CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Importance of language - Position of English in India - Teaching of English in our schools - Need and importance of the study - Textbooks and standards - Statement of the problem - Objectives of the study - Definition of terms - Methodology in brief - Scope and limitations of the study - Organisation of the Report.
Introduction

Importance of language

Language is an integral part of human behaviour and by means of it we enrich our thinking, share our experience with others and receive and transmit the ideals of civilization. It is the result of continuous development and holds within it the set of patterns of behaviour, learned and exploited by members of different communities. The study of languages to unlock the knowledge and secrets of different cultures is interesting and useful to the individual and society. Progress in the means of transport and communication has brought the peoples of the world close together and the need to know foreign languages has emerged. This need is reflected in the curriculum of schools in which the learning of foreign languages has been introduced since a long time.

Position of English in India

Indian society is a multiracial, multireligious and multilingual one. Each state of the Indian Union has its own language and literature. The different languages of this country stand in the way of bringing all the people of India
into one common idea. English was the medium of instruction in schools for a long period of time. It is true that even with a foreign medium India has produced great litterateurs, scientists, physicians, lawyers and engineers. But there was prolonged controversy about the medium of instruction and since independence, English is taught as a second language in our schools. Nevertheless, English language occupies an important position in India and our thinkers and administrators have realised its significance in the educational, social and international spheres of activity, and have taken steps to keep up its standards in schools and colleges. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru\(^1\) said:

All regional languages must be developed and promoted. But this did not mean that English should be discarded. To do that will amount to closing a window on the world of technology. Foreign languages served as windows on it and to suppose that translation could take their place was a mistake ... It is no use getting into an intellectual prison after achieving political independence.

The study of English has far reaching advantages for the society in general and the individual in particular. English is the language of modern science and technology. It provides for the mobility of students and teachers from one part of the country to another, and thus helps to

promote national and emotional integration. The learning of English helps the development of Indian languages. As English is spoken in a great many countries, it has become the chief international language of the world. It would therefore be an asset to the Indian if he learns it. The study of English will induce international understanding and peace and world citizenship. The University Commission\(^2\) has stated:

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\text{English is the means of preventing our isolation from the world and we will act unwisely if we allow ourselves to be enveloped in the field of a dark curtain of ignorance ... A sense of oneness of the world is in the making and control over a medium of expression which is more widespread and has a large reach than any of our languages today, will be of immense benefit to us.}
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**Teaching of English in our schools**

English is taught and learnt in our schools for its practical values. The quality of teaching English needs improvement. The Education Commission\(^3\) says:

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\text{As English will, for a long time to come, 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.}
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Prof. Nurul Hassan, Union Minister for Education has stated:

... Expansion must go on at an even faster pace. But simultaneously we must give due emphasis to continuing improvement of standards ... The first of these programmes is the emphasis placed on change in the content of education and curricular reform, adoption of new methods of teaching and evaluation and the production and supply of improved textbooks.... The second major programme included in these proposals is that of qualitative improvement.

The aim of teaching English in our schools is that pupils at the school leaving stage should be able to (1) read books in simple English, (2) converse intelligibly in familiar situations of every day life, (3) write correct simple English and (4) comprehend the English necessary for taking up technical and professional courses.

To attain the aims of teaching English, the whole programme should be properly organised. The essentials for the efficient teaching of English are:

1. A good syllabus that lays down in clear terms the portion of language to be covered at each stage and the vocabulary and structures to be introduced.

2. Preparation of suitable, quality textbooks in accordance with the syllabus and

3. Proper training of teachers.

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Changing objectives have given rise to new methods and materials. Continuous evaluation of the whole process of teaching English is necessary to raise standards.

Need and importance of the study

Research studies conducted in the area of teaching English and the opinion of educationists and others indicate that the standards of achievement of pupils in English have fallen. Regarding the linguistic attainment of pupils, Prof. L.A. Hill, who was the Chief Educational Officer of the British Council in India has observed:

Most of the children, who get through the School Leaving Certificate Examination and go on to the Universities in India, know practically no English except the bits they have mugged up to get through the examinations.

The investigation made in the Methods Department, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad reveals that writers and editors pay no attention to the vocabulary of the Secondary School Leaving Certificate and Matriculation Readers and do not plan any systematic vocabulary expansion. The editorial of the Bulletin says:


Why does the process of teaching English involve such an enormous waste of time and energy? ... Many of our writers of textbooks do not know how to construct text materials systematically. In the course book referred to above, for example, 90% of the words which are known to 25% or less of pupils occur only once or twice in the book. How can we expect to establish words in the minds of pupils if the vocabulary load is not suitably distributed from lesson to lesson and if words are not repeated in different contexts in the text till they have a good chance of being established in the pupil's mind? Only 15% of the words occur more than six times in this book .... It is partly this inefficiency in the construction of textbooks that is responsible for the tragedy of English teaching in our schools...."

The findings of the study group7 (1965) are:

... Meanwhile the standards of English are deteriorating very fast in our schools and colleges. In the country of Panini that gave the science of linguistics to the world, there are hardly any pupil in our regional medium schools who can write a correct sentence in English. The English language has itself a ghost life in India. It lingers in our examination scripts as the ghost of ghosts.

Harold B. Allen8 observes:

We are confronted by the deplorable circumstances that in the very countries where English has been taught and used as language of instruction, general competence in it has deteriorated sharply. Burma, Philippines and India come to my mind. The situation calls for drastic action.

There is deterioration of standards in English, as is shown by the large percentage of failures in the language at the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examinations. The analysis of the results of the Examination held in April 1975 also reveals this fact.

The above findings do not help us to arrive at a definite conclusion whether the standards of attainment in English indicated in the textbooks have also fallen and whether there is a relationship between the expected standards of attainment and actual standards of achievement. To study the problem of standards in English it becomes necessary to analyse the textbooks prescribed for study. The present study intends to analyse the textbooks prescribed for study in the secondary schools in Kerala since 1952, with a view to arriving at the concept of standards in English.

Textbooks and standards

Learning a language, especially a second language, centres around textbooks. In a developing country like India where the problem of overwhelming numbers makes it almost impossible for effective teaching without textbooks. Every effort should therefore be made to improve the quality of textbooks. Mathur and Varma⁹ observe:

All language learning especially would this be true of second languages - must centre around a textbook. It is nearly axiomatic to say, "As the text is so teaching will be", for we teach the text and the language through the text, so that if the textbook is defective our methods of teaching it are also vitiated by its technical shortcomings.

The textbooks prescribed for study indicate the standards of attainment in English and their successful application in schools is the best method to raise standards. Textbooks and teaching of English at secondary level have been the subject of severe criticism from all quarters. The Education Commission has stressed the importance of research in the preparation and production of textbooks. In this context the need for the present study is evident. This study will help to improve the quality of textbooks, to understand the concept of standards in English and will be of interest to the teachers of English, writers and editors of textbooks and administrators.

The investigator is a student of English literature and Linguistics. He has been teaching English in the high school classes for the last ten years. He has also carried out a study of the vocabulary, structures and sentence patterns in the Kerala English Reader for Std.X.

Statement of the problem

The problem for the present study is to analyse the textbooks in English prescribed for the secondary school pupils in Kerala since 1952, with a view to arriving at the concept of standards in English. The study is entitled, "A study of the concept of standards in English through an analysis of the textbooks prepared for secondary school pupils in Kerala since 1952".

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are:

1. to analyse the textbooks in English prescribed for study for the secondary school pupils in Kerala since 1952, in terms of the accepted criteria for evaluation of textbooks and

2. to compare the findings of the analysis of the textbooks to find out the concept of standards in English.

Definition of terms

Concept: Concept is defined in the dictionary\(^ {11} \)

as "an idea of a class of objects, a general notion or idea".

**Standard:** The term standard means a "basis of measurement or a "definite level or excellence or adequacy required, aimed at or possible". The meaning of the term 'standard', as accepted for the purpose of the study is "goal or ideas of achievement accepted as worthy of attainment", 12 embodied in the textbooks in English prescribed for study in secondary schools since 1952.

**Textbook:** Textbook is defined, for the purpose of the present study, as "a book 13 dealing with a definite subject of study, systematically arranged, intended for use at a specified level of instruction, and used as a principal source of study material for a given course".

**Secondary School pupils** are the pupils studying in Standards VIII, IX and X in the schools of Kerala.

**Kerala:** Kerala is the southernmost state of India which came into existence on 1st November 1956, integrating the erstwhile Malabar area with the erstwhile Travancore-Cochin state leaving out the southernmost district of Kanyakumari.


Methodology in brief

The textbooks and supplementary readers prescribed for study in secondary schools in Kerala since 1952 were analysed. The procedure of analysis included:

1. Setting up of tentative criteria for arriving at the concept of standards in English indicated in the textbooks.

2. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of textbooks. The procedures adopted by the Methods Department, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad were followed to some extent. The findings of the analysis were classified and compared.

3. The study of concept of standards of attainment. The findings of analysis were given to experts in the teaching of English and they were asked to respond to a questionnaire which incorporated the main criteria for arriving at the concept of standards. The responses were analysed and conclusions arrived at.

4. The study of concept of standards of achievement. The results of the Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examinations for which the textbooks were prescribed, were analysed to find out the level of achievement of pupils in English.
5. The concept of standards in English were studied based on the analysis of textbooks and the responses of experts.

Scope and limitations of the study

The study analyses the textbooks in English prescribed for the secondary school pupils in Kerala since 1952. The present state of Kerala came into being on 1st November 1956. The study covers two phases:

(1) 1952-1956, that is, till the formation of Kerala.
(2) 1956 onwards, that is, since the formation of Kerala.

In 1952 the Government of Kerala decided to publish all school textbooks at state level and accordingly the English Reader for Form V (Std.IX) was prepared and published in the same year. The present study commences from that year and includes all the thirteen readers and thirty-three supplementary readers excluding repetitions prescribed for study during the period. Both prose passages and poems in the readers have been subjected to analysis. Different criteria were formulated and applied for analysis of the readers and supplementary readers. As the study covered all the readers and supplementary readers prescribed for study since 1952, the work involved was heavy. Textbook analysis

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is a time consuming task. The methodology of this study is extensive and detailed and the main principles of textbook analysis are given due weight. Qualitative and quantitative analyses have been made wherever necessary. The theoretical analysis of textbooks has been supported and validated by statistical work and opinion survey. The concept of standards has been broadened to include the standards of attainment indicated in the textbooks and standards of achievement by pupils.

Textbook analysis has its own limitations. The theoretical bias of textbook analysis has been minimised by the use of quantitative analysis and field work. The heavy reliance on subjective judgement is both the strength and weakness of textbook analysis. Close adherence to accepted principles and criteria and their consistent and careful application and the use of opinions of experts in the teaching of English and adoption of statistical analysis have helped to overcome the weakness. The long experience of the investigator in the teaching of English has also been of great help.

Organisation of the Report

The Report has been divided into ten chapters. Chapter I contains the need and importance of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, definition of terms, methodology in brief and the scope and limitations of the
study. An account of the role of textbooks is given in Chapter II. A short discussion of the concept of standards in English is attempted in Chapter III. The survey of literature pertaining to the area of the study is given in Chapter IV. Methodology of the study is described in detail in Chapter V. Chapters VI-A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M give the findings of the analysis of textbooks. Chapter VII deals with the analysis of poems, and the analysis of supplementary Readers is given in Chapter VIII. A comparative study of the findings of the analysis of textbooks and the analysis of the responses of the experts in the teaching of English are done in Chapter IX. Chapter X contains the conclusions and suggestions and suggestions for further research.