

CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

English is accepted as a universal language. There is no imminent danger to the English language, or its global popularity. The English language worldwide has an official status. The language, English unifies all who speaks it. The language appears to marginalise and in a number of cases, tends to threaten the place of living that normally is no part of the purview of a foreign language. On the whole, the aim of teaching English, as a second language is to encourage the learners to acquire the communication skills, for both academic and professional purposes and to make them master the language. In future, English will certainly become the best mode of communication.

i) Origin of Communication

The word “communication” comes from the Latin word “communis” meaning “common”. Basically communication is divided into five stages namely,

- period until 3000 BC
- period between 3000 BC and 2000 BC
- period between 2000 BC and 300 BC
- period between 300 BC and 200 AD
- in the 1990s

During the 1990s computers made a remarkable growth in communication. There are various channels and routes of communication. Language is a powerful mode of communication. It is a medium through which an individual expresses his thoughts and ideas. Now-a-days English has become the medium of communication nationally as well as internationally; it has become a global language. On the whole, the aim of English as a second language is to encourage learners to acquire the communication skills. The skill will help them to improve their vocabulary, for both academic and professional purposes and to make them master the language. In future, English will certainly become the best mode of communication.

There is always a quest for a better method of teaching English as a second language. Many approaches, new theories on taking the language to the non-native speakers have been formulated. They have also changed according to the demand and new needs of the hour and the changing visions of the society. All the theories and approaches have been helping to design course materials, methodology and teaching tools for teaching English. There are four types of skills for a person to master a language namely, the LSRW technique. They are Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Listening and speaking skills are known as oracy and reading skills are known as literacy, both oracy and literacy form linguacy. The first two skills like listening and reading are used as the channels of receiving information and skills like speaking and writing are called productive skills. The skills of reading have been improved. The skills of listening, speaking and writing

are yet to be improved. The hurdles for a student to acquire these skills are many.

ii) The Importance of the English Language

It is highly essential to know the language for communication. In general, the most popular language is English. In this computer age, English is the only language that any one can understand. It has become an ideal language for expressing one's feelings. First and foremost students have to learn the language and then they have to gain fluency in that language. The first stage of learning this language would be very interesting. It is always best to follow the method of reading first, and then to adopt the method of writing. One can use the picture books for this purpose. When one feels that he is familiar with the words, then he can frame sentences. This is the most interesting stage in learning, first think of a sentence in the mother-tongue and then try to write down the same sentence in English. There could be some mistakes, but try to overcome it by correcting those mistakes. Frame sentences using different types of new words. This type of repeated practice helps the learner to frame sentences at ease. The presentation is the most important factor in communication and also in communicating one's feelings. Repeated practice makes a person master the subject.

1.2 THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

English is a West Germanic language which originated from the Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Britain by Germanic settlers and Roman auxiliary troops from various parts of what is now northwest Germany and the northern Netherlands. Initially, Old English was a diverse group of

dialects, reflecting the varied origins of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms of England. One of these dialects, Late West Saxon, eventually came to dominate. The original Old English language was then influenced by two waves of invasion: the first by speakers of the Scandinavian branch of the Germanic language family, who conquered and colonised parts of Britain in the 8th and 9th centuries; the second by the Normans in the 11th century, who spoke Old Norman and ultimately developed an English variety of this called Anglo-Norman. These two invasions caused English to become mixed to some degree, though it was never a truly mixed language in the strict linguistic sense of the word. Mixed languages arise from the cohabitation of speakers of different languages, who develop a hybrid tongue for basic communication.

Cohabitation with the Scandinavians resulted in a significant grammatical simplification and lexical enrichment of the Anglo-Frisian core of English; the later Norman occupation led to the grafting onto that Germanic core of a more elaborate layer of words from the Romance languages. This Norman influence entered English largely through the courts and government. Thus, English developed into a borrowing language of great flexibility, resulting in an enormous and varied vocabulary.

English is a West Germanic language originating in England and is the first language for most people in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland. It is used extensively as a second language and as an official language throughout the world, especially in Commonwealth countries and in many international organizations.

Modern English, sometimes described as the first global lingua franca, is the dominant international language in communications, science, business, aviation, entertainment, radio and diplomacy. The initial reason for its enormous spread beyond the bounds of the British Isles, where it was originally a native tongue, was the British Empire, and by the late nineteenth century its reach was truly global. It is the dominant language in the United States, whose growing economic and cultural influence and status as a global super power since World War II have significantly accelerated the adoption of English as a language across the planet. A working knowledge of English is necessary in a number of fields, occupations and professions such as medicine and as a consequence over a billion people speak English to at least a basic level.

Linguist, David Crystal (1997) recognises that one impact of this massive growth of English is common with other global languages. It has reduced native linguistic diversity in many parts of the world historically, most particularly in Australia and North America. Its huge influence continues to play an important role in language attrition. By a similar token, historical linguists are aware of the complex and fluid dynamics of language change.

Approximately 375 million people speak English as their first language. English today is probably the third largest language by number of native speakers, after Mandarin and Spanish. However, when combining native and non-native speakers it is probably the most commonly spoken language in the world. Of those nations where English is spoken as a second language, India has most such speakers; such English is termed as Indian

English. Linguistics professor David Crystal claims that, combining native and non-native speakers, India now, has more people who speak or understand English than any other country in the world. In many other countries, where English is not the most spoken language, it is an official language.

i) English as a Global Language

Because English is so widely spoken, it has often been referred to as a world language, the lingua franca of the modern era. While English is not an official language in most countries, it is currently the language most often taught as a second language around the world. Some linguists believe that it is no longer the exclusive cultural sign of native English speakers, but is rather a language that is absorbing aspects of cultures worldwide as it continues to grow. It is, by international treaty, the official language for aerial and maritime communications. English is an official language of the United Nations and many other international organisations, including the International Olympic Committee. English is the language most often studied as a foreign language.

Because of the wide use of English as a second language, English speakers have many different accents, which often signal the speaker's native dialect or language. Just as English has borrowed words from many different languages over its history, English loanwords now appear in a great many languages around the world, indicative of the technological and cultural influence of its speakers. Several Pidgins and Creole languages have formed using an English base, such as Jamaican Patois, Nigerian Pidgin, and Tok Pisin. There are many words in English coined to describe forms of

particular non-English languages that contain a very high proportion of English words. *Franglais*, for example, describes various mixes of French and English, spoken in the Channel Islands and Canada. In Wales, which is part of the United Kingdom, the languages of Welsh and English are sometimes mixed together by fluent or comfortable Welsh speakers, the result of which is called *Wenglish*.

English has been written using the Latin alphabet since around the ninth century. The spelling system, or orthography, is multilayered, with elements of French, Latin and Greek spelling on top of the native Germanic system; it has grown to vary significantly from the phonology of the language. The spelling of words often diverges considerably from how they are spoken. Though letters and sounds may not correspond in isolation, spelling rules that take into account syllable structure, phonetics, and accents are 75% or more reliable. Some phonics spelling advocates claim that English is more than 80% phonetic.

In general, the English language, being the product of many other languages and having only been codified orthographically in the 16th century, has fewer consistent relationships between sounds and letters than many other languages. The consequence of this orthographic history is that reading can be challenging. It takes much longer time for students to become completely fluent readers of English than of many other languages, including French, Greek, and Spanish.

ii) The Origin and History of the English Language

English is a Germanic language of the Indo-European Family. It is the second most spoken language in the world. It is estimated that there are 300 million native speakers and 300 million who use English as a second language and a further 100 million use it as a foreign language. It is listed as the official or co-official language of over 45 countries and is spoken extensively in other countries where it has no official status. English plays a part in the cultural, political or economic life of the following countries. Speakers of languages like French, Spanish and Arabic may disagree, but English is on its way to becoming the world's unofficial international language. Mandarin (Chinese) is spoken by more people, but English is now the most widespread of the world's languages. Half of all business deals are conducted in English. Two third of all scientific papers are written in English. Over 70% of all post or mail is written and addressed in English. Most international tourism, aviation and diplomacy are conducted in English.

The history of the language can be traced back to the arrival of three Germanic tribes to the British Isles during the 5th Century AD. Angles, Saxons and Jutes crossed the North Sea from what is the present day Denmark and Northern Germany. The inhabitants of Britain previously spoke a Celtic language. This was quickly displaced. Most of the Celtic speakers were pushed into Wales, Cornwall and Scotland. One group migrated to the Brittany Coast of France where their descendants still speak the Celtic language of Britain today. The Angles were named from Engle, their land of origin. Their language was called Englisc from which the word,

English derives. An Anglo-Saxon inscription dated between 450 and 480 AD is the oldest sample of the English language.

At this time, the vocabulary of Old English consisted of an Anglo Saxon base with borrowed words from the Scandinavian languages (Danish and Norse) and Latin. In 1066, the Normans conquered Britain. French became the language of the Norman aristocracy and added more vocabulary to English. It was not till the 14th Century that English became dominant in Britain again. In 1399, King Henry IV became the first king of England since the Norman Conquest whose mother-tongue was English. By the end of the 14th Century, the dialect of London had emerged as the standard dialect of what we now call Middle English. Chaucer wrote in this language. Modern English began around the 16th Century and, like all languages, is still changing. The historical influence of language in the British Isles can best be seen in place names and their derivations.

iii) Old English (450-1100 AD)

The invading Germanic tribes spoke similar languages, which in Britain developed into what is now called Old English. Old English did not sound or look like English today. Native English speakers now would have great difficulty in understanding Old English. Nevertheless, about half of the most commonly used words in Modern English have Old English roots. The words *be*, *strong* and *water*, for example, derive from Old English. Old English was spoken until around 1100.

West Germanic invaders from Jutland and Southern Denmark: the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, began to settle in the British Isles in the fifth and

sixth centuries AD. They spoke a mutually intelligible language, similar to modern Frisian, the language of the northeastern region of the Netherlands, that is called Old English. Four major dialects of Old English emerged, Northumbrian in the north of England, Mercian in the Midlands, West Saxon in the south and west, and Kentish in the Southeast.

These invaders pushed the original, Celtic-speaking inhabitants out of what is now England into Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, and Ireland, leaving behind a few Celtic words. These Celtic languages survive today in the Gaelic languages of Scotland and Ireland and in Welsh. Cornish, unfortunately, is in linguistic terms, now a dead language. The last native Cornish speaker died in 1777. Also influencing English at this time were the Vikings. Norse invasions and settlement, beginning around 850, brought many North Germanic words into the language, particularly in the north of England. The majority of words in modern English come from foreign, not Old English roots. In fact, only about one sixth of the known Old English words have descendants surviving today. But this is deceptive; Old English is much more important than these statistics would indicate. Old English, whose best known surviving example is the poem 'Beowulf', lasted until about 1100.

iv) Middle English (1100-1500)

In 1066, William the Conqueror, the Duke of Normandy, part of modern France, invaded and conquered England. The new conquerors, called the Normans brought with them a kind of French, which became the language of the Royal Court, and the ruling and business classes. For a period there was a kind of linguistic class division, where the lower classes

spoke English and the upper classes spoke French. In the 14th century, English became dominant in Britain again, but with many French words added. This language is called Middle English. It was the language of the great poet Chaucer, but it would still be difficult for native English speakers to understand it today. The new overlords spoke a dialect of Old French known as Anglo-Norman. The Normans were also of Germanic stock and Anglo-Norman was a French dialect that had considerable Germanic influences in addition to the basic Latin roots.

Prior to the Norman Conquest, Latin had been only a minor influence on the English language, mainly through vestiges of the Roman occupation and from the conversion of Britain to Christianity in the seventh century, but now there was a wholesale infusion of Romance words. Sometimes French words replaced Old English words, the French and Old English components combined to form a new word, as the French 'gentle' and the Germanic 'man' formed 'gentleman'. Two different words, with roughly the same meaning, survive into modern English. Thus, we have the Germanic 'doom' and the French 'judgment', or 'wish' and 'desire'.

In 1204 AD, King John lost the province of Normandy to the King of France. Thus, began a process where the Norman nobles of England became increasingly estranged from their French cousins. England became the chief concern of the nobility, rather than their estates in France, and consequently the nobility adopted modified English as their native tongue. About 150 years later, the Black Death (1349-50) killed about one third of the English population. And as a result of this the labouring and merchant classes grew in economic and social importance, and along with them English increased

in importance compared to Anglo-Norman. This mixture of the two languages came to be known as Middle English. By 1362, the linguistic division between the nobility and the commoners was largely over. In that year, the Statute of Pleading was adopted, which made English the language of the courts and it began to be used in Parliament. The Middle English period came to a close around 1500AD with the rise of Modern English.

v) Modern English

a) Early Modern English (1500-1800)

Towards the end of Middle English, a sudden and distinct change in pronunciation, the Great Vowel Shift started, with vowels being pronounced shorter and shorter. From the 16th century the British had contact with many people from around the world. This, and the Renaissance of Classical learning, meant that many new words and phrases entered the language. The last major factor in the development of Modern English was the advent of the printing press. William Caxton brought the printing press to England in 1476. The invention of printing also meant that there was now a common language in print. Books became cheaper and more people learned to read. Printing also brought standardization to English. Spelling and grammar became fixed, and the dialect of London, where most publishing houses were, became the standard. In 1604, the first English dictionary was published.

The next wave of innovation in English came with the Renaissance. The revival of classical scholarship brought many classical Latin and Greek words into the language. These borrowings were deliberate and many

bemoaned the adoption of these “inkhorn” terms, but many survive to this day. Shakespeare’s character Holofernes in ‘Loves Labour Lost’ is a satire of an overenthusiastic schoolmaster who is too fond of Latinisms.

Many students having difficulty in understanding Shakespeare would be surprised to learn that he wrote in modern English. But, as can be seen in the earlier example of the Lord’s Prayer, Elizabethan English has much more in common with our language today than it does with the language of Chaucer. Many familiar words and phrases were coined or first recorded by Shakespeare, some 2000 words and countless idioms are his. Newcomers to Shakespeare are often shocked at the number of cliches contained in his plays, until they realise that he coined them and they became cliches afterwards.

Two other major factors influenced the language and served to separate Middle and Modern English. The first was the Great Vowel Shift. This was a change in pronunciation that began around 1400. While modern English speakers can read Chaucer with some difficulty, Chaucer’s pronunciation would have been completely unintelligible to the modern ear. Shakespeare, on the other hand, would be accented, but understandable. Vowel sounds began to be made further to the front of the mouth and the letter “e” at the end of words became silent. Chaucer’s *Lyf* is pronounced as leaf became the modern life. In Middle English *name* was pronounced as nam-a, five was pronounced as feef, and *down* was pronounced as doon. In linguistic terms, the shift was rather sudden, the major changes occurring within a century. The shift is still not over; however, vowel sounds are still shortening although the change has become considerably more gradual.

b) Late Modern English (1800-Present)

The main difference between Early Modern English and Late Modern English is vocabulary. Late Modern English has many more words, arising from two principal factors: firstly, the Industrial Revolution and technology created a need for new words; secondly, the British Empire at its height covered one quarter of the earth's surface, and the English language adopted foreign words from many countries. The principal distinction between early-modern English and late-modern English is vocabulary. Pronunciation, grammar, and spelling are largely the same, but Late-Modern English has many more words. These words are the result of two historical factors. The first is the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the technological society. This necessitated new words for things and ideas that had not previously existed. The second was the British Empire. At its height, Britain ruled one quarter of the earth's surface, and English adopted many foreign words and made them its own.

The industrial and scientific revolutions created a need for neologisms to describe the new creations and discoveries. For this, English relied heavily on Latin and Greek. Words like *oxygen*, *protein*, *nuclear*, and *vaccine* did not exist in the classical languages, but they were created from Latin and Greek roots. Such neologisms were not exclusively created from classical roots though; English roots were used for such terms as *horsepower*, *airplane*, and *typewriter*. This burst of neologisms continues today, perhaps most visible in the field of electronics and computers. *Byte*, *cyber*, *bios*, *hard-drive*, and *microchip* are good examples.

Also, the rise of the British Empire and the growth of global trade served not only to introduce English to the world, but to introduce words into English. Hindi, and the other languages of the Indian subcontinent, provided many words, such as *pundit*, *shampoo*, *pajamas*, and *juggernaut*. Virtually every language on Earth has contributed to the development of English, from Finnish (*sauna*) and Japanese (*tycoon*) to the vast contributions of French and Latin. The British Empire was a maritime empire, and the influence of nautical terms on the English language has been great. Phrases like *three sheets to the wind* have their origins onboard ships.

Finally, the military influence on the language during the latter half of twentieth century was significant. Before the Great War, military service for English speaking persons was rare; both Britain and the United States maintained small, volunteer militaries. Military slang existed, but with the exception of nautical terms, rarely influenced Standard English. During the mid 20th century, however, a large number of British and American men served in the military. And consequently military slang entered the language like never before. *Blockbuster*, *nose dive*, *camouflage*, *radar*, *roadblock*, *spearhead*, and *landing strip* are all military terms that made their way into Standard English.

c) Varieties of English

From around 1600, the English colonisation of North America resulted in the creation of a distinct American variety of English. Some English pronunciations and words froze when they reached America. In some ways, American English is more like the English of Shakespeare than

modern British English is. Some expressions that the British call “Americanisms” are in fact original British expressions that were preserved in the colonies while lost for a time in Britain, for example *trash* for rubbish, *loan* as a verb instead of lend, and *fall* for autumn; another example, *frame-up*, was re-imported into Britain through Hollywood gangster movies. Spanish also had an influence on American English and subsequently British English, with words like *canyon*, *ranch*, *stampede* and *vigilante* being examples of Spanish words that entered English through the settlement of the American West. French words (through Louisiana) and West African words, through the slave trade also influenced American English and so, to an extent, British English.

Today, American English is particularly influential, due to the USA’s dominance of cinema, television, popular music, trade and technology, including the Internet. But there are many other varieties of English around the world, including for example Australian English, New Zealand English, Canadian English, South African English, Indian English and Caribbean English.

d) American and other English varieties

Also significant beginning around 1600 AD was the English colonisation of North America and the subsequent creation of American English. In certain respects, some varieties of American English are closer to the English of Shakespeare than modern Standard English. The American dialect also served as the route of introduction for many Native American words into the English language. Most often, these were place names like

Mississippi, Roanoke, and Iowa. Indian-sounding names like *Idaho* were sometimes created that had no native-American roots. But, names for other things besides places were also common. *Raccoon, tomato, canoe, barbecue, savanna, and hickory* have Native American roots, although in many cases the original Indian words were mangled almost beyond recognition.

A lesser number of words have entered American English from French and West African languages. Likewise dialects of English have developed in many of the former colonies of the British Empire. There are distinct forms of the English language spoken in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India and many other parts of the world.

e) Global English

English has now inarguably achieved global status. Whenever one turns on the news to find out what is happening in and around the world, or practically anywhere, local people are being interviewed and are telling him about it in English. To illustrate the point when Pope John Paul II arrived in the Middle East recently to retrace Christ's footsteps and addressed Christians, Muslims and Jews, the Pontiff spoke not Latin, not Arabic, not Italian, not Hebrew, not his native Polish, but, he spoke in English.

Indeed, if one looks at some of the facts about the amazing reach of the English language many would be surprised. English is used in over 90 countries as an official or semi-official language. English is the working language of the Asian trade group Association for South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). It is the de facto working language of 98 percent of international research physicists and research chemists. It is the official language of the

European Central Bank, even though the bank is not in Frankfurt and neither Britain nor any other predominantly English speaking country is a member of the European Monetary Union. It is the language in which Indian parents and black parents in South Africa overwhelmingly wish their children to be educated. It is believed that over one billion people worldwide are currently learning English.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the spread of English around the world has been the extent to which Europeans are adopting it as their internal lingua franca. English is spreading from northern Europe to the south and is now firmly entrenched as a second language in countries such as Sweden, Norway, Netherlands and Denmark. Although not an official language in any of these countries if one visits any of them it would seem that almost everyone there can communicate with ease in English. Indeed, if one switches on a television in Holland one would find as many channels in English, as there are in Dutch. As part of the European Year of Languages, a special survey of European attitudes towards and their use of languages were published. The report confirms that at the beginning of 2001 English is the most widely known foreign or second language, with 43% of Europeans claiming they speak it in addition to their mother tongue. Sweden now heads the league table of English speakers, with over 89% of the population saying they can speak the language well or very well. However, in contrast, only 36% of Spanish and Portuguese nationals speak English. What is more, English is the language rated as most useful to know, with over 77% of Europeans who do not speak English as their first language, rating it as

useful. French rated 38%, German 23% and Spanish 6%, English has without a doubt become the global language.

f) English as an International Language

English is an international language, spoken in many countries both as a native and as a second or foreign language. It is taught in the schools in almost every country on this earth. It is a living and vibrant language spoken by over million people as their native language. Millions more speak it as an additional language. English is spoken habitually in the United States, the British Isles, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of South Africa, Liberia, and many territories under the United Kingdom and the United States of America. It is estimated that 300 million people speak English as a second language, and an additional 100 million people use it fluently as a foreign language. As a rough estimate, 1000 million or one billion people around the world have some knowledge of English, either as a native language, or as a foreign language. English is the associate official language of India which has over 1000 million people. Pakistan, Bangladesh and many other nations which were ruled by Britain continue to use English both as an optional medium of instruction in their institutions and as one of their official languages. The islands of Philippines continue to use English as an important tool of education, administration and for mass media purposes.

Even though some nations which were ruled by French continue to teach French as their most preferred second language, English is gaining ground even in these countries. In the former Soviet Union, Russian was the dominant language. Since the break of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian

Republics have been rapidly introducing English as a second or foreign language. In Japan too, English is the most favoured second or foreign language. Outside Europe, English is the predominant language of international commerce. English is chosen as the preferred language of communication between the participating member-nations.

Latin was the main medium of education in Western Europe throughout the Middle Ages. French was the language of diplomacy for four centuries, from 17th to 20th. At present, there is not a single language which can be compared to the position occupied by the English as the international language. English is learned everywhere because people have found out that knowledge of English is a passport for better career, better pay, advance knowledge, and for communicating with the entire world. In this computer age, English is bound to expand its domains of use everywhere. In the Indian subcontinent, English has become the dominant language of communication among the educated classes.

g) The Importance of English Language

India is a vast country with different languages in different parts of the country. These regional languages differ from each other so much that it is not possible to communicate with people of the other regions without a common language. India is on the road to become a strong and prosperous nation in the world. For all this, there is a need of a common language, that is, English. It is this language which is understood almost all over the region in addition to national language of Hindi, all schools and colleges teach English and mostly have it as a medium of instruction. This language is a

store house of social and political knowledge. Hence, study of English language is of great importance for a developing country like India. Without knowledge of this language, our technicians and engineers cannot progress. English is such a language having an international status and can provide the best medium to interact with the outside world. To survive in modern society, English knowledge is as essential as water.

1.3 SKILLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

According to Francis Bacon, (1561-1626) “reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.” The primary aim of learning a language is to attain and to acquire the four basic skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW). Further, every language plays a crucial role in maintaining social relationship among the people of the linguistic community and of the various cultures and beliefs. Listening and speaking skills are known as oracy and reading and writing skills are known as literacy. Together the oracy and literacy are known as linguacy. Listening and reading are categorised as the receptive and passive skills. They are used as channels of receiving information. On the other hand speaking and writing are productive and hence, active skills. They are used as channels of sending information.

i) Listening Skill

Listening is the easiest skill. It means understanding the language while speaking. Listening becomes difficult due to the pronunciation. Any

second language learner faces initial language difficulties. Even the most competent student will have some difficulty in understanding the variety of the accents which they will encounter. Through various exercises in listening comprehension, by repeated practise and by question and answer method, the skills may be improved.

Listening is a prerequisite to other skills of language. Listening activity is not just listening and grasping to the speaker's utterances, but recording it and then, repeating it also. It involves the process of comprehending the words, its meaning and making use of it in sentences of our own. Listening involves the following:

- receiving the sounds of a language in a systematic manner
- constructing the sounds into words
- giving meaning to the words and also giving meaning for new words which is received
- the ability to interpret and to comprehend the utterances of the speaker

ii) Speaking Skill

Listening is followed by speaking. It is an easy skill among the four. The learner develops this skill by observation and repetition. More concentration should be given on pronunciation, intonation and stress. It is an act of creativity. In addition to knowing the language, the speaker must think of an idea he wishes to express. Here, the speaker must either initiate or must respond to the other speaker's statement. Speaking activity involves:

- the consciousness of the grammatical, lexical and cultural features of the language
- the ability to speak error-free sentences
- awareness to speak situation-based conversation
- speak the language correctly, with the right pronunciation
- ability to present in a comprehensible way

iii) Reading Skill

To comprehend a written material is reading. Only through practice one can master the reading skill. While reading the interaction takes place with the text, the learner decodes it and constructs the meaning in the process. It is an important tool for the academic success. By this process, one can update one's knowledge. To master this skill one must have:

- the knowledge of the language
- the knowledge of the writing system
- the ability to recognise the phonemes
- the ability to interpret and comprehend the text

Students for whom English is a second language, often say that they do not like to read and they do not read for pleasure, they tend to respond to texts as non-readers. For them, reading is a passive activity and everything that can be said about a text lies in its print. They tend to know that they can, and in fact, should bring their own reflections to bear on the subject matter. Reading, for them involves the retrieval of information of words. They have limited experience while accessing their own ideas or responding to someone else or little to say related to the subject of the text.

iv) Writing Skill

Of the four skills, writing is the most difficult one. Here, the learner must be aware of the letters and also to some extent be good at grammar. Writing is a process of conveying one's thought through written symbols. The writing skill includes:

- ability to shape the letters
- ability to convert the ideas using the written symbols
- ability to write without grammatical errors
- ability to present and organise the thoughts in a readable manner

All these four skills of language are the bases for communication. Therefore they form the base for the language proficiency and the ability to use the knowledge in different tasks. To master the four skills to some extent, the learner must undertake the following activities:

- reading books in simple English
- conversing intelligibly in familiar situations of everyday life
- writing simple and correct English
- comprehending English is necessary for taking up technical and professional courses

1.4 NEED FOR THE STUDY

The inability of the student to express his / her ideas in the written form without any errors, prompted the researcher to undertake this study.

Even though the student has good technical knowledge, he / she fumble when asked to write a paragraph without any mistake.

Basically engineering, being a professional course where the student must not only excel academically, but also be efficient in other skills. When a passage or a topic is given before the test, the performance of the student is to be up to the expected level. But, when they are asked to perform for a surprised test they do not perform well. Creating ideas and thoughts of their own do not come to them spontaneously. This barrier prompted the researcher to undertake the study. Repeated practice would remove their constraints and make them think freely and express their ideas clearly.

Just as “necessity is the mother of invention”, today English has become a necessary tool and a powerful mode of communication. English, to the British is the native language; but to the Indians, it is a foreign language. One cannot expect every single individual to master the foreign language, which has now, become the medium of communication at the national and the international levels. English has become a global language and a universal mode of trans-communication of the message which reaches to the people in an easy and effective manner.

Slow learners can understand English to some extent, but when it comes to written and the spoken forms of communication, they let slip and find it difficult. They struggle to frame a few sentences in a coherent manner. The mistake here, is not only in the teaching process but also in the mental caliber of the students. The mental caliber here, denotes the understanding capacity of the students over the subject. The students must

not only speak in English but also start to think in English. Once one starts thinking in English, then automatically his vocabulary will also start improving. When an error is committed, it should be rectified then and there. Most of the students feel shy to speak in English in public. The reason is about the other people's criticism and comments. They must accept the criticism openly and in a positive manner and later correct them. The students coming from the rural area shun away from using English language because they feel in their heart of hearts, that English is a difficult subject. Moreover they are not prepared to learn it by facing the usual and initial hardships and overcoming the challenges. Such people do not speak freely, openly and confidently.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The general notion among students is that grammar is very difficult and tough to learn. It needs a lot of practice. But with the help of a remedial package in a multimedia form, it can attract and draw the attention of the students. This new form will indeed kindle the student's interest to learn more. It can also be fun in learning new concepts and understanding the unknown.

The students are not bound by any time-limit or constraints. They can learn with the guidance of a teacher. This self-learning package will also be fun too in learning grammar. The written part from the student's point of view can be improved. The study will be of great help to the so called slow learners. They can learn the selected areas of grammar at ease. The exercises

are in the step-wise procedure. Only when they complete an exercise they can go to the next one. If they have any doubt they can go to the home-page and look into the text-matter. The study will contribute to the students who are weak in grammar and in the written form. They can work the exercises in the package at their own expediency. The students will gain knowledge in the selected area over a period of time. Hence, the students will improve theoretically also.

The teacher on the other hand need not pay individual attention to the students every now and then. They can monitor the activities of the students over the server and note down the errors committed by them. The teacher can guide or help the students when needed. The study here, is not a regular classroom activity.

This type of package may be implemented by the policy-makers, for the development and the improvisation of the learning and writing skills.

At the philosophical level, the study will be of great help to the slow learners. In this method, they will show more interest and the eagerness to learn more. In order to be on par with their peer group, they will like to overcome their drawback and learn for their betterment.

By implementing this package, the teachers can be free from the regular and traditional classroom setup. The package can be practised repeatedly till the student masters it. There is no need of paper work and manual correction. Here, the teacher need not monitor the student round the clock or throughout the period when the student works out the exercise. The committed teacher can employ similar packages for different areas of

grammar and train the students. In order to teach a language, it is necessary to understand the process that goes on in the mind of the learner. With the advent of new technology multimedia packages on other subjects or different areas may be brought out as self-learning packages.

Generally, any language can become an essential tool for effective communication; particularly in professional colleges like Engineering, Medical and Agriculture etc., the medium of instruction is English. Normally lecture-cum-demonstration-cum-discussion method is useful to teach subjects through English language. Due to the mushrooming of Engineering colleges, nowadays even below average and educationally backward students could gain an entry into the professional course. They are weak in all subjects in general and English in particular. At this juncture, the students have to grasp the ideas and understand the subject matter as quickly as possible and to follow the lecture effectively. But rural students, who are poor in English language, feel very difficult to communicate with the others during the learning process. Therefore, the study is a needed one, particularly for the slow learners.

The Government policy gives importance to English up to the higher secondary level only. At the tertiary level, English is taught only at the first year level. Even in the entrance examination, a test in English is not conducted. Naturally the students do not give much importance to or concentration on English. Only when they go to the final year or when they enter job market, the importance of the language is much felt by them. At the same time their inability to comprehend the skill of communication in English is exposed during the Interview or at the Group Discussion.

English is considered as a world language. The Kothari Commission (1964-'66) suggested that English be studied as a library language of Science and Technology. It is a valuable and a skill-based subject. First and foremost, one has to read the content and then, to analyse the errors found in the content committed by the slow learners. Slow learners here, imply that the students who take considerably more time to pick up the subject and also in understanding them. Up to higher secondary, most of the students learn English by memorising them without understanding it. The examination point is taken into consideration instead of English being a source of acquiring the knowledge and communication.

The research could contribute in three directions. They are the leading role, the supporting role and the following role.

- i) Leading Role:** The research could bring to light multimedia concepts which are not given importance in the existing curriculum. It could help the teachers, teacher educators and curriculum planners to include those concepts of multimedia in the curriculum and to practise the approaches and methodologies adopted in this research.
- ii) Supporting Role:** The finding of the research could help the planners of educational curriculum to identify the areas and concepts wherein the learners' knowledge is less or lacking. This will pave a way for supplementing materials in engineering field with the knowledge of the inadequacies of the students.
- iii) Following Role:** From the outcome of this investigation, it would also be possible to probe further in case, any concepts are found

difficult to acquire by the learners despite the varied approaches and methodologies followed. The outcome of this research will also throw much light on the attitude of the learners towards multimedia usage and remedial package.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research is to find out the rudimentary errors committed in written English by the students particularly, the slow learners at the Engineering college level.

By observing the development of English in the Indian system of education, the Kothari Commission (1964-'66) observed or in fact, emphasised that university graduates and teachers should be proficient in two languages, the regional language and English.

The views of the expert bodies throw light on the changing fortunes of English in the curriculum of schools and colleges. The University Education Commission (1948) stressed the need to learn English to keep in touch with the stream of knowledge. The Mudaliar Commission (1953) emphasized the adoption of dynamic methods to teaching English and other subjects. The research throws light on how far the multimedia remedial self-learning package to be developed by the investigator helps the engineering college slow learners reduce their errors in written English.

1.7 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is indeed pathetic to notice that even though various efforts have been taken by the educationists for improving the state of affairs of English language teaching for the past few decades in India in general and Tamilnadu in particular, a sorry state of affairs is still found to exist in the achievements of English linguistic behaviour among the students of all levels. So it is necessary to unearth the real reasons behind the slow learners in English. It is assumed that students commit copious errors in written English and these errors can be rectified by a self-learning remedial package. The remedial measures will also create a positive attitude towards learning English.

1.8 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study intends to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To identify the slow learners and the errors committed by them in written English at the Engineering College level.
2. To categorise the errors committed by the slow learners.
3. To develop a remedial multimedia self-learning package.
4. To administer the self-learning multimedia package to the slow learners with a view to reducing their errors.
5. To identify the effectiveness of the remedial self-learning package in reducing the errors.
6. To identify the attitude of the students towards English in general.

1.9 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was delimited in the following aspects:

1. The investigator confined her study to the K.S.Rangasamy College of Technology, Tiruchengode, Tamilnadu.
2. The study was conducted on the B.E. / B.Tech. first year students in the K.S.Rangasamy College of Technology, Tiruchengode, Tamilnadu.
3. The study was conducted to the students of Computer Science Engineering, Information Technology, Civil Engineering and Mechatronics Engineering only.
4. The study was conducted in the computer laboratory.
5. The investigator prepared a multimedia self-learning package pertaining to four areas of English grammar namely, Articles, Prepositions, Voices and Tenses.
6. The multimedia self-learning package was administered for four weeks during the working hours only.

1.10 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERMS

i) Developing: ‘Developing’ means to unfold more fully or to bring out all that is potentially contained in, or to bring out from a latent to an active or a visible state.

ii) Remedial: Affording a remedy and tending to relieve something pertaining to teaching for students with learning difficulties. It describes an

action which is intended to correct something that is wrong or to improve for the good.

iii) Self-Learning: Self-learning which is also known as auto-learning is learning by self. In self-learning, the individual learns at his own speed. The process is individualised or self-based. There is no hard and fast rule and no time constraints are fixed for learning. The students learn at any time when they feel and by the availability of time. The result or the feedback of the self-learning is known immediately in the learning process. There are different types of self-learning materials, they are printed materials, computer-aided learning material and multimedia.

iv) Package: Computing a general-purpose programme for use by a wide range of users.

v) Slow Learners: A student who has obtained scores on intelligent tests below the average but above the limit set for the mentally deficient. The rate of progress of such a student is slower than that of the average student, though he can learn within the scope of his capacity. The slow learners are generally weak in those subjects who need a good deal of reading and reasoning. These students need help in enlarging their background of experiences which may facilitate in building reading vocabulary and interest. Learners with the IQ range of 50 – 70 (Cyril Burt, 1966); they are also labelled as backward learners, as their pace of learning is much slower than what is expected.

vi) Written: Written is one type of output skills. The students, who learn English as a second language, use this to express their basic ideas or expression of a language. This is one of the skills where the student ought to be strong.

1.11 CHAPTER ARRANGEMENT

This dissertation report is divided into six chapters. The first chapter being the introductory chapter, deals with the need and significance of the study and definition of the key terms along with a brief history of the English language as well as the objectives of the study.

The second chapter, which is the conceptual framework, deals with multimedia, the various approaches in multimedia and the advantages of multimedia.

Chapter three puts a note on review of related literature both in India and abroad.

Chapter four deals with research methodology that comprises objectives, assumptions, hypotheses and research design. Further this chapter deals with preparation of multimedia package and its effective administration of the pretest, progressive test, posttest, retention test, pre-attitude scale and post-attitude scale.

Chapter five is data analysis that deals with various statistical treatments which are carried out after the data collection.

The last and sixth chapter is about finding and conclusions drawn out of this study.

1.12 CONCLUSION

The present chapter has introduced the origin of communication, history of English language, skills of English language learning, need for the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study and delimitation. The next chapter deals with the conceptual framework of the study.