Chapter - I

Introduction

1.1 Language:

Language is the medium of communication. It is a vehicle, through which our feelings, emotions, ideas and thoughts are communicated. Animals and birds too communicate. They communicate through sounds, body languages and gestures. But being human is to know a language. “To be human is to use a language and to talk is to be a person”, says John Algeo (2010,3) in his, *Origins and Development of Language*. While language is the medium of communication at the primary level, it is the medium of instruction when it comes to education. Language allows a person to think and reason out. His exploration comes out, only when he expresses in language. The growth of human’s intelligence correlates with the growth and development of language.

The culture and civilization grows hand in hand with language and the mankind evolved along with it. No Art, Science or Technological innovations are possible without proper sharing of knowledge through any language. When we say, freedom of speech and freedom of write it denotes the freedom of language.

Language is a man’s significant possession. We cannot imagine a society without it. From birth to death we are surrounded by language. It is the means of communication, a means of social control. No society can function without it. Nor is it possible to think
without language. When we think of anything, we give shape to our thinking with the help of language (Kohli, A.L. 1968,17)

Language, whether it is European, Indian, African or Arabian it has its own unique role and unique origin. In a country like India, where languages are as many as its number of states, people are expected to be multilingual for intercommunication.

1.2 English, the International Language:

English is not the most widely spoken language in the world in terms of the number of native speakers. Chinese speakers outnumber English speaking people as the population is bigger in China. But Chinese language is spoken only within the country and we cannot expect people talking Chinese outside China. Numbers do not really indicate how important English is as a world language, because less than fifteen percent of the world population uses English. The importance of English is not just in how many people speak it but in what it is used for. English is the major language of news and information in the world.

By accidents of history and by the rapid spread of industrial development, science, technology, international trade, and by something like an explosion in the speed and ease of travel and by all the factors which have broken down frontiers and forced nations into closer interdependence, English has become a world language. It is the means of international communication, there is no other (French F.G.1970, 1)
1.3 Importance of English in India

English is introduced into India with the invasion of English men. It remained as a language of trade and commerce for some time and the knowledge of English language became inevitable to work with the English people. The constitution of India adopted in 1950 gave a lease of 5 years to English as the official language of the country. In 1963, the parliament passed a bill according to which English was declared to be the Associate Official Language of India for an indefinite period. The English language still occupies the same position as it did in the days of British rule. It is still the language of our outstanding newspapers and journals. “It is still the language of our technological and professional studies such as medicine and engineering and indeed of all higher researches of scientific knowledge”. (Gordon, D.S. 1963, 2). Our life has been so intimately bound up with English that giving it up would paralyse our activities considerably in many practical and intellectual spheres. It is therefore and inseparable necessity that we should continue to study it and teach it simultaneously with the mother tongue.

English would play a vital role in higher education as an important library language, no student should be considered as qualified for degree in particular a master’s degree unless he has acquired reasonable proficiency in English (Report of the Education Commission, New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1966)
1.4 The social and psychological factors that, compel Indians to learn English

English has gained the status of enabling individuals to work at Multi-national companies, Call centres, DATA transfer centres, Medical Transcription jobs, Digital publishing houses and Human Resource Personnel Departments. There they demand young persons with a good command of oral and written English. Hence, irrespective of the economic status, parents want to provide education in English to their children. Many deem it a matter of pride to hear their children speak in English. Catering to the parental needs for English Education, many private schools have sprung up in many parts of the country. In Tamilnadu, the state has opened up many language labs making interactive learning of English possible. ‘English is a language which is rich in literature; humanistic and technical...English is the only means of preventing isolation from the world” (Radhakrishnan University Commission, Report, 1984)

1.5 Methods and Approaches of Teaching English

The whole foundation of contemporary language teaching was developed during the early part of the twentieth century and there was an array of fascinating methods and approaches to teach English language. Many changes and innovations occur in teaching methods, approaches and techniques. Some methods exist primarily in the form of materials-that is, as a textbook that embodies the principles of selection, organization and presentation of the content the method follows, together with a set of specifications as to how the materials are to be used.
Structural/ situational, aural/ oral, and notional/ functional approaches to teaching or syllabus design provide principles that can be used in writing textbooks....Consequently, methods that lead to texts have a much higher adoption and survival rate than those that do not (Richards, C. 2001, 38)

**Method:** A method refers to the overall plan for the orderly presentations of language material based on selected approach and procedure. A method includes three components:

- Approach
- Design
- Procedure

**Approach:**

Approach is concerned with the theory of the nature of language and language learning.

**Design concerns itself with:**

- The general and specific objective of the course.
- A syllabus model
- Types of learning and learning tasks
- Roles of learners and teachers
• Role of learning materials

**Procedures concerned with:**

• The actual happening in the classroom

• Classroom techniques, practices and behaviours.

**1.6 Role of the Learners and Teachers**

As David Nunan explains, the ‘Role’ refers to the part that learners and teachers are expected to play in carrying out learning tasks as well as the social and interpersonal relationships between the participants (1989). In their comprehensive analysis of approaches and methods in language teaching, Richards and Rodgers (1986) devote considerable attention to learner and teacher roles. They point out that a method will reflect assumptions about the contributions that learners can make to the learning process.

The different methods and approaches evolved from 1840 to 1980 methods like Grammar-Translation, Direct Method, Bilingual, and S-O-S Approach method helped the students to acquire linguistic competence. But language is a means of communication. The approaches mentioned earlier have almost ignored this function of the language and succeeded in imparting. In 1972, a new language course was proposed in Europe which aims to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching. Here the focus was on what the learner needed to understand and express through the target language and not on the accumulation of grammatical items.
and structures. All the four language skills—Listening, speaking, reading and writing—receive equal treatment in that Communicative Language Teaching. In 1970s to 1980s alternative methods and approaches have had a strong influence. Total physical Response, Silent Way, Counselling-Learning and Suggestopedia were seen as stressing important dimensions of the teaching-learning process. The Lexical Approach, Whole language, Neurolinguistic programming and Multiple Intelligence could also be considered as increasing popular approaches to characterizing the ways in which learners are unique and to developing instruction to respond to the uniqueness.

In order to investigate how the methods and approaches process the second language acquisition easier and effective, learners’ language aptitude and motivation are to be scrutinized. Learning strategies too differ with each learner and they in turn have their influence in learning the language.

1.7 Second Language Acquisition

Everyone in this world acquires mastery over their First Language, whereas Second Language acquisition remains a big task most of the time. The reason lies on the age factor. We start familiarize with our mother tongue in a very early stage but, learning L2 was started in a much later period. Still, some people are better in learning skill than others. A Chinese writer in his book, Facets of language discusses about this.

The capability to learn a second language is referred to as **language aptitude**. It is different from proficiency, motivation or general intelligence. It must be
seen as a stable factor, perhaps even innate, but it is not a prerequisite for the acquisition of a second language. It only helps to make the process of SLA faster and easier (2007, 197).

The book further deals with the four components of language aptitude that have been identified.

1. The phonemic coding ability which helps the learner to identify foreign sounds and to form associations of these sounds with the symbols that represents them so that they can be remembered and retrieved later.

2. Grammatical sensitivity which helps the learner to recognize the grammatical functions of words in sentences.

3. Inductive language learning ability which helps the learner to identify based on the sample materials given, patterns and relationships between form and meaning.

4. Rote learning ability which helps the learner to learn the associations of sounds and meanings and to retain them.

A survey was conducted by Wu et al (1992) on the influence of psychological and socio-psychological factors and learning strategies on language learning. Modern Language Aptitude Test was used for it which tested the learners' number learning (memorizing numbers in an invented language), phonetic script(associating graphic symbols and English speech), spelling clues (detecting English word on hearing English speech) and words in sentences (identifying the word or phrase in one
sentence and that functions as the same in way as word/phrase in another sentence), and paired associations (studying foreign-language translations for native-language words for a short period of time first and then took a multiple-choice test to show that they still recognize the associations).

According to this survey, learners who achieved high marks in Modern Language Aptitude Test have also performed well in the proficiency test. The two factors, language aptitude and proficiency were positively correlated. **Motivation** is the next important area in which most of the researches for individual differences in second language acquisition is done. “**Motivation could fall into two types, integrative motivation and instrumental motivation**”. (Gardner, R. & Lambert, W. 1959.13:266-272.) By integrated motivation he means, a learner who is motivated when he or she likes the culture of the target language and wants to identify with the people from the target language culture. And instrumentally motivated as if, a learner learns an L2 for utilitarian purposes such as passing an important exam, finding a good job, or improving social status.

The finding of the research is that although learners with instrumental purpose of study can be as motivated as learners with integrative orientation, the integrative motivated learners have better chances to sustain the drive to learn which may lead to mastery of the L2.

**1.8.1 Learning Strategies:**

Learning Strategy can be defined as
learning processes which are consciously selected by the learner. The element of choice is important here because this is what gives a strategy its special character. These are all the moves which the learner is at least partially aware of, even if full attention is not being given to them (Cohen AD, 1990).

O’Malley et al (1985, cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991) identified, in an influential study of the field that, there are 26 strategies in learning process and they were divided into three main groups.

Fig:1.1

1.8.2 **Metacognitive Strategies**: It includes advance organization, directed attention, selective attention, self management, advance preparation, self-monitoring, delayed protection, self-evaluation and self-reinforcement.

1.8.3. **Cognitive Strategies**: It include repetition, resourcing directed physical response, translation, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, Auditory representation, keyword, contextualisation, elaboration, transfer, inferencing and question for clarification.
1.8.4. **Social Mediation**: Cooperation

From the above survey, O’Malley et al conclude that intermediate level students are more likely to enhance metacognitive skills than the beginning level students which indicate that better proficiency learners show a readiness to control and plan their own study in acquiring target language skill. Other researchers also derive at the point that successful learners easily adopt more frequent and flexible strategies than less successful learners.

Finding own learning styles and effective learning strategies are essential to obtain optimal results with the efforts made.

1.9. **Teaching and Learning English- the four skills**

All languages are first received and then expressed. In language learning four language skills are involved. These skills are listening and understanding, reading and understanding, speaking and writing. The differences among these skills bring to light the differences between responding to language (reception) and using language (expression).

In the first case, the learner gives meanings to language symbols, spoken or written. In the second case (using or expression), the learner has to produce both meaning and symbols.

1.10.1 **Reception involves:-**

- Listening and understanding.
- Reading and understanding

All language learning begins with the ear. So the teacher must aim at making his learners respond to the target language when it is spoken. Of course, ear-training begins in the mother-tongue class. But in learning English as a second or foreign language, the learner is to respond to a new set of symbols in speech. To achieve this aim, the teacher must provide maximum opportunities to his pupil to listen to the spoken forms of English language. For this purpose, he may use different audio-aids such as tape-recorder, linguaphone, radio etc. The aim should be that children learn to respond to English sounds produced in quick succession. In fact, everything in language learning is based on good learning.

Besides responding to spoken symbols, the learners must also learn to respond to written symbols. Reading is also a good means of receiving language. Reception through reading for acquiring knowledge should come much later than reading for expression has been acquired.

1.10.2 Expression

The expression in a foreign language of ideas and facts is an important aim. Anything that the learner ‘has in mind’ should be first clothed in new symbols before it is ‘expressed’. This involves two-fold process:

- To think the ideas or thoughts.
- To clothe them in new symbols.
Much ground for these two processes is prepared when the teacher aims at making the child respond to language symbols. To achieve the aim of expression, the learner must start ‘using’ the target language (English) in

(a) Speaking

(b) Reading

(c) Writing.

1.10.3 Speaking

Listening is naturally followed by speaking. Once the child has started understanding language symbols; he should be given opportunity to use those verbal symbols in speech. This means:

1. The child should be able to make the sounds of English – single sounds as well as sounds in combination;

2. He should know the use of proper stress and intonation;

3. He should be able to express himself through short, simple sentences;

4. He should be able to converse in English, answer simple questions and ask simple questions;

5. He should be able to talk about events, places, things and persons in simple English.
1.10.4 Reading

Reading is an important mode of expression. The idea is that young pupils should have had a sound training in reading mother-tongue before they start reading the foreign language. Reading, as a mode of expression in learning English is responding to verbal symbols after they have been given written shapes.

1.10.5 Writing

While teaching English for practical purposes, pupils must be given the ability to write simple and correct English. This is the most difficult task. The aim here in to enable the pupils to write on simple topics of day to day life such as letters to friends and relations, applications for hand-writing, spelling, structure, words of active use, punctuation, etc. In order to achieve this aim, the teacher should begin teaching the pupils how to make the shapes of English letters.

Thus, the dominant objective of teaching English to Indian children is inclusive of developing all these basic communication skills. An Indian child will be said to have gained the working and practical mastery over English only if he has learnt the four basic skills:

Listening to understand spoken English.

Speaking correct English.

Reading English

Writing simple and correct English.
1.10.5 Writing – An Essential Skill

One English Core Reader of Maldives discusses how humans had developed language and how they had learnt to put down language in the form of writing. It had been said that, before writing was invented, a few thousand years ago, all the memories and knowledge of mankind had to be handed down by word of mouth alone, by one person speaking to another. Much information was lost, and now we shall never know about such important happenings as the discovery of fire, the intention of the wheel and the beginnings of agriculture.

The very first kind of writing was picture-writing. A picture of an eye stood for the word “eye” and a picture of a tree for “tree” and circle stood for the sun. Although exciting stories could be written in this way, it is still not a recording of language. Some progress was made when pictures came to stand for ideas, for example a lion could stand for strength or a cat for hunting, but the approach to the modern alphabet came when signs were made to stand for the sounds we make when we speak (36).

Once picture shapes or letters came to stand for sounds instead of things, it was possible to record language in a more exact way, and by using fewer letters.

Writing is the most productive and complex skill, which needs the ability to correctly sequence grammatical and lexical structures in written form and to present ideas precisely. Writing has become very important in everyday life and everyone has to master this skill. “Writing is an important and, at the same time, demanding activity,
particularly in a foreign language context in which learners are exposed to language for few hours just a week (Kim & Kim, 2005)”

1.11.2 What is writing?

Schwar, Bill N, Cantanch, and Antony H in, *Advances in Accounting Education Teaching and Curriculum innovations* clearly explain what the written communication is meant for. To them, writing is more than grammar and punctuation. Further, writing is not a separable quality of student work; rather, it is enmeshed with critical thinking, information literacy, problem solving, quantitative reasoning, and other skills. A statement developed by faculty under the auspices of the Association of American colleges and universities is quoted in that book, which says,

> Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing.
> Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles.
> It can involve working with many different writing technologies in various formats on paper and online, and integrating texts, data, and images (Handa, 2004; Rhodes, 2010).

1.11.3 Why to develop students’ writing skill?

Caleb Gattegno, an expert on the teaching/learning paradigm, captured the rules perfectly,” It is the students ’job to learn the language; it’s the teacher’s job to learn the students”. Actively engaging the students involves the activities of both the teacher and the students with their distinctive roles. In the language classroom students involve in developing their four skills, listening, speaking reading and the writing skill.
And there are as many reasons, why to teach these four language skills to the students. “Writing can enhance students’ higher order learning, as suggested in more than one hundred studies summarized by Russel(2001).” Say, Schvar, Bill N, Cantanch, Antony H.

The authors further enlist the researches undertook by various Institutions to discuss the importance of developing writing skills with the students.

- Writing is part of several high-impact practices that research has linked to student learning. These practices include writing-intensive courses, frequent higher-order exams and assignments, prompt feedback on student work, tutoring, and supplemental instruction.

- Writing is an important skill for students’ academic success in college, which in turn affects retention.

- Writing is one of the skills most emphasized by employers.

- Working with student writing affects student engagement, affects both learning and retention. Which you can work on writing in a number of ways throughout the institution, and you can involve large numbers of faculty and classes. The composition program, writing lab, and writing-across-the-curriculum efforts can be tightly integrated or not, depending on your circumstances

- Faculty workshops can help faculty develop ways to use writing effectively in their classes and to incorporate other strategies that research has linked to learning
He concludes by saying that Literacy has always been intimately connected to [equality] and to the well functioning of a democracy. “ How can you have an effective voice in this society if your literacy is not protected and developed equally to others?” (2009, 14–15).

1.11.4 How to Write?

As writing is organizing ideas, students are to be taught in such a way that they consolidate their concepts in an effective way to suit their audience and also to solve the purpose.

Citing instances from various resources, locating the references they made, integrating and evaluating the information gathered are the area to be specialized. The tone of the writing and choice of the words are to be in accordance with the content. Ethics in writing includes avoiding plagiarism. Although every finished piece of writing is unique, there will always be something that remains the same: the process of writing. There are certain steps one should always follow: pre-writing, writing a first draft, and rewriting, or revising.

There are some steps that are very much important to be remembered while putting ideas in words.

1. Choose and limit a topic
2. Decide on your purpose
3. Identify your audience
4. Gather supporting Information

5. Strengthen and organize your ideas

By keeping in mind all these steps, the student has to be trained to find a topic that he will enjoy and a one that will suit his assignment. After having selected the topic, he has to decide the purpose of his writing that is what he wants to accomplish out of his writings. Knowing the audience makes the student to include information accordingly. If it is a formal writing, the language he used should be very much formal, following all sets of grammar rules and usage. Colloquial expressions and slang are avoided in formal English. Gathering supporting information is the next criteria, which helps to develop the topic. Strengthening the ideas and organizing ideas are the final step where the students alter their ideas, revise or remodel. Thus the students are made familiar with the writing skill.

1.11.5 Writing skill and college students

“Write to be understood, speak to be heard read to grow” says, Lawrence Powell Clarke, American Librarian, Writer and Critic. (1906-2001). Writing well is an art that everybody should master in order to be successful. It means conveying thoughts, ideas, and facts in simple and clear language. In school level, the second language is taught in a serious way, which imparts neither creative writing nor an efficient writing. But in colleges they may need a good skill in writing as they no more can depend on rote learning. Whatever the courses the student prefers, the skill of good writing is to be proved. The Professional course students have to develop their technical writing, to
submit their technical documents at the time of their training or after joining job. Similarly, the science students have to submit their research papers putting forth facts and information which must be free from grammar or spelling errors. If a student is not skilled in writing he may fail in accomplishing the above tasks. His career too expects from him a good business communication, project report, feasibility report; survey report etc., Sending e-mails with effective communication becomes a daily core of all sorts of job. Hence to develop the writing skills of the students is inevitable of a language teacher.

Generally, there are three types of written composition, Controlled, Guided, and Free.

1.12.1 **Controlled composition:**

This is the simplest form of making children write a composition. In the 1950s and early 1960s under the influence of the Audio-lingual Method, writing was relegated to the secondary position. Subject matter may be strictly controlled in the early stage and they have no freedom to add anything of their own. Grammar, Syntax, and mechanics of writing were stressed to help the students in developing composition skills.

1.12.2 **Types of Controlled Composition:**

1. jumbled sentences.

2. Matching the sentences.

3. Fill up the blanks.

4. Simple exercise in conversation of sentences.
5. Answer to questions.

6. Parallel sentences.

1.12.3 Guided Composition

Composition given under the guidance of the teacher on the choice of the subject matter and the expression is called guided composition. The teacher’s intervention, control and guidance are necessary for students at the beginning of language learning.

Procedure for Guided Composition

a. selection of the topic.

b. preparation.

c. oral practice.

d. Writing composition.

e. correction.

f. follow-up work.

1.12.4 Free Composition

The ultimate aim of composition is to enable the pupils to arrange their own ideas in their own way-to choose their words to express their ideas freely. Hence the term,
“free composition”. (H. Champion) The aim of free composition is to enable the pupils to express themselves correctly and creatively.

**Features of Free Composition**

i) There are no restrictions on pupils for the use of vocabulary and structure.

ii) There are no rigid restrictions to the length of the composition.

iii) They are free to select the topic

iv) Their writings need to be original and creative.

v) Proper organization of subject matter and accuracy of presentation are very important.

**Exercises of Free Composition**

I) Paragraph construction.

II) Paraphrasing.

III) Letter writing.

IV) Application writing

V) Essay writing.

VI) Narrative writing.

VII) Story writing.
VIII) Précis writing

IX) Poetry writing.

Of all the above mentioned exercises, the students of second language are often prescribed with almost all exercises except, story writing, poetry writing and paraphrasing in their prescribed syllabus. As the teaching method has evolved from its Audio-Lingual method to the advanced Communicative Language Teaching and to the most recent Task –Based Language Teaching, engaging the second language students to develop their writing skills also needs some new trends and approach.

1.13 Writing in Daily Life

Writing in daily life is often taken for granted. However, through writing we create meaning. Writing in everyday life includes a wide range of texts, written in many different ways. A text message to a friend is unlikely to be presented in sentences, and many well incorporate slang, abbreviations and smileys. In contrast, a formal letter is generally written in Standard English.

Writing in everyday life is:

- motivated by meaningful purposes
- varied in form according to audience and purpose;
- Produced for a specific audience, often others, but also for oneself.

1.14 Encouraging development in Writing
In order to encourage children to develop into confident, competent, enthusiastic writers in their lives beyond the classroom, it is essential that their experience of writing in the classroom provides opportunities for this.

1.15.1 Writing beyond the Classroom

- Write for a range of purposes and audiences;
- Products a range of different types of texts;
- Write in order to communicate express feelings and entertain the others;
- Use their writing to aid learning
- Engage in writing as a process
- Develop confidence and competence in transcription skills.

Audiences and purposes for children’s writing exist within and beyond the school as shown below.

1.15.2 Within the International and National Community

- Emails/letters to children in another school at home/abroad, author and publishers about favourite books.
- Requests for information from organizations, bands, stars, museums, tourist information offices and so on;
- Contributions to Internet sites for children’s writing and discussion boards of charitable organizations;

- Letters in response to issues to the Prime Minister/ United Nations/ charitable organizations.

1.15.3 Within the local area

- Complaints or requests to the local council, MP or police, for instance about local litter and the need for new bins or the lack of facilities for skateboarding;

- Invitations and posters about school events or local campaigns;

- letters, reviews, articles for the local paper;

- response and contributions to local TV

1.15.4 Within the school

guides of the school for new children/visitors

lists of children wanting dinners for the school office

invitations to events for parents and carers;

letters of thanks, for example to cleaning staff

1.15.5 Within the classroom:
labels for a display, resources or property
information for other children in the class
reminders, e.g. about behaviour, events, items to collect etc.;
welcome poster
messages and adverts for class notice board;
letters to the teacher.

1.15.6 Writing for one self:
diaries
jotters
reminder notes

1.15.7 Writing with Technology

Writing is probably the skill most affected by the rise of Internet. Apart from anything else, the last decade has seen the emergence, or rise in prominence, of important new tools such as blogs and wikis, and social networking platforms that have seen our learners becoming more used to writing (Stanley, 2013.121).

Writing CVs and emails are also considered as a challenging one by the students. Writing personal mails are flexible, whereas official emails need certain rules. Using
appropriate salutations, making the subject matter significant, grammar, punctuation, polite and reciprocating good deeds are very important.

Writing with technology demands good writing skill in that way and at the same time, technology provides learners many opportunities to develop their writing skills too. The following chapter deals with the role of technological aids in general and social network in particular in improving the writing skill of the students.