CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language already known to educated Indians for a very long time since A.D. 1600 and A.D. 1700 when Britain established its colonies in a number of countries. In this world of competition, the large number of young people desirous of achieving excellence in specialized courses are required to have fluency in English. As it is more convenient and more useful to learn English, the number of those who want to learn English far exceeds those who want to learn any other foreign language. This fact keeps English in the front line.

English is spoken as a native or first language in countries like the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada and Australia. In other countries like India, Pakistan, Africa, France, Russia, etc., English is used as a second or foreign language. According to a source from Internet, 17.01% i.e. 1.143 million people of the world population speak English. Out of them 331,000,000 millions use it as a first language and 812 million people in all the parts of the globe use it as an additional language. English is the language of international politics, trade, commerce and industry and one of the official languages of the UNO and also a link language of the Commonwealth countries. English has truly become a world language. It has proved to be a great incentive behind the international exchange of teachers and students in different countries of the world. Much of the cultural give and take among different nations of the world takes place due to English language, playing the role of a link language on international platforms. Peter Strevens (1980) rightly says that when there is an immense growth in international
communication, we cannot sit back lamenting the passing of an era. We have to learn what the society demands, i.e. English for practical purposes.

More than six decades have passed since India attained independence. English has been a great source behind the Indian Renaissance. English literature has played an important role in bringing about modern Indian, socio-cultural and political renaissance. The vast and ever-growing English literature has inspired some of our finest minds and continues to remain a source of inspiration to noble endeavours. Indian scholars and political reformers learnt much from the writings of Milton, Wordsworth, Shelley, Tennyson, Emerson, Whitman, Frost, Carlyle, Ruskin, Rousseau, Burke, Wells, Shaw and many others whose writings in both quality and quantity remained unrivalled. The social, cultural and political life of India’s educated classes continues to be influenced by the English language.

In India, no one can deny the fact that higher studies in Medicine, Technology, Engineering, Economics, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and many other subjects cannot be undertaken without English. No commission or committee on education has ever recommended the discontinuance of English language from the corridors of education. Educational advisors and policy framers struggled to retain English as a medium of instruction in the higher studies, more particularly in the scientific and the technological branches of education even though Hindi, as well as regional languages, is being used as medium of instruction at the postgraduate level in different subjects. In India about one-third of books published and one fourth of all the periodicals are in English.

English is a link language in India. It is the only language which is understood by the educated people all over the country. The trade correspondence from one state to another is mostly conducted in English. If there is no English there will be no dialogue
among people from different states and a person from Mysore will not be able to communicate with a person from Kerala, nor can a person from Bengal share his thoughts with one from Punjab. English is a unifying factor and helps national integration. The correspondence between the Union Government and the State Governments is mostly conducted in English.

English is an effective means of social communication. English adds advantage to every social situation in which people find themselves placed. Whether it is a market place, or a government office, a first class showroom, or a hotel reception counter, a conversation in English gives an added advantage to the user. In our daily conversation we make use of a large number of words from the English language. English is largely being used for administrative work. Before independence, it was the language of administrative work and even today, English is a declared ‘associate official’ language of the Indian Union. It is the only language for interstate relationship and communication. Efforts are being made to develop Hindi to replace English but it will take a number of years before it is given up as a link language. It remains a prime mover of inter-state mechanism in India.

English is considered as our major window on the outside world. Anyone who can read English can keep in touch with the whole world without leaving his own home. It has been described as a pipeline for the stream of knowledge in all branches of learning. English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world and we Indians will act unwisely if we allow ourselves to be enveloped in the folds of a dark curtain of ignorance (University Education Commission 1948-49). According to the University Education Commission (1948-49),

… our students must acquire sufficient mastery of English to give them access to the treasures of knowledge, and in the universities, no student
should be allowed to take a degree who does not acquire the ability to read with facility and understanding works of English authors (Report: 319-25).

English is an important library language in India. It is the key to the storehouse of knowledge. Most of the knowledge is not as yet available in Indian languages. The Kothari Education Commission (1966) has rightly stressed that English would play a vital role in higher education as an important library language. The implications of English as a library language are two-fold. All teachers in higher education should be essentially bilingual in the sense that they should be able to teach in the regional language and in English, and all students should be able to follow lectures, and use reading materials in the regional language as well as in English.

1.1. English in Pre-independence Period:

According to Inayat Khan (1990:43),

before independence, the study of English was regarded as a content-based, cultural, humanistic discipline and English was a language which could make western science and technology available to the people of India. In the universities and colleges of India, English was taught with two aims: (a) introducing the culture embodied in English literature, (b) giving the Indians the ability to use the language effectively through a sustained exposure to the great works of English literature. In schools which were preparation ground for university education the same kind of dual approach to the study of English was reflected.

Mecaulay’s Minute of 1835 is clear about the goal of English education in India. According to Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy (2006:31), the Minute said “we must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the million whom we govern – a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect”.

The Wood’s Despatch of 1854 emphasized the teaching of English along with the vernacular language. The teachers must be trained and universities should be established.
The Indian Education Commission of 1882 argued that to a boy who is educated, our elementary knowledge of English is of unquestionable value not only by reason of mental training but also in regard to his business or other relations with the outer world.

The Indian Universities Commission of 1902 observed that the results are not discouraging and the students after Matriculation, are found to be unable to understand lectures in English when they join a college.

The Government of India Resolution of 1904 suggested that English should not be taught until the learner had received a thorough grounding in the first language.

The Indian Universities Act of 1904 enlarged the scope of universities and English continued to be the language of higher education. The Government of India Resolution of 1913 recommended the improvement of the curriculum and the mode of the examination and English continued to be the medium of instruction and examination in Secondary schools and in colleges.

The Calcutta University Commission of 1917-19 emphasized mother tongue education as a preliminary to the effective use of English and it was in favour of bilingual education.

The Hartog Committee of 1928-29 said that in the interest of India, English should be a compulsory second language.

The Abbot-Wood Committee of 1936-37 said that mother-tongue should be the medium of instruction throughout the high school stage and English should be compulsory language for all. The teaching of English should be more realistic.

View of the Central Advisory Board of Education (1944): The report restated the importance of basic education for India and said that the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue. The basic education should comprise course of eight years. English should not be introduced even as an optional subject in the basic school.
1.2. English in Post – independence Period:

The independence of India in 1947 led the people to shun everything that was English and there was a steep decline in the general standard of higher education. The position of English witnessed a sea change in the post-independent India and the main problem that the country had to face was the question of retention or rejection of English. Educationists and political leaders argued the case and Gandhiji said that it was his considered opinion that English education, in the manner it has been given, has emasculated the English-educated Indians, and that it has put severe strain upon Indian students and made of us imitators. Mahatma Gandhi further said that “of all the superstitions that India has, none is so great as that, a knowledge of the English language is necessary for imbibing ideas of liberty and developing accuracy of thought” (Nayyer 2005:3). However, C. Rajagopalachari (Nayyer 2005:3) said that, we in anger and hatred against the British people, should not throw away the baby (English) with the bath water (English people). Maulana Azad (Nayyer 2005:3) said that “It has been observed that one hundred and fifty years of intimate contact has made English an integral part of our educational system and this cannot be changed without injury to the cause of education in India. English has today become one of the major languages of the world, and Indians can neglect its study at the risk to themselves”.

View expressed by the University Education Commission (1948): A Commission was formed to enquire into the causes and remedies of the maladies of Indian education. The commission submitted its report in 1949 and advocated the promotion of a national language (Hindi). Yet, it stressed that English should continue to occupy an important place in India’s academic and intellectual life. The commission pointed out, “English, however, must continue to be studied. It is a language which is rich in literature – humanistic, scientific and technical. If under sentimental urges we should give up
English, we should cut ourselves off from the living stream of ever growing knowledge” (Report: 319-25). The Commission for the first time advocated the formula of three languages, i.e., mother tongue, Hindi and English at the higher secondary and university stages in India.

View expressed in the Constitution: It was laid down in the Constitution of India (1950) that English would continue as the official language of the Union for 15 years, that is upto 1965, after which time Hindi would replace it. It was also declared that, it shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that, it may serve as a medium of expression of all the elements of composite culture of India.

View expressed by the Mudaliar Commission (1951-52): The Commission reviewed the position of English in 1951-52 and reiterated the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission in the following words:

It is suggested that no student should be handicapped by the ignorance of a language which will ultimately determine the career that he should choose. It should also be recognised that even in regard to many of the diversified courses of instruction, as matters stand at present, a full knowledge of English will be extremely useful for understanding the subject matter better and for further study of the same subject. All these considerations led to the conclusion that English should be given due position in secondary schools (Report:71).

View expressed by the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53): The Secondary Education Commission also observed that much of the national unity in political and other spheres of activity has been brought about through the study of English language and literature.

View expressed by the Official Languages Amendment Bill (1956): The Lok Sabha adopted the Official Languages Amendment Bill. According to the Resolution of the House, (i) The compulsory knowledge of either Hindi or English shall be required at the time of selection of candidates for recruitment to the central services. (ii) All the languages
included in the eighth Schedule of the Constitution and English shall be permitted as alternative media for the all India and higher Central Services Examinations.

View expressed by the University Grants Commission (1957): A committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Dr. H.N. Kunzru to examine the problems connected with the medium of instruction and recommend measures to ensure adequate proficiency in English at the university stage. Some of the important recommendations of this committee are: that the change from English to an Indian language as the medium of instruction at the university stage should not be hastened; that a proper foundation in English should be laid at the secondary school stage so that students going up to the university can have adequate knowledge of English; that even when a change in the medium of instruction is made, English should continue to be studied by all university students; that it would be necessary to have methods of teaching English at the schools carefully examined by an expert body and the recommendations of that body adopted by all the universities; that where English is not the medium of instruction at any university course, it is necessary to adopt special methods to secure an adequate knowledge of English as a second language; that it is possible to learn language more efficiently and much faster than was considered possible in the past with the assistance of special techniques and the use of gramophones and tape recorders and other audio-visual aids; that it is in our educational interest that English should be retained as a properly studied second language in our universities even when an Indian language is used as an ordinary medium of teaching. It pointed out the maladies of English teaching like, defective syllabi, lack of teacher training, etc. The recommendations of the Kunzru Committee were later reiterated by the Tarachand Committee (1961). Hence English was retained as a link language in India.
In 1960, the UGC again appointed a group of experts, commonly known as the English Review Committee to examine the problems of English teaching in this country, whether it is used as a medium of instruction or studied as a language. The Report (1960) said that the regional languages have not yet developed to a point where they can replace English as a tool of knowledge and as a medium of communication. Even when the regional languages become sufficiently developed, English will remain our window to world knowledge. It has, therefore, to be ensured that the student is able to read books, journals, reports, etc. in English in his subject of study.

View expressed by the Indian Education Commission (1964): The Indian Education Commission was appointed in 1964 to look into the problems in the field of education. Language problem was no exception. The Commission observed that no student should be considered as qualified for a degree, in particular a Master’s degree, unless he has acquired a reasonable proficiency in English. In 1964 the Government of India also appointed a Study Group under the Chairmanship of Prof. V.K. Gokak to examine the position of English in school education. This study group emphasized the training of English teachers so that English could be taught as an effective second language in this country. In 1966 the Education Commission which was appointed by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Kothari submitted its report. The Commission (1966) had also referred to the role of the teaching of English in India and said that, as English for a long time to come will continue to be needed as a ‘library language’ in the field of higher education, a strong foundation in the language will have to be laid at the school stage. The introduction of regional language as the medium of instruction was discussed in great detail by the Commission and it was felt that this introduction of regional language should not mean underrating the importance of English in the university. For the successful completion of the first-degree course, a student should
possess an adequate command of English, be able to express himself in English with reasonable ease and facility, understand lectures in it and avail himself of its literature. Therefore, adequate emphasis will have to be laid on its study as a language right from the school stage.

View expressed by the National Policy on Education (1968): The first ever National Policy on Education was given to the country in 1968, according to which 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 and India must not only keep up with this growth but also make her own significant contribution to it. For this purpose, the study of English deserves to be strengthened.

View expressed by the New Policy on Education (1986): The important step that the Programme of Action (POA) recommended was the establishment of rural institutions, i.e., schools, colleges, and universities in rural areas, with the objective of idealising and promoting excellence.

View expressed by the Curriculum Development Centre (1989): The Curriculum Development Centre which was set up by the University Grants Commission in 1987 submitted its recommendations 1989. In “A Note on the New Curriculum”, the CDC Report on English says that the new undergraduate curriculum comprises a General English Course and Special English courses. It says,

To cater to the heterogeneous tertiary level student population, the General English Course is conceived of as comprising different units and modules suited to the different levels of learners. The patterning of the course is such that students, depending on their linguistic competence at the time of admission, would not only begin their General English Programme at different levels but also reach different levels at the time of graduation (Introduction to the Report of the CDC).
View expressed by the Acharya Ramamurti Commission (1990): The report made an analysis of the problems in the implementation of the three-language formula. Options are given to students to take examinations at all levels in regional language media. It suggested the development of Hindi, Sanskrit, foreign languages, and English.

Many people expressed their opinions for and against the retention of English. Time passed and regional languages have come of age. A number of states have introduced regional languages as the media of instruction. The central government has also been making efforts to make Hindi as the link language in the country. The efforts have failed and Southern states have not responded positively. English and regional languages remain the media of communication. Under these circumstances, English continues to remain the national link among different states.

1.3. English as the Language of Globalisation:

Today the English language has pervaded all walks of life. Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy (2006:153) say that “English has become a global commodity like oil and the microchip and without petrol, computers, and the English language, the world will come to a halt. It is no longer a language of national or cultural or class identity; it has become a language of technology, of communicational necessity”.

English language that is the global medium of communication, of the computer and the Internet; it is estimated that nearly eighty per cent of all websites use English and three-quarters of the world’s mail, telexes and cables are in English. Communication skills in English and computer skills have become interrelated and interdependent. Even countries like China, Japan France, Spain where it was not used before – that are strong in computer technology and hardware – are forced to use English. The whole world has been giving importance to English language. The knowledge revolution in the present age, the
importance of English for career purposes and employment opportunities demand a greater need for learning English.

The changing role of English: “As a result of the widespread use of English, the very character of the English language is changing; it is slowly being stripped of its culture, class, and even race” (Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy 2006:154). It has become a tool for international communication and a fairly high degree of proficiency in English and excellent communication skills in speaking and writing enhance students’ employability. The career purposes of the language have been gaining importance.

English for professional purposes, like facing interviews, writing resumés, writing reports, conducting campaigns, writing letters, participating in meetings, seminars, conferences, and discussions, is demanded; English for social roles and interacting in social contexts is considered essential. More than two-thirds of the world’s scientific papers published annually are written in English. The governments and universities are appointing English trainers and conducting accent-sensitizing and accent-neutralizing programmes as a part of their courses. The ability to communicate one’s ideas and attitudes – agreeing, disagreeing, convincing, narrating, requesting, ordering, explaining, apologizing – is the expected skill and not the ability to interpret a literary text. It is communication skills in English that are essential as we live in a global village where English is widely used not only between native speakers and nonnative speakers of English but also among nonnative speakers themselves as it has become the language of business and commerce, trade and technology, journalism and electronic media, the Internet and IT-enabled services.

The demands to be met in framing the programmes for the future of English teaching in our country are: the changing conditions and the needs to answer the problems
created thereby; the role of English as a source language and the place of English as a link language with the outside world for the acquisition of new knowledge.

1.4. Teaching Language as an Integrated Skill:

   Writing is integrated with reading, listening and discussing the core content and so learning a second language is in effect, learning the four skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. Communicative approach aims at communicative competence. Communicative abilities include linguistic skills. In order to find our contexts for written work, we also need to explore opportunities for integrating it more effectively with other classroom activities involving not only reading but also speaking and listening. In real life it is the consequence of a certain situation. Supposing there is an activity to apply for a job, it involves reading, speaking and listening, and writing.

Listening: Familiarity with the sound system and an ability to articulate English sounds prepare the students for listening to utterances with understanding. Listening should precede speaking. It paves the way for them to develop oral fluency and accuracy. Listening is a receptive skill and speaking is a productive skill. Listening is concerned with decoding a message and understanding. It is a skill that can be developed through systematic teaching. It can be cultivated through listening practice, both intensive and extensive. Practice is primarily for language items as part of the language teaching programme. In India, our students are hampered in their ability to listen for meaning by certain weaknesses like: (a) inadequate range of words and phrases that are understood, (b) inability to maintain attention, (c) inability to understand pronunciation other than personal or regional pronunciation, (d) inability to understand fast speech, (e) inability to understand against background noise through acoustic/electrical interference. The students can enrich their vocabulary through reading and by looking up unfamiliar words
in dictionaries with phonetic transcription. Dictation is an admirable exercise for sharpening attention and the teacher can adjust his speech and clarity to the capacity of the class and gradually speed up. The development of other skills would be easy if they are based on aural foundation.

Speaking: Practice in listening should precede practice in speaking. The student should be able to recognize a sound before they attain the ability to produce it. Listening should be sharpened with particular emphasis on grammatical and lexical items. To give practice in speaking, the teachers may start with dialogues. Reading aloud can be adopted. Some of the drawbacks generally noticed in our students are: misplaced stress on syllables and words, or absence of stress at all, confusion between sounds with meaningful contrasts, failure to discriminate between long and short vowels or diphthongs, interference of the phonological system of the mother tongue of the learner, failure to aspirate initial /p/ /t/ /k/, production of the harsh sounds /t/ in words like ‘wonderful’, ‘far’, etc., and misapplication of lexis and idiom. The teacher should keep in mind that an unintelligible utterance becomes unacceptable because of grammatical, lexical and syntactic inaccuracies. What is important is that a student who learns a second language should be able to feel that he has the basic machinery to say what he wants. It is not an easy thing to instil this confidence in the student; it calls for considerable preparation and creative thought on the part of the teacher. “To communicate effectively a speaker must know not only how to produce grammatical utterances of a language, but also how to use them appropriately. The speaker must know what to say, with whom and when and where” (Cooper 1968:39). Providing maximum opportunities to learners to speak, improves writing skills also as both the skills aim at expression.
Reading: Reading is a decoding process and it is a very complex process involving many physical, intellectual and often emotional reactions. It entails the ability to recognize graphic symbols and their corresponding vocal sounds. There are two types of reading skills – the skill of reading aloud and the skill of reading silently. The second-language teacher should pay attention to silent reading. The process of reading has three stages – the recognition stage, the structuring stage and the interpretation stage. The student who wants to learn English will have a lot to read and only silent reading enables him to do it at some speed. The students must have practice in both intensive and extensive reading. An efficient reader must possess the skills like: (a) ability to skim and dip, (b) ability to read fast with good comprehension texts that are easy in language and content, or difficult texts that are familiar; (c) ability to read slowly but with excellent comprehension, difficult texts on professional, academic and technical subjects in which he has a special interest and requires specialized knowledge; (d) ability to use works of reference, (e) ability to size up the book quickly. Exposure to written communication helps the learners to develop the real communicative competence.

Writing: Learning to write a second language is not merely learning to put down on paper the conventional symbols of writing system that represents the utterances one has in mind, but it is also purposeful selection and organization of ideas, facts or experience. It is a slow and arduous process. The student who learns to write English has not only to cope with the script of the language but also with the problems of ease and fluency of expression, of grammatical and lexical accuracy and of the appropriateness of the style of writing, as demanded by the occasion or situation. Learning to write therefore is learning to use grammar with ease and facts in some sequential order as tools. The main aim of a writing course is to train the student in expressing himself in good English. The teaching of writing course should cover the widest possible range of kinds of writing. The teacher
must see that progress is achieved in successive stages. No exercise should be set that is too difficult for the student; any task assigned to the student should be adjusted in its presentation to an appropriate level of difficulty and should be capable of being tackled within the language the student knows. The grammar teaching that is done should be relevant to the needs of the composition. The students should be encouraged to write a draft of the exercise first, revise and then rewrite it. The teaching of English at the college level was scarcely even intended to provide language instruction. Although exposure to literature can, and frequently does, result in consolidation and sharpening of language skills, it is doubtful whether college teaching ever had the imparting of language skills as a conscious aim (UGC 1977).

Some of the suggestions for the teacher to bring the task to the level of the class are useful. “The teacher can (i) limit the length of the written material to be produced, (ii) increase the amount of class preparation for the task, (iii) provide guidance on the final form of the written work, (iv) encourage students to collaborate in the actual process of writing, (v) allow cross-checking between the draft stage and the writing of the final product, (vi) limit the complexity of the writing task itself, and (vii) can demand that the task be completed either slowly or quickly” (Broughton et al. 1978:121). The students’ written work should be gone through by the teacher. This will enable him to assess the students’ level of achievement and prepare for the tasks ahead. Besides correcting the students’ composition, the teacher should take practical steps to remedy weaknesses in writing generally seen in a composition class. The weaknesses that can be remedied are: (a) inadequacy of lexical range; (b) misapplications of words and phrases; (c) grammatical faults; (d) misspellings; (e) faulty punctuation; and (f) use of words that are outdated.
Integrated approach: Language is often called a skill rather than a subject which is learnt by constant practice. It is more a matter of doing than of knowing. The two language skills namely listening and reading require less exertion on the part of learners. These are called receptive skills because when listening or reading, the person is at the receiving end of the communication channel. Speaking and writing, on the other hand are active skills. The person is at the transmitting end of the communication channel. These are productive skills, and the skills overlap as language is not an amalgamation of diverse skills but it is one integrated skill. In most cases we have to use more than one skill simultaneously. For example, if we are engaged in conversation we have to listen and speak.

Writing in most languages is a representation of speech sounds, which in turn represent the meanings. In early stages, the written medium cannot be taught meaningfully without reference to the spoken medium. Since the learner has to learn language from others, he has to gain language experience first through skills of comprehension, listening and reading before he can learn corresponding expression skills. The comprehension skills are learnt before expression skills. The written medium is dependent on the spoken medium. Reading also forms a good basis for writing. No skill can be learnt in isolation because they are interrelated and interdependent. What is learnt through one medium can be transferred to the other. The complex nature of language skill shows that teaching of one skill overlaps the other and thus exercise of one skill facilitates the learning of the other skills also.

1.5. Problems of the Second Language Learner:

We, Indians, are not native speakers of English. We use English as a second language. Learning is not as natural to us as it is to the native speaker but an activity in formal classroom teaching. The native speaker of English has imbibed the language, has
become familiar with the components of English in the natural process of growing up. For us learning English is essentially a deliberate effort at developing a command and control of the different components of the language; its phonology, its morphology and its syntax. From the moment of his birth, the native language child is exposed to the sounds of the language. He is thus in constant contact with these sounds for most of his waking hours. Most of the language he hears is directed at him by other people. Without any conscious effort he learns the essential components of his language. The two significant factors in the process of language acquisition are that the child is exposed to spoken language and that he hears linguistically uncontrolled language.

The child’s exposure to language enables him to internalize the grammar of his language. The learners of second language are not so much exposed to the language they attempt to learn as a child acquires his mother tongue. If exposure to language enables the learner to become acquainted with linguistic structures, opportunities to use these structures, if made available to him, will make it possible for him to speak the language. Perhaps he will make mistakes in his utterances, especially in the beginning, but these mistakes will become useful to him if he gets the feedback that enables him to learn from them. In the case of the second language learner, the feedback should be the responsibility of the teacher. The teacher’s correction of mistakes through the feedback should be cautiously and sympathetically carried out.

A very significant factor in language learning is motivation. The child acquiring his mother tongue has his strongest motivation or urge to learn as his basic needs remain unfulfilled if he cannot express himself in his mother tongue. But the second language learner has his motivation in the need to communicate – whatever be the level of
communication he wants to reach. Emphasis should be laid on the communicative use of language.

The duration of exposure to the language is also one of the factors of importance in second language learning. In India English is taught as a second language in schools and colleges for five or six hours a week. In the existing system we begin to teach English at the fifth standard when the innate capacity of the child to learn a new language is considerably reduced and the child has to exert more to learn English. Perhaps the duration is hardly adequate; also the courses are spread over years. Another factor that hinders language learning is classroom conditions. These conditions include the number of students in a class, the physical arrangements for the class, teaching materials, library, etc. The second language classes should be of right size. The two vital factors in a second language learning situation are the student and the teacher. The teacher has problems to tackle when he is faced with the task of teaching a class of students who show varying capacities of assimilation. In India even at the college level a large number of students have to be given elementary lessons in the language. They, as well as the students who have a better standard, feel that the lessons and methods adopted are not appropriate to their age or status. The result is a kind of general resentment. Some of the students are weakly motivated owing to their social and family backgrounds. The teacher must himself stimulate and sustain motivation.

Like the student the teacher himself is a variable factor in the scheme of teaching a second language; his skill and personality are instrumental in creating the necessary conditions for learning. He should be proficient in the language; his knowledge and expertise in methods and techniques of language teaching should be of reasonably high standard. The language teacher must be educated, at least to the levels of his peers. He
must have the general preparation of a teacher. He must know the target language well enough to be imitated by his students. Every second language teacher has a serious problem to cope with the students’ bilingualism. The habits of the speech in the first language, its syntactical structures, its phonological system, etc., can become impediments to the learning of English. They can be overcome through sustained remedial teaching. The problem is that the students, and especially students in developing countries, who have received several years of formal English teaching, frequently remain deficient in the ability to actually use the language and to understand its use, in normal communication, whether in the spoken or the written mode (Widdowson 1983).

Teaching English as a second language in India is thus beset with problems such as poor motivation, inadequate exposure to the language, poor classroom conditions, lack of teaching aids and materials, incompetence of teacher’s bilingualism and its effects on the learner, etc. However, some worthwhile teaching is possible if the right relationship is established in the attitudes of the learner, the teacher, the learner’s parents, and through this relationship the learner is properly motivated.

1.6. Structure of Higher Education in India:

Higher Education has a special significance in the educational system because it is the terminal component of the system. The pace of development of any country depends upon the quality of its Higher Education. In the Indian system, Higher Education includes the education imparted after 10+2 stage (ten years of primary and secondary education followed by two years of higher secondary education). The first degree, the Bachelor’s degree, is obtained after three years study in the case of liberal arts and four years in the case of most professional degrees, four and half in case of medicine and five or six in case
of law. The Master’s programme is usually of two years duration. The research degrees M.Phil. and Ph.D. take variable time depending upon the individual.

The postgraduate degree programmes except Engineering involve 2 years of study after first degree. The M.Tech. programme, however has been restructured and involves 3 semester duration. M.D., M.S., M.D.S. courses take 2 years after M.B.B.S. / B.D.S. The M.Phil. programme is one and half years duration. It is a preparatory programme for doctoral studies. Ph.D. programme is research study for 2 years while D.Sc. and D.Litt. are awarded by some universities after Ph.D. for original contributions.

1.7. Importance of Undergraduate Stage:

The undergraduate stage forms an important educational bridge between the school stage and the higher stages of education. It is at this stage that the student has to make the transition from the kind of learning to which he was exposed, to the quite different kind of learning that will be expected of him at the higher levels. More states in India have been adopting the 10+2+3 years pattern of education. This is probably a recognition of the fact that at the undergraduate level, students coming from different school systems and different states must be given the necessary preparation which will enable them to go on to the next higher stage. Proficiency in English is an important part of this preparation. The differences in the levels of achievement in English should be levelled as far as possible with the help of ‘Bridge courses’. These courses are meant to be a bridge between school English and English for higher learning within a very short time. The students have to make the transition from the former to the latter. This involves a highly intensive kind of teaching of English language. Sometimes these courses are known as crash courses, because they hope to achieve quick results.
Tremendous expansion in primary and secondary education is being observed these days. More and more children enter schools and a majority of them come from uneducated families. They do not get opportunities of using English outside the classroom. Our teacher training programmes do not meet the needs of teacher teaching a foreign language at the earlier stages. Either the learners acquire bad language habits or no language at all. This creates a new set of problems at the undergraduate stage.

In the first place, the student coming to college may have to unlearn some of the English which he was taught at school. This is more difficult than teaching him something new. Bad language habits seen in speaking, reading and writing are very difficult to get rid of, but these habits must be eliminated before new learning can take place. A bridge course must, therefore, be largely a remedial course in English. The other aim of bridge courses is to give the student the language skills as well as the language content which he needs to have. However, we have to overcome a number of difficulties before we can make a bridge course successful. One of these difficulties is the fact that one and the same course may not be useful to all the learners. In such a situation we should have a variety of such courses.

1.8. Justification for the Teaching of Writing in English:

i) Academic purposes: In 1947 in India, there were only 19 universities, by 1988-89, the number of universities increased to 183; and now there are more than 300. Some of these are deemed to be universities and institutions of national importance. The number of colleges (excluding junior colleges) in 1950-51 was 695, by 1988-89 they increased to 6,500; and now there are about 13,000. Student enrolment was 362, 325 in 1950-51, 38,82,000 in 1988-89 and about 200 million now. The number of teachers (at all levels) was 18,700 in 1950-51, 2,42,000 in 1988-89, and about 2 million in 2004 and much more
now (Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy 2006). During the year 2005-2006 there are 89 lakhs of graduates in India of which 42% are in B.A. courses, 18% are in B.Sc. courses and 16% are in B.Com. courses (Ministry of Human Resources Development 2008) and so the undergraduate stage is a crucial stage. “In every occupation, in every human relationship, the ability to use a language is of tremendous value to those who possess it. Everyone knows this” (Long 1967: 221-222). Writing in English is therefore of considerable importance in the academic sphere. The students should also take notes, summarize, write applications, drafts, memos, etc. which are important in higher studies. Entrances, competitive exams and many other examinations are held on an all India basis in English. Emphasis is to be given to written English by making it a compulsory paper. For academic purposes the student needs expository writing. So it is very essential that learners are taught effective writing.

ii) Professional / occupational purposes: The UGC National Workshop on Syllabus Reform in English states that “English functions and will continue to function as the language of development. Our scientists, technologists, engineers, doctors and other professionals must not only have access to professional literature, but must also be able to express themselves and communicate their ideas / discoveries / findings to their counterparts in other parts of the world (1977:4).

The English language has the necessary information in every branch of knowledge – Agriculture, Economics, Commerce, Business, Engineering, Space Technology, Biotechnology, Information technology, etc. English is an ‘exploding language’ in the world of ‘information explosion’ and so the teaching of writing skills for our students is very important.

The full-blown Indian bureaucratic network, which is supposed be the largest in the world covers the entire socio-economic areas of governance and planning in the form of advisory boards, committees and commissions,
ministries and various departments, the legislative and the judiciary, government controlled non-governmental organizations like educational institutions, autonomous bodies, banks, registered companies, trusts and societies (Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy 2006: 139).

Even those who go in for government jobs, whether in the national or the state cadres, for example, managerial posts (in the banking or private sector) or the post of a clerk, would be required to draft letters, record comments, frame instructions, rules, etc., and cite them for different purposes. A knowledge of writing in English is essential for public or private employment. Within the state, it might be possible to do with the regional language but for interstate purposes of communication, English will have to be used as the link language.

iii) Personal purposes: For smaller needs like corresponding with friends abroad, corresponding with superiors, heads of institutions, Central Government offices, etc., writing in English is required. It is however, unfortunate that inspite of the utility of written English, and the acute need for teaching it, very little has been done and it has been neglected in the past and continues to be neglected in the present as well.

1.9. Identification of Learner Needs at National Level:

Language needs are to be identified “in order to become aware of the learning conditions of the individuals or groups and to align these with their physical, intellectual and emotional possibilities, as well as, to devise learning materials which will approach the real use made of the language taught, thus to define pedagogical objectives through negotiation with the learner” (Richterich 1984:30). He also says that — (a) a need does not exist independent of a person. It is people who build their own images of their needs on the basis of data relating to themselves and their environment which give them an awareness of a certain lack; (b) nor does a need exist without a second awareness, namely that there is some means of satisfying it; (c) a need can be satisfied only by recourse to an element external to the person (1984:29).
No systematic study or survey has been done so far in this area. But the University Grants Commission made an effort to identify the needs at the national level and based on the needs, has formulated the objectives for teaching English which could be adopted (UGC 1977). According to the guidelines of University Grants Commission, writing skill is to be subdivided into sub-skills and categorized to cater to the needs of the learners, who could broadly be grouped into (a) those who go for higher studies and (b) those who go for employment. Sub-skills relevant to university studies are further classified foreseeing the needs of future students of literature and future needs of science. The needs identified for the first group could accommodate the needs of the students of all arts subjects / humanities and for the second group, by and large, could represent students of vocational and professional courses too. The sub-skills of writing relevant to university studies are listed as:

(i) Essay (elaboration, analysis, comparison, assessment), critical note or annotation, interpretation or explanation of text, schematic summary, the use of appropriate quotations for representing others’ views or for illustrating the quality of text under review (for future students of literature); (ii) Reporting (events, experiments), recording (observations, findings, conclusions) including the devising of tabular forms and section headings as appropriate; abstracting (pieces of objective writing); extracting (facts, statements, relevant to given point of view); describing (physical objects, instruments, processes); note-making from books, articles); note-taking from lectures (for future students of science) (UGC 1977:8).

Needs of Job-seekers: “Drafting letters (official, semi-official); recording comments (one’s own and other people's); framing instructions, rules, memos, and citing them for given purposes; editing and abridging given pieces of texts; drafting factual statements / notifications, drawing up forms, schedules and lists with explanatory notes; drafting invitations and responses, complaints and replies, enquiries and answers” (UGC 1977:8).

In order to fulfil these needs the learners have to be taught how to communicate effectively through writing. The learners will be able to write well in their mother tongue if they are mature, and have also acquired some proficiency in the spoken language. But
oral skills – both listening and speaking – have to be taught, through appropriate techniques and through appropriate forms of practice. Since the spoken and the written forms of the language are different, the writing skills require special teaching. The learners have to be exposed to the written form of the language and to appropriate varieties. Oral ability requires a firm foundation in listening. Writing has to be preceded and accompanied by wide exposure to appropriate models of written language. The learners have to be taught how to write texts. Writing in any significant form involves the ability to organize sentences into a coherent whole or text. Most writing practice should start from the aim to teach those devices of the written language.

The learners have to be shown how writing functions as a system of communication. The learners must be made aware of how we communicate through the written medium and how it differs from speech. Any piece of writing has a communicative purpose and they need to understand how the resources of the written language are used to fulfil this purpose. The learners have to be taught how to write different kinds of texts. No learner can master all the varieties of the written form of the language. Many of them would not be relevant to their needs. Our goal should not be to teach different kinds of writing (such as narrative, descriptive, expository and so on), but rather to see that these are to be practised within the wider context of the text. The learners have to be set realistic writing tasks. The purpose of writing tasks fails if the tasks lack reality. We must attempt to identify those forms of writing which are most likely to be relevant to the learners’ needs, such as types of “personal” communication (notes, letters) and “institutional” communication (formal letters, reports) and to establish classroom contexts for practicing them.

The learners have to be supported in their writing tasks and guidance should be tempered with opportunities for free expression. Generally, writing tasks are imposed and
the learners may not have either relevant ideas or be sufficiently stimulated by the tasks. The use of techniques and procedures which have proved valuable for oral work, such as pair and group work, need to be examined within the context of the writing programme. The learners’ efforts need to be viewed sympathetically. With the help of a programme which takes learner problems into account, we can hope to make writing a more rewarding activity for them in terms of attainment and satisfaction. We need to be truly a reader than a judge and we should not look so much at what the learners have failed to achieve but rather at what they have actually succeeded in doing. Though the need for teaching writing skills is identified, proper care is not taken to teach them particularly in schools with Telugu as the medium of instruction. If students have to acquire good writing skills it is very essential that they are trained properly since their childhood. Changes should be brought about in the conditions of teaching language at all levels.

This chapter presents the importance and position of English in pre-independent and post-independent India. Next, it shows how English has become the language of globalization and how the role of English in India has changed. As the study obtains the opinions of teachers and students at undergraduate level, it is also important to discuss the structure of higher education in India and the importance of undergraduate stage. The learner needs are identified at national level and there is a need for teaching of writing. Teaching of language is skill-based one and so the general principles of teaching and learning English have been discussed. Some important problems of second language learners are also included. The next chapter deals with theoretical insights into the process of learning and teaching of L₂ composition.