CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: RETROSPECT & PROSPECT
English language is an easy means of communication in the international sphere of life. It is the language that can be easily comprehended in different parts of the world. It is supposed that near about 350 million people of the world speak English. With the progress of trade and commerce, it has spread far outside England. At present, it has become a language of universal culture that embraces so many departments of knowledge.

As far as India is concerned, it is but certain that we can not live a self-centred life and then dream of prosperity. We will have to develop our relations with different countries. Every country needs to establish channels of communication with others. There is perhaps in the modern world no better means of such communication than English.
The introduction of science and technology has given a new outlook to us. It has enabled us to break down those social barriers that were responsible for the growth of a narrow outlook of life. It was then that the training in mother-tongue was considered sufficient. Now the time has changed a lot. In these days of rapid communications, we can not remain content with learning mother-tongue or regional languages. If in this expanding world a community is to benefit from its relations with the rest of the world, it must maintain communication with the world outside its own borders. Only English offers us the convenience of maintaining relations with the rest of the world, of borrowing the freshness and vigour of the free exchange of ideas from all the countries of the world. In India, too, English has so far served as the unifying language against the background of various cultures and regional languages. In view of all this, it seems practically impossible to dispense with English.

However, one of the perplexing problems which we had to face soon after independence was the position of English in the country. Before independence English occupied a privileged place in India. It was the language of administration, a compulsory subject at schools and colleges, and a medium of instruction for some subjects at the school and for all subjects at the university
level. It opened the door of employment, and a person who did know English was not considered educated in the true sense of the word. A knowledge of English was a must to climb the social ladder. Speaking English became a craze. But after independence there was rethinking about English. A time came when people thought to do away with English forever. This cry for the abolition of English from the educational system had its roots in bitterness stemming from the long period of domination by England. But a majority of people continued to believe that by abolishing the teaching of English the standard of education would deteriorate and that English was one of the major vehicles of the culture of the modern world. However, the muddle at the political level has also created a muddle at the educational level. This muddle has resulted in shifting our policies regarding teaching English as a second language from one to so many that the teachers in general can not lead their young students on to a definite path.

The conditions under which English is taught in India differ from state to state and from one type of school or college to another. For instance, English is taught under immensely favourable circumstances in public and convent schools whereas the conditions under which
it is taught in a majority of other schools and colleges leave much to be desired.

The objectives of the teaching of English have been narrowed down. It is considered enough to teach the pupils proper understanding, reading, writing and speaking of the language. In India it is not possible to fulfil even these limited objectives. Students, after leaving the schools, are not able to read English properly, what to talk of writing and speaking. Their vocabulary is also poor. It is not possible for them to explain the passage of the text-books. They do not know the proper use of the words. For this state of affairs not only the students, but the teachers also are to be blamed. Though they have their own problems as well. In fact, the whole education structure is to be blamed.

The frequent changes in governmental policy towards the teaching and learning of English, the indecisiveness of the State Education Departments as regards policies and programmes, non-availability of facilities and resources for reform and reorganisation, and ill-equipped institutions are some of other factors that are responsible for our failure in the successful implementation of any worthwhile English teaching programme. It is no exaggeration to say that no effective teaching is being done at present.
in schools and colleges situated in the rural areas. The survey conducted for this research work has strongly substantiated this fact. Perhaps the situation is different in the urban areas, because here there are well-established English-medium schools to which are sent the children of the upper-class and middle-class urban elite.

Approaches, methodologies and techniques continue to be the same old ones. For example, the traditional translation method that is most wasteful is still followed in a majority of schools and even in colleges. Oral work that is the soul of any good teaching is neglected. There is no oral practice on the part of students as a result of which they can not construct a few sentences of English of their own accord. Besides, our schools and colleges are not equipped with adequate material facilities which can help in language learning. Even English readers and text-books are sub-standard. In their writing no attention is paid to the selection and gradation of structures. Although vocabulary is graded from year to year, yet the authors of these books do not take pains to see if it is properly used in a manner to facilitate its grasp by the students. In our text-books we lay more emphasis on the subject-matter rather than on the teaching of the language. There are no practice exercises to teach
Since the type of examination influences the methods and other aspects of teaching to a large extent, examination in English is to be blamed for a number of defects which have crept in. Under the present system, a student can get through the examination if he cares to cram answers to certain stock questions. He need not read even the prescribed text-books. The result is that though a student succeeds in the examination, yet he has no practical command of the language. He can neither speak correct English, nor write. The standard of spoken English in schools and colleges is deplorably low and one of the reasons for this is that there are no oral tests. An overwhelming majority of respondents (75.29 per cent) are not satisfied with the present examination system in general and traditional essay type tests in particular (Table 48, Appendix-II). A variety of reasons have been given for not considering these essay type tests satisfactory like they do not take into account all the linguistic aspects that are to be tested; they determine at best only achievement of students for purpose of rating them on the basis of their marks; they mean luck or pluck for students etc. But the most frequently
mentioned reason is that the subjectivity of the examiner is involved in them (Table 50). The same answer when marked by different examiners yields different results. Even the same answer, when marked by the same examiner at different times gives different results.

There has been an ever-increasing rush for education during the last forty years or so and on account of this the classes have become overcrowded. The urge for education has been growing among the masses bringing more pressure on schools and colleges that have shortage of funds, buildings and competent teachers. The increasing number in classroom is bound to affect teaching English adversely. Language learning is a skill to be drilled. It is not mere information to be given to the students.

The attitudes of teachers in general are yet another factor that stands in the way of effective English language teaching in India. These attitudes are a legacy of the past and have become part of traditional thinking and practice. The teacher do not exactly understand the main aim of teaching English. They feel fully satisfied if the pupils are kept busy during the whole period. In addition there is a shortage of well-trained, fully qualified teachers of English in schools and colleges. The direct method and the bilingual method have been introduced and the structural approach and the communicative approach have been adopted, yet no progress seems to have been achieved. The reason is shortage of trained
staff. The handful of available trained teachers have been unhelpful; they have been hesitant in giving demonstration lessons to their untrained colleagues and in thus popularising effective teaching methods.

As is clear from the preceding discussion, the standard of English in schools and colleges has considerably declined. This realisation calls for many-sided reforms in the teaching of English. First of all, our policy regarding the place of English in the curriculum must be very clearly defined. It should not be vacillating. Likewise, we must define very clearly our objectives of teaching English at various stages of education, and try to realize them.

Since the teacher occupies a pivotal position in education, it is essential that we have the right type of English teacher. The teacher should be fully equipped to do justice to the subject. Besides a rich background of English language and literature, he should be acquainted with the latest techniques of teaching the language and should also have a knowledge of phonetics. He should be painstaking and patient, because an impatient teacher cannot teach English efficiently. Facilities for reorienting in service teachers to new techniques
of teaching the language should be expanded and follow-up work should be undertaken.

If we desire to obtain the best results in the teaching of English, we should plan our teaching in a systematic manner. The aim of teaching is to enable the students to acquire an ability to use English effectively by the time they leave the school after passing their examination. This ability to use English effectively can not be achieved in a day or in a year. Generally, the teaching of English begins as soon as the pupils complete their primary education course. It enjoys the status of a second language and is a compulsory subject that the students have to offer along with others. The purpose of using language needs further elaboration. This requires acquiring four linguistic skills that are to be developed equally. The main emphasis, therefore, should be on the linguistic aspect of English. English should cease to be taught as literature up to the secondary education stage. This shift in attitude is essential due to the fact that its study as literature has produced unhappy results as the pupils have to study things of which they have no experience at all. Hence, we must re-model our courses in English at the secondary stage and recognize that the learning of English is not an
end in itself but only the acquisition of an instrument for adding to our knowledge. The stress must, therefore, shift from literature to the simple language of every day. This does not mean that our teaching of English as a language should lose human interest. Some literary pieces within the range and experience of our pupils may be included. One thing is certain that now English should be learned, not as a vehicle of culture, but for its utility. Henceforth, the emphasis must be on the language learning aspect rather than its literature.

However, at the university stage the study of English should be aimed at, both as language and literature. English possesses an imaginative literature that has few equals in the world. In the field of fiction, poetry, drama and belles-letters, English has immense wealth of achievement. To the serious student of English such study will open out a new world and serve as a source of inspiration that may empower him to produce works of beauty in his own language, and in English as well. As John F. Povey observes, "Literature may guide a few more gifted students towards their own creativity by example derived from their reading of successful writers. There is already fascinating evidence of a second-language literature in English from several countries across the
world, especially India and Nigeria.\textsuperscript{1} Though teaching English as a second language should take into account creation of interest in literature in students, yet the language course should not at any rate be turned into a literature course. "Learning to read literature must be carefully distinguished from studying it."\textsuperscript{2} We will have to devote more attention on the formation of sound linguistic habits.

In order to develop sound linguistic habits, in order to carry out an effective programme of English teaching, in order to prepare a background for the study of literature, we will have to make out an effective plan. Having the end in view and the needs of students and their society, their physical and mental age and health, we must formulate such a comprehensive and well-organised plan of work, that our students may proceed step by step and form each linguistic habit and each habit becomes their second nature. That is, the habits of speech, reading and writing become natural with them. Effective planning will ensure success at both ends - at the teacher's end it will always present a picture before him - 'how much he has done and how much remains

\textsuperscript{1} Allen & Campbell (Eds.), op.cit., P. 181. The quotation is from "Literature in TESL Programmes : the Language and the Culture".

\textsuperscript{2} ibid., P. 195. The quotation is from "The Literature Lesson" by Bruce Pattison.
to be done' - that is, it will discipline his efforts of teaching and economise his labour and at the students' end, it will encourage them to march on step by step, without feeling bored and tired, without letting them fritter away their energies in the absence of planned work. A well chalked-out plan will enable them to co-operate with their teacher. The teacher will be able to co-ordinate his work. This co-ordination of work and co-operation with his efforts will naturally produce happy results.

But planning alone will not work. It is essential to effectively execute it. One will never know our best plans that are in our imagination only. We will not be benefited by such plans till we execute them. Putting our plan into practical use is extremely necessary. We must put our plan into practice as soon as we have drawn it. This will be beneficial for us. In the first place, practical situations will guide us about the effectiveness of our planning. Secondly, we will know about the strong and weak points of our planning. If we feel that our planning requires revision, we can do it instantly. Appraising leads to assess the value of our efforts and also what our students have gained from our efforts. We also appraise the situation at schools or colleges in which
we work. In this way planning, executing and appraising will lead us to our goal. The most important thing regarding standards of teaching English is that the teacher should know what he is about and how he is going to achieve it. In this regard much remains to be done in the teachers' training colleges, the weakest link in our educational system.

However much we may desire, it may not be possible for us to change some of the unfavourable circumstances in which English is taught today. It is not possible, for instance, to restrict the number of students in a class because of the ever-growing expansion in the school population. Nor is it possible to devote more time to the teaching of English because there has to be a proper distribution of time among the various subjects in the curriculum. This necessitates the need for new approaches and methodologies that are effective and economical. New approaches and methodologies with stress on the four language skills will have to be introduced both in schools and in colleges. They must depend on techniques that will motivate pupils to learn English and to enjoy learning it.

When we talk of new approaches to teaching English, we will have to take into account certain innovative
components of ELT such as 'distance education, remedial teaching, programmed teaching, diagnostic teaching' etc. In fact, teaching of English has to be relevant in terms of learners' needs; it has to take into account their socio-economic needs; it has to develop in the learners new skills and communicative competence. Now, this is a real challenge we are faced with. Obviously, it is a challenge that the conventional system of education is not equipped to meet. The traditional system of education is inadequate in several respects for meeting the changing needs of the learners.

Independent India craves for 'universalization of education' and 'equal opportunities for all'. These are two basic principles of the educational policy of independent India. Hence we have to feel concerned for the under-privileged students — underprivileged because they belong to the weaker section of society and have failed to enjoy the privilege of attending good schools. Even otherwise they have little or no exposure to English. Is the traditional university department of English capable of meeting this challenge? Obviously not. The kind of situation desired can be made possible only by an innovative system of education that the information-rich and technology-intensive society of today has made possible.
The needs of the new student can not be met by the conventional system of education. Distance Education is capable of doing so. We will have to move away from a total dependence on the formal educational system towards distance education that is a whole new way of learning. It is pleasing to note that distance education has received a good response from the teachers concerned with the conventional system of education (Table No. 40).

Distance education is not another name of correspondence education. The correspondence education is the name given to that kind of education which makes use of print materials primarily. These print materials are more or less like the text-books prescribed for the students of the traditional face to face system and hence are called lessons rather than self-instructional materials. On the other hand, distance education has a reference to non-traditional innovative type of education. Distance education employs almost all means of communication. It makes use of the advanced strategies and technologies of communication: i.e. print materials, radio, television, telephones, audio-video cassettes, video disc, computer etc. Distance education has the potential to meet the challenge of catering to the vast variety of learners' needs. In fact, the emphasis today is not on teaching
but on learning. Distance education has tremendous potential to meet the challenge of population explosion on the one hand and of providing for equal opportunities of learning English on the other hand.

Similarly, in the field of methods of teaching foreign language, programmed teaching is considered a special method of teaching. Programmed teaching is based on principle of controlling the student's cognitive movement. It brings the student to the system of short and logically related steps in a manner so that he makes the least possible number of mistakes. The aim of programmed teaching is to optimise the pace of acquisition process of communication habits and skills. This teaching is based on the psychological concept: the theory of stage formation of mental actions and also the theory of communicational movement. According to this theory, teaching develops from stage to stage in the form of consecutive learning by the learners. At present programmed teaching is developing in three directions: creation of programmed text-books and tests, work on models of teaching and development of supplementary means of programmed teaching (exercises for tape-recorders, television, computer etc.). In the field of electronic machines, 'Examiner' is used to control the knowledge in the initial stage of learning.
'Signal 65' is used for training in exercises in which the tasks are given to open the brackets, fill the necessary word, fill the missing structure of the sentences and also for training in translation. 'KISI-8' permits the use of linear and non-linear programming with a large degree of adaptation to the needs of the learner. This machine controls as well as teaches.

It has been proved by an experiment with the second language learners that the process of learning has intensified 1.5 times when machines were used and drills could be done seven times more than in the conventional method. One of the specialities of programmed teaching is that the acquisition and imparting of skills primarily depends upon the speech activity rather than logical activities. These days most of the methodologists prefer the employment of programmed teaching in combination with the traditional methods so as to have optimal results. A few areas to use programmed teaching in combination with the traditional methods are the areas of exercises and drills. An attempt should be made to relate pedagogy, cybernatics and psychology in teaching English as a second language. But the big question is how many teachers are there in India who are trained in programmed teaching or even know about this innovative device. Perhaps not many. The data presented
in Table No. 46 substantiate this view. A large majority of respondents (67.76 per cent) admit that they know nothing about programmed teaching. In fact, this indicates stagnation and inefficiency of teachers' training colleges and of the education system itself and calls for a drastic intervention in order to change the context of English learning.

Another component of English language teaching which has attracted the attention of educationists recently is remedial teaching. Remediation is a process of setting right some of the drawbacks of the learner. It involves teaching, reading, testing and reteaching. Remedial English implies improvement in the standard of English. It goes without saying that the pupils who learn English as a second language are considerably poor in the subject. The new remedial teaching has received a stimulus from the testing movement, however, and has been given a name borrowed from the medical profession. It has for its objectives the development of effective techniques for the correction of mistakes in all sorts of learning. Remediation consists of: (i) correction of mistakes and (ii) repair of all kinds of breakdown and failure in the learning system. It is essentially a process of reteaching, thus it compensates the lack of proper learning
and eliminates undesired learning. It involves a blend of habit formation and concept formation with a lot of stress on the latter. It becomes essential, for students generally form bad language habits. It is also significant to remediate or compensate the insufficient formation of good language habits, insufficient formation of desired concepts and insights. However, Table No. 43 strongly indicates that respondents do not seem to have realised the value of remedial teaching or they do not have the knowledge of this new technique, because as many as 68 per cent of the respondents admit that they have never used remedial teaching. These observations are not very encouraging.

Diagnostic teaching is a term somewhat related to remedial teaching in its theory but slightly different in function. Diagnosis is the art of discovering and knowing the pupil's difficulties in learning from the symptoms that are apparent in any form in the class-work. The symptoms are normally known from observation. But sometimes, they can not be discovered till very careful measurements are made for the purpose of diagnosis. In whatever way the symptoms are known, they indicate the source of difficulty. There are two objectives of diagnostic teaching. First, it should show the specific difficulties
that the subject-matter presents to the pupil. Second, it should reveal the specific difficulties he faces in mastering those difficulties. The modern standpoint holds that the teacher should be diagnostician of learning problems and should be able to cure them. If the practice of diagnosis is carried on specifically, it will do much towards saving the pupil from effects of protracted wrong reactions and the development of habits that may deter progress.

Well, what is most needed is a positive change in our attitudes towards the teaching of English. The main and simple aim of teaching English is to enable the students to acquire an ability to use English effectively. In order to achieve this aim we will have to introduce changes in our syllabi, methodologies of language teaching, materials (including audio and video materials), training programmes, attitude to students and system of evaluation. We may need to change the school/college — its physical structure, its atmosphere, its functions, its facilities, its roles and responsibilities.

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