of writing skill.
- There is no significant difference in the pre and post test self efficacy scores for listening skill.
- There is no significant difference in the pre and post test self-efficacy scores for speaking skill.
- There is no significant difference in the pre and post test self-efficacy scores for reading skill.
- There is no significant difference in the pre and post self-efficacy scores for writing.
1.16 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is delimited to its area, method, tools and techniques and assumption proposed for the study.

- The study was confined only to the upper primary school teachers and students drawn from one district of Kerala.
- Teachers and students of government and government aided schools are only selected as sample.

1.17 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the theoretical background of the study is discussed. The context in which the study was taken up is explained. The objectives of the study were also given. In the next chapter, a review of the studies related to the variables considered under the present study is presented.