Chapter 2

Goals of Language Teaching within the Grounds of Indian Context

The fourth edition of *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* by A.S. Hornby (edited by A.P. Cowie in 1991) defines the term 'goal' as the "object of one's effort". Seen in this light the term 'goal' can be taken as the target one wishes to attain. The goal of ELT in the pre-independence days of India was to create a class of English speaking Indians who could serve as go-betweens for the Britishers and the Indians. And the Indians were lured to learn English in order to get government jobs, which had a certain amount of prestige attached to them. To quote Krishnaswamy and Sriraman (1995) the Indians "continue to privilege Western tradition and Western Literature". Even during the Mughal rule in India Persian was the language of the elite. But with the fall of Delhi in 1857 the appeal of Persian started to dwindle and the status hitherto enjoyed by Persian began giving way to English gradually.

English literature continued to be taught because it honed the Indian sensibilities. The main practice of teaching English was confined to adorn the exclusive Indian minds with the
subtleties of English literature by teaching them the plays of Shakespeare and Shaw, poetry of Wordsworth, Keats and Eliot and essays of Hazlitt, Lamb, Huxley etc. Till date the same practice continues, but today when English literature is taught in Indian schools and colleges it is taught with a hope that learning of English literature would enable the learners to write and speak English well.

In CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) certified schools a text book Interact in English: Literature Reader (A textbook prescribed for English course ‘A’) is taught to all the high school learners of advance English. This book was prepared by the CBSE English Language Teaching Project Team. The book contains a foreword by the Chairman (Prof. B.P. Khandelwal) according to which the book aims at highlighting the proficiency of learners “in learning English as a second language”. The division of 100 marks of the English examination paper (CBSE) for 10th class is as follows:

1- Section A: Reading (30 marks)

2- Section B: Writing (30 marks)

3- Section C: Grammar (15 marks)
Even the books used in A.M.U. at intermediate level for the purpose of imparting knowledge of general English are actually a collection of short stories. The book* English with a Purpose* (a text book for class XI) published by NCERT (National Council of Research and Training) and edited by Sandhya Ravi -Sahoo and V.K. Bajpai can be taken as an example of the literary texts used for the ELT purpose.

To quote Usha Nagpal (1995), "Most universities held on diligently to English literature not only in their honours courses but also in general English courses. The question whether, in the compulsory English paper literature was to be taught qua literature or as a tool for language, remained unasked and unstated." Gupta and Kapoor(1991) support Burton's view that "there can simply be no argument that an average Indian today needs English for certain very specific purposes : to be able to follow a lecture given in English, to be able to read text books in his subject in English, and on occasion to be able to express his ideas in English ". In order to perform all these tasks an average student needs to master the four skills, "therefore, certain minimal competence in all the four skills. (Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking ) with a high premium on reading should be the
focal point of compulsory English Course". The main goal of ELT in India should be to help students master the four skills.

One can't but agree with Shrivastava and Sharma (1991) that "Our education system reveals that the higher we move in education, the fewer are the number of languages employed as media of instruction, so much so that for higher education and technical training the only medium left for use is English. Out of a total of 67 educational languages, 52 are used as the medium of instruction at the earliest school stages, and this progressively decreases as we move towards higher education where only 12 languages are used at the under-graduate and only English in institutes of science and Technology." English is the universally acknowledged language of science and technology and whoever wants to excel in science or technology needs to have a fair knowledge of English language. Most of the scientific journals and magazines are written in English.

Graddol (1997) proudly states in his book The Future Of English that the press release for the launch of the British Council's English 2000-Project in 1995 summarised the position of English thus "World-wide, there are over 1,400 million people living in Countries where English has official status. One out of five of the world's population speak English
to some level of competence. Demand from the other four fifths is increasing...English is the main language of books, newspapers, airports, airtraffic control, international business and academic conferences, science technology, diplomacy, sports, international competitions, pop music and advertising." Not only is English the language of science and technology but it is also the dominating language in the field of media, business, sports etc. The position of English is much recognized in academics and it is the most important language of communication at airports too. It can be said that when English language is learnt it is learnt with the understanding that no other language can provide the kind of exposure that English does.

Graddol (1997) says, "in post-colonial countries such as India and Malaysia, English medium education provides one of the mechanisms of distributing social and economic power." But it is not so as Graddol (1997) himself points out in the form of response to the English 2000 global consultation questionnaire that "competence in English encourages elitism and increases socio-economic inequalities." Fifty nine percent of the respondents disagreed with the above mentioned statement. On the contrary ninety five percent respondents agreed that English is intrinsic in providing access
to “high-tech communication and information over the next twenty-five years.”.⁹ As a result, it can be said that English is very important for acquiring higher education in science and technology.

Krishnaswamy and Sriraman (1995) consider English to be the “the language of oppurtunities”."° It can be said that English is the language of economics, media, IT (information technology), hautecouture, bureaucracy, law and the world of intellectuals. Therefore, English pervades in all the spheres of life and provides better job opportunities to those who are proficient in it.

Most of the competitive examinations, interviews and group discussions are conducted in English. The most prestigious scholarship tests like the Commonwealth, JRF (Junior Research Fellowship) etc are conducted in English. Even NET (National Eligibility Test) – a must for acquiring lectureship is conducted in English for all the subjects, excluding literatures of other languages, like Urdu, Sanskrit, Hindi etc.

According to Manjari Mishra in an article ‘School Kids in U.P. say Hindi is a Big Bore’ published in The Times Of India on 17ᵗʰ May 2000 “Hindi is definitely out of favour with school
going children in U.P., the heartland of the language". They find it "boring, dull and sad"... "While the children seem enthusiastic about English, Hindi hardly has any takers".

According to Agnihotri and Khanna's scale measuring 'the motivation forces behind learning of English', maximum number of respondents feel 79.1% (see table 1.1) English learners learn English in India in order to secure good jobs, 78.1% of the students learn English as English language is learnt because it is useful for higher education, 60.6% people felt that English language is learnt because it makes a person knowledgeable, 46.2% people felt that English is learnt because it adds to prestige and personality. And 44.1% (see table 1.2) respondents felt that one has to learn English language is learnt because it is a part of the course requirement. Although, 21.5% people felt that English language is learnt because parents want it to be learnt. While 49% (see table 1.3%) respondents felt that English is learnt because it helps them to get their work done easily and 19.8% people felt English is learnt because it helps them to manipulate other people for their personal gains. It can be said that different people are motivated to learn English for different reasons.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues eliciting instrumental motivation</th>
<th>Total no. of persons</th>
<th>Scale measuring instrument motivation</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Persons</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>No. of Persons</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>No. of Person</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>No. of Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Helps to build a career</td>
<td>1099</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Useful for higher education</td>
<td>1098</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Makes a person knowledgeable</td>
<td>1097</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Adds to prestige and personality</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Distribution of the Sample on the Scale Measuring resentment motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues eliciting instrument motivation</th>
<th>Total no. of persons</th>
<th>Scale measuring instrument motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Persons</td>
<td>Percent age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 A part of course requirement</td>
<td>1056</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Parents want it to be learnt</td>
<td>1064</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.3 - Distribution of the Sample on the scale measuring manipulative motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues eliciting instrumental motivation</th>
<th>Total no. of persons</th>
<th>Scale measuring instrument motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Helps to get work done everywhere</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Helps to use other people for personal gains</td>
<td>1089</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But the main reason behind children being zealous in learning English could be the popularity of English. As it is also the language of internet and IT. Hence English is popular with adults as well as school going children. Not only do people learn English keeping in mind that it is useful for higher education but also because a lot of knowledge is available in English. In an article “English: Language of Communication the World Over” on 9th May 2000 published in The Times of India. The Writer H.S. Rao, raised some interesting points. He quotes Sally Wehemier, editor of the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) that “80 % of the world’s electronically stored information is in English and three quarters of the world’s mail is written in English.”

English is the language of communication, majority of people write their e-mails in English, many Indians want to learn English so that they can effectively communicate with or write proper mails to their relatives abroad.

According to Rao “Over two-thirds of the world’s scientists read in English and British language products are worth over 500 million pounds a year, 600,000 language students come to Britain every year, spending 700 million Pounds.”
Such is the popularity that English language enjoys today. English language teaching has become a global phenomena. Students vying for scholarships abroad especially to countries like England, America, Canada and Australia, where the mother tongue is English, enthusiastically sit for TOEFL to prove that they are competent enough in English to pursue higher studies in these countries. English is the international language. It is the language of the Indian media as the most widely read newspapers in India like The Times Of India, Hindustan Times, The Hindu, Statesman etc are printed in English. And many people learn English as this language gives them an easy access to the vast treasures of knowledge instantly.

Rao implies that English is "appearing on the curriculum of virtually every school." Since English is the language of communication all over the world parents also want their children to learn it probably with a hope that in future knowledge of English would ensure them good jobs in India or abroad.

Since Indians are second language learners of English, it is important to find out what 'second' means in the context of language learning. A meaningful explanation of the word 'second' has been given by Professor Marckwardt (1978). He
says, "The term second may be understood in two senses. Chronologically, it is the language which is acquired after the speaker has mastered his native language or mother tongue, or at least after he has made a good start toward doing so. Socially, it is a language which not only supplements whatever language may be native to the area or to the speaker but in a sense is virtually necessary to conduct the affairs of the country." It is not important to argue whether English is imperative to the affairs of India or not? But English is definitely important for the same.

"English is spoken as a first language by 375 million people and as a second language by the same number". The figure mentioned by Wehemier indicates the importance that English language is given by the second language speakers. On the basis of the above stated facts, it can be said that English is the language of communication all over the world, and that is what should be taken into consideration for determining the ELT goals.

Krishnaswamy and Sriraman (1995) have focussed on the root cause of gloomy ELT scenario in India; they say "With the advent of independence, the nation should have redefined the goals and priorities in education and more specifically in English education." Various educational bodies aimed at
redefining of the ELT goals in India. The most conspicuous among them are CBSE, NCERT and CIEFL. The Central Institute of English (CIEFL) has specified in its website its original mandate is to "improve the quality of teaching of English in India through suitably designed training, research, and materials production programmes".

According to the official website of British Council Library www.bcl.org English "has official or special status in at least seventy five countries with a total population of over two billion". R.K. Rajan in one of his articles 'English-Studies at the crossroads-Role of English as a language' says, that "English is necessary today, especially in the context of India's transformation into a democratic society ". Though the importance of English is universally recognised yet Rajan is right when he says, "English in India is at crossroads". In response to Rajan's article T.Ranjit of Thrivananthapuram wrote a letter which got published in the Letters To The Editor page in The Hindu(December 12,2000). Ranjit wrote "English teaching in our country has been in dire straits for many years...It is still more unfortunate that even students who have a post-graduate degree in English language and literature cannot speak or write correct English, not to speak about good English". Such is the plight of English language learners in our
country. There are innumerable factors responsible for the dismal ELT scenario in India ranging from untrained teachers, inappropriate materials, lack of methodology in teaching English language and faulty system of examination. Rajan asks a question “Whom should one blame for this sad state of affairs -the teacher or the students?” Then he himself goes on to answer his question and says “Both of them have an equal role in the deterioration at present. The lack of motivation on the part of the students and unscientific teaching methods adopted by the teachers right from the primary school level are to a certain extent responsible for this. It is high time that some remedial measures were adopted by the teaching fraternity and those concerned with the learning of English language.”

Measures are being taken in India. For the same purpose on 19th November 2000, ‘The Central Institute Of English and Foreign Languages’ had launched A National English Language Testing Service (NELTS) which was held at various centres in India; an estimated number of 17,000 candidates sat for the test. The preferred age of candidates was 16 years. The NELTS team in an Interview with Padmini Devarajan (published in The Hindu under the heading A System To Assess English Language Skills (November 14, 2000)said that they hoped “The
long-term impact ...will be to gear the teaching system towards the development of functional proficiency in English and the Introduction of a more reliable and valid assessment." However the short-term impact of the test according to the NELTS team was to make the teachers and testers aware "of a more reliable system of measuring their students' English language abilities and skills."

ELTecs, an organisation of ELT professionals, also aims at improving the quality of English language teaching in India. ELTecs (English Language Teachers Contact Scheme) organized a conference in December, 2000. A group of twenty-seven key teachers, trainers, policy makers and publishers, related to ELT worked in coordination and identified the main tasks related to ELT in East - India. They are as follows:

1-Policy implementation

2-Materials

3-Teacher training

ELT professionals from primary, tertiary to secondary levels presented their views on the above-mentioned issues. But the highlight of the conference was the issue of teacher training. Experts felt training should be given to English
teachers not only in language proficiency but also in methodology. Experts thought use of appropriate methodology will definitely make English language teaching successful.

One member of ELTecs made a suggestion "that the Government should be approached by a representative of ELT group for providing online access to schools." The task seems to be gigantic yet it is not impossible.

According to the ELTecs conference the key issues faced by English language teachers in India are as follows:

1-Teacher competence

2-User-friendly class room materials

3-Developing evaluation tools

4-Selling ELT to policy makers

5-Teacher development

6-Self access materials.

The duty of the policy makers is to give due attention to ELT and make it more popular in the country. English language teachers should be trained properly in language as well as methodology, so that the teachers can develop their mental faculties and provide the English learners with the kind of
assistance needed. The learners should also have self access to the materials in order to decrease their dependency on the teacher. The goals of ELT in India should be—to be able to provide the learners with competent teachers, user friendly classroom materials and such evaluation tools which can easily estimate the level of their learning in quick succession. Only then perhaps proper English language learning will take place in India on a large scale.

Nunan (1998) in an attempt to describe the utility of learning task to the teachers and learners alike says that “Goals are the vague general intentions behind any given learning task. They provide a point of contact between the task and the broader curriculum. The answer to the question: ‘why did you get learners to engage in Task X?’ will generally take the form of some sort of goal statement. Possible answers might be:

‘I wanted to develop their confidence in speaking.’

‘I wanted to develop their personal writing skills.’

‘I wanted to encourage them to negotiate information between each other to develop their interactional skills.’
'I wanted to develop their study skills'. “14

Hence the teacher should be conscientious and cautious in choosing the task for language learners and should judge clearly the utility of a task to the learners before assigning them any task.

An article published in The Hindu, "New Directions in English Studies" by Padmini Devarajan (March 6, 2001) revealed some information about a symposium held in Hyderabad. At the symposium Professor Yasmeen Lukmani favoured the improvement in the writing skill. She felt that the current trends in research in ELT should ultimately lead to improve academic writing in general”. And the Vice-Chancellor of CIEFL, Prof. Pramod Talgeri promoted “serious thinking about English studies, to evolve training programmes and courses at the primary or secondary level.” Among the recommendations of the symposium it was also mentioned that “Provision should be made for conducting workshops, field work and formal courses for college teachers to handle efficiency courses in advance applied skills such as writing reports”, hence the importance of the skills in making the learners proficient in English language was being realized.
On 'language and literature' controversy Devarajan points out at the symposium that "On the debate of language versus literature, all agreed that neither could function in mutually exclusive pockets." S. Chona, principal of Delhi - Public School (DPS), and a recipient of Padma Shri said in an interview published in Education Times (3rd September 2001) that "Emphasis should be laid on teaching languages – English and Indian...Focus should also be laid on the study of literature." Hence, teaching of English language and literature are considered to be an integral part of the curriculum.

Another fact worthy of attention is the universal acceptance of the occupational goal of language learning. For instance a dialogue published in an article – 'The English For Different Occasions' (Competition Success Review - Booklet, June 2001) highlights the same fact. The dialogue is as follows:

Sarita: English being one of the working languages of the U.N.O, the English knowing Indians have a very bright scope of getting jobs in the U.N.O offices and agencies.

Sonia: You are correct as a matter of fact, there are more Indians employed in the United Nations Organisation and its agencies than their share.
I conducted a questionnaire (see appendix) based study on a sample of graduation 1st year students of Women's College (A.M.U.) on 7th March, 2000. The questionnaire was divided into three sections and all the three sections aimed at assessing the level of interest students had in literature. However, the third section of the questionnaire especially aimed at finding out what according to the students / respondents were the goals of ELT in India. Each section of the questionnaire had ten questions. Out of the total of 80 students (see table 1.4), 77.5% of the students found stories in *A Complete Course in Written English*, (Book four) edited by R. J. Dixon to be interesting. 67.5% of the students felt that items of literature like poems, plays etc should be prescribed in place of items like modals, participles, gerunds etc. 76.25% of the students wanted items of literature to be retained in the syllabus, whereas 72.5% of students felt stories had helped them understand language better. And 56.25% students felt that the most interesting item on the syllabus was the stories. On the basis of the present study it can be concluded that much more success can be achieved regarding the ELT objectives in India if proper methodology and strategies are employed in teaching of English through literature.
The third section of the questionnaire resulted in varied responses (see table 1.5). 16.25% students felt the goal of ELT in India is to enable students to speak English properly, 7.5% felt the goal of ELT in India is to make students acquire certain level of expertise in writing English, 28.75% students felt the goal of ELT in India is to enable students understand English, 2.5% students felt the goals of ELT in India are to teach students to speak and write English properly. One student (1.25%) felt that the goal of ELT was to make students speak and understand English properly and another student (1.25%) felt it was to enable students to write and understand English. While the majority 43.75% respondents thought that the goals of ELT in India are to enable students to write, speak and understand English well. If one would be able to understand and speak English well then one would be able to read it well too. Students were not completely aware about the goals of ELT in India. Same is the case with intermediate level students. Given below are two tables as samples of the attitudes of language learners regarding literature and language:
**TABLE 1.4**

DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE ON THE SCALE MEASURING THE LEVEL OF INTEREST IN LITERATURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Students who find stories interesting</th>
<th>% age</th>
<th>No. of Students who feel items of literature like poems should be prescribed %</th>
<th>% age</th>
<th>No. of Students who want the stories to be retained in the syllabus</th>
<th>% age</th>
<th>No. of Students who feel stories have helped them to understand language better</th>
<th>% age</th>
<th>No. of students who find stories to be most interesting item on the syllabus</th>
<th>% age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>76.25%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56.25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Survey*
### Table 1.5

**MEASUREMENT OF THE SAMPLE OF GOALS OF ELT IN INDIA BY THE STUDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Students who feel goal of ELT in India is to teach students speak English (SE).</th>
<th>No. of students who feel goal of ELT in India is to enable students write English (WE)</th>
<th>No. of students who feel goal of ELT in India is to enable students understand English (UE)</th>
<th>No. of students who feel goals of ELT in India are to teach students to speak &amp; write English properly</th>
<th>No. of students who feel goals of ELT in India are to enable students to write &amp; understand English properly</th>
<th>No. of students who feel goals of ELT are to enable students to speak, write &amp; understand English.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.25%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28.75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Field Survey
With reference to table 1.4 it can be concluded that the English language learners are quite unaware about the goals of English language teaching in India. Most of the time their attitude towards General English course is also very depressing as they just want to get passing marks in the subject. This kind of a laid back attitude from the side of Indian language learners also drops the motivation level of the teachers towards teaching the English language. Perhaps to a certain extent items on the syllabi are to be blamed. To improve the language skills of the learners and create an awareness regarding ELT goals amongst them, they should be provided with such items featuring in their General English course that they take interest in learning the language.

However, the language learners of the present times do not need English to hone their sensibilities. They have very practical requirements towards language learning. They need English to get access to the resources of knowledge available in English Language.
According to Zeenat B. Merchant (1999), "The Ministry of Education, Government of India has emphasized the study of English for practical purposes, saying that the average Indian student today needs English for specific purposes, that is, to be able to follow a lecture given in English, to be able to read textbooks in his subject in English and to express his ideas in English." In order to perform all these functions the Indian student needs to master the four skills of language.

Dusbange (1999) says, "There are four aspects which are involved in the study of a language. They are: the Semantic aspect, the Phonetic aspect, The Graphic aspect and the Phonetic-cum -Graphic aspect. The semantic aspect refers to the understanding of meaning. The phonetic aspect deals with the spelling and pronunciation. The graphic aspect refers to the reading aspect of the language. In the study of a language all these aspects function in co-ordination with each other. With reference to these aspects we can draw the following aims:

1-To teach pupils to understand spoken and written language;
2-To teach them to acquire language skills;
3-To teach them to speak the language; and
The Indian English language learners need to be provided with this kind of an assistance so that proper enhancement of their language skills can take place.

The tertiary goal of ELT in India should be to provide the learners with competent teachers, user friendly classroom materials and such evaluation tools which would easily assess the progress of the English language learners. But in the light of Dusbange's opinion it can be said that the actual goal of ELT in India is to help learners enhance the four languages skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

After identifying the goals of English Language Teaching and also noting that literary text is often employed for the ELT purpose, the next step for us is to find out whether it is really possible to teach language through literature. The language-literature controversy has added to the confusion that literature should be kept out of the language class. The ESP has taken the issue to the extreme. But in the next chapter the meeting grounds between language and literature will be explored and it will also be seen how fit literary texts can be when employed for the ELT purpose.
References:


Ibid. p. 38.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.


