CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION: AIM AND SCOPE
Chapter - 1

1.1 AIM AND SCOPE

This thesis is designed to discover and organise skill-based and purpose-specific materials in order to make the teaching and learning of English language interesting and fruitful both for the teachers and learners at the undergraduate level in India. It is hoped that the learners and teachers of English will be benefited by the materials provided in the thesis. They will also find the techniques for using those materials useful. Aim and scope of the thesis are cited below:

(i) training the Indian students in listening/speaking/reading/ and writing with a reasonable degree of accuracy, fluency, intelligibility and social acceptability.

(ii) developing the comprehension skill of learners.

(iii) promoting the learners' ability of listening accurately, speaking fluently, reading comprehensively and writing appropriately.

(iv) improving the language skills of those students also who learn English for specific purposes (ESP).

(v) maintaining an internationally acceptable standard of English language. The teaching of internationally acceptable and intelligible English language is necessary in Indian colleges and universities.

(vi) Today English is the only language which is spoken all over the world and in India it is used as a second language. Its main function is
communication. Students seeking employment after graduation often find themselves unable to make their presence felt and succeed in times of cut-throat competition because of their poor communication skills. Therefore, ESP courses are designed to serve these students who need English for specific purposes. It is used to refer to the teaching and learning of a second language for a clearly utilitarian purpose. So one of the aims of the thesis is to help these learners improve their speaking skill which is required for their future career along with their present academic life.

(vii) ESP covers a very wide range, such as vocational/occupational/and academic courses. The scope of the thesis is limited to the study of academic requirements of the learners. It also includes the organisational skills which underlie listening/speaking/reading/writing and emphasise their relationship. A sense of organisation, appropriate vocabulary, technical competence and comprehension in both written and spoken forms are sought during this course of English. These skills can be achieved successfully by constant practice.

(viii) In India majority of students come to the English classroom with a background of different Indian languages as their mother tongue. When they have to face the modern world of competitions, they find it difficult to compete and succeed in getting their ambitions of life fulfilled. ESP is the best suited answer to such problems. English
teachers can match their study plans with various subjects offered by the learners and fulfil their demands.

1.2 PLAN OF STUDY

Chapter 1 forms the introduction of the thesis.

Chapter 2 deals with the skill-based materials. The first skill taken up is listening. The first step towards proper understanding of speech is proper listening. Proper listening is also essential for intelligible speech. The listening skill involves recognizing, comprehending and interpreting a vocal utterance.

Listening and speaking skills are inter-related. Both these skills are needed for interaction among people. As Gray, G.W. writes, "Listening occurs only in the occasion of speech". Speech is meant to be listened to. In short, speech and listening are to be dealt with simultaneously.

Speech is a mode of communication which includes specific and not so specific meanings of any conversation which takes place between the communicator and the listener. The specific responses which are created in the listening process and in the minds of speakers and listeners are also an integral part of speaking process.

In the process of speaking and listening exercises, listeners should be able to recognise speech sounds and pronounce them correctly. They

---

should also be able to understand the relationships, distinctions and functions of these sounds in various situations for perfect communication.

Teaching of speaking skill is considered to be one of the difficult tasks in language teaching. The main objective behind teaching this skill is to enable the students express themselves in the target language to cope with basic interactive skills, like exchanging greetings, thanks, apologies, etc.

Learners are provided with enough materials in chapter-2 of the thesis for ample practice in listening through ear training exercises. A number of exercises are also provided for them to listen and repeat to improve their fluency in speech. The materials include the segmental and supra-segmental features of the language, e.g.

A. World lists containing all English segments, i.e. consonants, pure vowels and diphthongs of R.P. of England.

B. A list of words including simple words, compound words and words involving functional stress change [e.g. 'Object (n.) - Ob'ject (v.)].

C. A list of sentences for practising stress and intonation patterns in English. The sentences chosen for this purpose are related to everyday life and include all major sentence-types, e.g. statements, questions, (Wh-questions and yes/no questions) imperatives and exclamations.
In the entire process, reading is one of the most important skills in learning a language. It can be reading for pleasure or for obtaining certain information from the text. Though these aspects appear to be independent of each other but inherently they are allied with each other. Reading for pleasure indirectly means acquiring certain information and simultaneously reading shorter text for certain information also implies certain information. In short, reading for pleasure or for eliciting certain information appear to be independent of each other but they have basically the same function—i.e. acquiring knowledge.

In order to develop the reading exercises and to comprehend the text fully, care should be taken to illustrate the text in a logical way. Grellet, F. explains it in the following words,

“Reading is an active skill .... This should therefore be taken into consideration when devising reading comprehension exercises. It is possible, for instance, to develop the students’ powers of inference through systematic practice, or introduce questions which encourage students to anticipate the content of a text from its title and illustrations or the end of a story from the preceding paragraphs”².

Reading is also a form of experience that modifies personality. Learners comprehend accurately, interpret broadly and apply what they learn wisely, they acquire new understandings, broader interests and deeper appreciation after developing their reading skill.

The reading skill, once developed, is the one which can be most easily maintained at a high level by the students themselves without further help from a teacher. Through it, they can increase their knowledge and understanding of the culture of the speakers of the language, their ways of thinking, their contemporary activities and their contributions to many fields of artistic and intellectual endeavour.

Reading skill can be related to the listening, speaking and writing skills in the following manner:

A. Reading and listening skill can be connected by comparing an article and a news-bulletin, using recorded information to solve a written problem, matching opinions and text, etc.

B. Reading and speaking can be linked by discussions, debates, appreciations, etc.

C. Reading and writing can be linked by summarizing, adding information elicited from a letter, book, or magazine, note making and note-taking in the classrooms.

Among the four skills of language teaching, writing skill is the last. English is one of those languages which has a written and standard form. Advance learners of English can easily understand and speak English but perhaps they have difficulty to express themselves on paper because of their inability in organising ideas and finally, they get annoyed. Writing is not an easy task. And it is necessary for a good writer to have perfection
in the organisation of ideas in a fluent, spontaneous and lucid way. He should be able to write without any confusion and ambiguity in the meaning. Writing skill can be achieved by constant practice. So enough comprehension exercises and writing assignments are provided in Chapter-2 for writing practice.

The other area of concern in the thesis is the purpose-based materials. These materials are provided in chapter-3 of the thesis to teach ESP. The provided materials take care of the language needs of the students of various subjects. Needs of teaching English for special purposes are steadily growing. So the materials provided for the students of Science, Arts, Social-Science and Commerce are determined by their language needs. These materials focus on such exercises and activities as essay-writing, report-writing (e.g. describing an experiment), note-taking (especially from lectures), etc. These activities are part of Science, Arts, Social-Science and Commerce studies but they are carried out in English. Practising these activities are an excellent way of developing command over English language skills. And for proper learning of English language, it is essential to achieve perfection in all the four skills.

Chapter-4 is designed to provide the teachers with some practical techniques and a few suggestions to teach ESP and the four skills of English language in Indian colleges and universities. These techniques would help teachers make their teaching effective, meaningful and enjoyable. This chapter is not based on any particular method or approach
since there cannot be only one way of effective teaching. Various techniques and suggestions are offered because of their practical utility for a wide range of teachers who teach English in different situations. Many techniques for teaching ESP and language skills are adopted from different methods of English language teaching and teachers can apply any one of the suitable techniques according to their classroom situation(s) and purpose of teaching English keeping in view the learners’ aim of learning English, for example:

A. One of the purposes of learning a second language is to be able to read its literature and translate it into the other. If learners are learning English for the development of reading and writing abilities, teachers should concentrate on Grammar-Translation Method of language teaching and should follow any one of the following techniques:

(a) Reading comprehension questions
(b) Antonyms/synonyms
(c) Fill-in the blanks
(d) Memorization
(e) Composition

B. Language is primarily speech which can be developed by thorough practice. So communicative approach to language teaching is very important for appropriate teaching of language skills. Students should be provided enough opportunities to express their ideas in English and errors should be ignored in the initial stages by the
teachers. Scrambled sentences, role-play activities, repetition drills, etc., can be used fruitfully for this purpose.

C. Followers of the direct method teach all language skills from the beginning of their teaching. Hence, teachers can use direct method for teaching language skills and ESP by implementing (any of) the following techniques:

(a) Reading aloud
(b) Question and answer exercise
(c) Dictation
(d) Conversation practice
(e) Paragraph writing, etc.

These techniques are dealt with briefly in chapter-4 and some other useful techniques for effective teaching of language skills and ESP are also provided in the same chapter of the thesis.

All the suggested ideas and techniques will hopefully help the teachers to be more aware of what and how they should teach English and it is also hoped that teachers would be benefited from this work and would feel a remarkable improvement in their language teaching efficiencies if they carefully use the suggested ideas and techniques in an organised manner.

Finally, Chapter-5 of the thesis offers some useful guidelines to the learners of English in order to handle the materials provided in chapter-2 and 3 of the thesis. Different techniques are provided in this chapter
for the study of language skills and ESP. For example, to become an efficient reader, the students should know certain specific reading techniques. These techniques would contribute to build up learners' confidence by showing them how much they can learn simply by looking at some prominent parts of an article.

A few useful techniques are designed for classroom use and also for individual students. Students are guided to use different techniques, drills and language clubs effectively for learning English.

The students come together to participate in discussions in the classrooms during which they interpret, analyse and argue for learning language skills and achieve their aim of learning. For example, to improve speaking skill, students should engage themselves in classroom discussions and debates as much as possible. Students of other subjects can learn English by describing any of their works. Since it is important to learn the use of English in different contexts, students are asked to use their English language skills in learning purpose specific materials. While learning, learners should form the habit of using English instead of their native language. They can do it by applying any of the following techniques provided in chapter-5:

(a) Memorization
(b) Repetition
(c) Imitation
(d) Question and answer drill
(e) Complete the dialogue, etc.
It is hoped that the techniques offered in the final chapter of the thesis would be profusely beneficial for the students for learning ESP and all the four English language skills. The materials (i.e. skill-based and purpose-based), methods and techniques for teaching and handling these materials by the teachers and students of English in Indian colleges and universities offered in the thesis will be immensely useful for the English teachers, students, material producers, course designers, research scholars and language institutes. If used in the desired manner, these materials will definitely improve the written and spoken English of Indian undergraduates so that they can speak English with fluency, mutual intelligibility and social acceptability and write English with normal appropriacy at the national and international levels. The aim is to improve the communication ability of these learners in India which will hopefully be achieved by proper use of the materials provided in the thesis in the suggested manner.