Chapter Two

Language, Socialization, Education & Culture

2.1 Introduction

Any study of an effective teaching programme must begin with the role the subject to be taught, plays in the development of the society which endeavours to learn it. So the study of teaching/learning language must begin with an account of the role that language has played in the development of man, whether it be the mother tongue/second language or foreign language.

Social scientists, anthropologists, linguists and teachers—all agree that natural language is central to the whole process of human activity. It is instrumental in the growth of man as a social being by enabling him to record, interpret and extend his experience. Man sorts out his universe and gives intelligent direction to his life through language. Just as D A Wilkins has recorded, “Our entire elaborate social structure is mediated through language and it is inconceivable that we could have constructed so complex a social interaction if we had not had spoken and latterly, written language at our disposal” (1).

Language is the main channel through which a child learns to act as a member of the society, in and through various social groups, the family, the neighborhood and so on and to adopt its ‘culture’, its modes of thoughts and action, its beliefs
and values as Mengham, in his seminal work, *Language: An intellectual Delight* has said: “it is after all, certain, that the symbiosis of language and mind is profound enough to have played a crucial role in the physiological development of the brain, not only with regard to the evolution of the species, but also in terms of the arrangement of brain functions in the early life of each individual human” (2).

As the most powerful instrument that man has ever invented, language is highly flexible, characterized by variation in every conceivable dimension that is adapted to all sorts of circumstances. All natural languages have the potential for being developed for the purposes that human society and human brain can conceive. They grow and develop to suit the functions in newer contexts and newer settings. One has to fully agree with Rod Mengham that, “Language is so subtle and complicated an instrument that the multiplicity of its use is often lost sight of” (32). Every language plays its role in developing human resources in the development of the creativity of human beings in their ingenuity and adaptability. Based on this discrimination language has been considered by S. K. Verma as “Central to the whole process of education and is the principal means of cultural transmission” (41). The communicational and cultural functions of language are not only limited to the contemporaneous world, but also extends to the past and future world. On the wider significance of language, in the cultural development of societies Mengham says: “[...] the secret purpose of language may not be to further communication between the living and living, but between the living and the dead” (50). J F Wallwork, too expresses the same opinion
about the relation between language and culture thus: “To some extent we control our present in the light of our past. A primitive people preserve its history, laws and traditions by oral accounts handed down from generation to generation” (6).

It has also been widely recognized that the fundamental aim of all education system is to provide the climate and facilities to follow for all individuals to relish the full potential of their capabilities in every appropriate way, both for the enrichment of their personal lives and for the benefit of the society as a whole. Wilkins writes: “If we are to understand the process by which man communicates with one another we must look closely at human capacity for language and at the particular qualities of language which enables it to play so powerful a role within us and between us” (7).

A very keen observation of the phenomenon of language growth, especially at the early childhood, will provide a deeper insight into this. No other living species has the anatomy and brain mechanisms that humans use to produce speech. No one can disagree with F.C. Stork who said: “Without language, of course, human life and civilization would not be as they are today. In our society, we are as dependent on language as primitive man was, on his weapons and tools” (1). Halliday, observing man’s progressive acquisition of language, comments:

a child learning other things through language is at the same time, building up a picture of the reality that is around him and inside him. In
this process, which is also a social process, the construal reality is inseparable from the construal of the semantic system in which the reality is encoded. In this sense, language is a shared meaning potential, at once both a part of experience and inter subjective interpretation of experience.

Hence, it is an indisputable fact that language teaching has been a significant part of a wider whole, the education of the individual. Learning experiences provided as a part of the formal education system, in the classroom as well as the unsystematic and unorganized experiences that one gets from the society, contribute more or less equally to the development of the individual. Whatever are these experiences, they involve language use. Therefore, the relationship of language, society and culture is of vital significance in any education system.

Language has the wonderful faculty of flexibility, to suit the communicational needs of the society; whatever is its need. About the integral relation of language and life Stork remarks:” Language is so much a part of our every day life that we usually take it for granted and seldom stop to think what remarkable skills are involved in its use” (10).

Language, as a means of communication, is purely a human phenomenon; which distinguishes him from all other species. All normal human beings acquire language at an early age. Language grows as man grows and societies grow; it grows to meet the complex needs of the society. The individual can grow only if his language grows with the growth of the society and its language.
2.2. **Language as power centers-socio-economic technological, political, cultural and religious**

Ever since the emergence of language, it has been serving the interests of the most powerful concentrations of religious cultural socio-economic and political powers. The formation of various social groups has played a predominant role in both constructing and maintaining power relations. This phenomenon is ever in progress. Without an awareness of this, any study of language will be incomplete. Mengham says: “The connection between language distribution and the spread of religion needs to be enlarged to confront the realities of power relations and the evolution of political structure and social systems” (45).

All living languages have been found to grow and change to meet the requirements of such powerful social groups. Historical antecedents have played, a decisive role, in determining these power concentrations, and regional, national, and international spread and status of languages. Every language and language variant encompasses and helps to define a new and socio-culturally different way of thinking and relating to the natural and social universe.

Even in its simplest terms, language imperialism involves the transfer of a dominant language to other peoples. The transfer is essentially a demonstration of power – traditionally military power. In its modern context, it is military as well as economic power and aspects of dominant culture, usually transferred along with language. In view of the prestige of the dominant power and its culture, the transfer may not be imposed, but actually be demanded by the people who adopt the dominant language. It is likely to be regarded as an intrinsically
superior language and accorded alleged virtues. John Haycraft in his famous work *An Introduction to English Language Teaching* says: “[…]language is the unique expression of an historical development of a special social awareness and or particular ways of thought; learning and teaching it will necessarily involve adapting to culture, attitudes of which it is an essential fact (1).

During the 6th century B.C, Rome became one of the most important states of Europe. In the subsequent years, it became the unquestioned master of Italy. During the Roman Republic and Roman Empire, Latin was the spoken language of the regions, which were controlled by the empire.

From about 500 to 1500 AD Latin was the principal language of the church as well as of administration, theology, philosophy, science, history and biography. When Rome fell Latin remained the literary language of the medieval world, until it was superseded by the Roman languages it has generated and by other modern languages. After renaissance, the writing of Latin was increasingly confined to the narrow limits of certain ecclesiastical and academic publications. The influence of Latin can be considered the best example of language imperialism. Like wise certain socio-political and economic developments made certain languages spread widely and assume influence over other languages as Mengham points out: “The link between money and words, always important has come to form an absolutely central strand in the fabric of modern society (58). Charles Barber, the Historian of the English Language, portrays Language hierarchy thus:
Latin was the language of the church of scholarship and international communication. For a period beginning in 1000 AD, French took over the position enjoyed by Latin, not only in a major part of Europe, but even in England itself. In the thirteenth century, French was still being spoken at the English court, and literature was being written in French for the nobility of England; but it is this century that sees the tipping of the balance away from French and back to England. (156)

In this shifting linguistic prominence, “the importance of French and Latin began to wane and the need of a new standard in England emerged” (Blake 10). Within a few decades English was in use as a national language in England. It was used in different activities as teaching, bureaucracy and trade, though there was no proper standardization of the language in its written form. Blake further says: “The period from 1400 to 1660 was concerned with the establishment of a written standard throughout the century” (12). This period marks the simultaneous spread of language everywhere. In course of time, the accidents of history made English the most prominent language of the world.

At the dawn of the twenty first century we are entering a hitherto inexperienced stage in the technologically motivated expansion of the linguistic resources of English and in the immediate future there is likely to be more dramatic developments, unprecedented in the history of any language. Unless and until our young generation can cope with the emerging situation, they will
be denied the opportunities they deserve. The implications of the present study is to make an analysis of the present academic scene in English Language Teaching at the tertiary level in the colleges affiliated to Kerala with a view to developing strategies to evolve an effective language teaching system to equip the learners fit for the emerging socio-cultural and economic system the world over.

2.3 English Language Teaching / Learning In The Globalised Context

The world today has realized the importance of English not only as a language of commerce, science, and technology but also as an international language of communication – an integral part of the new, complex socio-linguistic setting. In many nations, most of the education at school level and university level is through the medium of English; in some others, it is the main second language. The power bases for English today exist on almost all continents. Gerry Knowles rightly observes that, “English has changed in the course of the present century from being the language of the British Empire to the international language of communication” (162). English has today acquired internationally and intra-nationally unique roles, which no other language in the world enjoys. David Crystal in his seminal work English as a Global Language (1997) points out, “A language does not become a global language because of its intrinsic structural properties, or because of the size of its vocabulary, or because it has been a vehicle of great literature in the past, or because it was once associated with great culture or religion (9). He further observes, “A language
has traditionally become an international language for one chief reason: the power of its people—especially their political and military power. The explanation is the same throughout history” (9).

Consequent on the recent developments in economic, socio-political, and cultural domains brought about by unprecedented scientific and technological advancement, the intensification of world-wide social relations links distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring far away and vice versa.

The spread of English started at a higher pace at the end of the nineteenth century. Leonard Bloomfield, the well-known linguist, sees that “A language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country” (57). Sharon Goodman and David Gradol describe the development towards globalization thus:

By the end of the nineteenth century there began a process of global restructuring, of a change in the social and economic relations among the peoples of the world. This process continues today, and is affecting the lives of an increasing proportion of the world’s population, some in a positive way, but many negatively. The global pattern of language loss, and new forms of social inequality within countries, must be seen as a part of this greater process of globalization – a term that embraces both economic and cultural spheres and that expresses the increasing interdependence of geographically diverse countries and
peoples. Indeed the term globalisation is often used to express a changing perception of the world as a smaller, more compressed space, in which some people, at least, can project their legacy and will, over large distances. (206)

More native speakers than any other language except, presumably, North Chinese speak English; if we count the important factor of foreign speakers, English is the most widely spread of languages. Lorlto Todd is of opinion that, “The English language in its many forms is today a medium for speakers in every continent. It is used by people who are multilingual and by those who have lost their ancestral mother tongue” (30).

The language today plays a vital role in promoting transportation, tourism, study abroad, international business, entertainment, scientific and technological research, politics and world peace. The linguistic and cultural consequences of imperialism have changed the global scene; and English plays a key role in the global restructuring of social and economic relations. Robert Clairborne observes:

   English is the lingua franca of scientists, of air pilots and traffic controllers around the world, of students hitchhiking around Europe, and of drop outs mediating in India or Nepal. There has never been a ‘world language’, nor is there likely to be, but English is the nearest thing to it that has ever existed. (1)
According to Donald D. Hook, “Geographical extent, plays a significant part in languages’ world-wide importance and here English wins over all others. There simply is no other language that is spoken as an official or semi-official language in 80 or more countries on all continents, as a first and second language, by more people, than English.” (36). According to Loretto Todd, “It has become a truism of contemporary descriptions of English that it is the most widely used language the world has ever known” (30). About the unprecedented linguistic situation that English enjoys today, a British council publication observes that, “the predominant position currently enjoyed by English is a historical contingency arising from the mercantile and colonial expansion of British empire which was followed by American economic and technological hegemony” (3).

Braj B. Kachru, who has made an in depth study of the features of the spread of English across the continents says:

Worldwide there are over 1400 million people living in countries where English has official status. One out of five of the world’s population speaks English to some level of competence. Demands from the other four-fifths is increasing […] By the year 2000, it is estimated that over one million people will be learning English. English is the main language of books, news papers, air ports and air-traffic control, international business and academic conferences,
science, technology, diplomacy, sport, international competitions, pop-music and advertising. (1)

The recent technological advancement and the development of the phenomenon known as information super highway have further been instrumental in enhancing the worldwide use of English. Gerry knowles, in his well-known book, *A cultural History of the English language*, (1997) observes:

As the computer culture has extended into large-scale databases, electronic mail (e-mail) and so on, the expansion of English has followed, and the technology is so designed that the user needs to interact in English. Individual programmes can of course use other languages, but the programme itself will almost certainly use English based commands. Where as in previous technological revolutions, the technology has had to be adopted for different languages; in this case, the languages other than English have to be interfaced with the resident language of technology. (160)

Three quarters of the world’s mail and its telexes and cables are in English. So are more than half the world’s technical and scientific periodicals: it is the language of technology from Silicon Valley to Shanghai. English is the medium for 80 percent of the information stored in the world’s computers. Nearly half of all business deals in Europe are conducted in English. Lorelto Todd further relates, “The global electronic media, however, have been
dominated by English speaking interests from their very beginnings in the eighteenth century” (30).

The recent high-tech revolution has brought with it a socio cultural and economic change at a hitherto unknown and unprecedented speed, the result of which is manifest in every walk of human life. The peoples of the world are now knit together so closely on the economic plane that they cannot do without active and massive international trade and investment on a worldwide scale. The case of communication between different parts of the world and different parts of society afforded by such technology is leading to changed social relationships, to new social groupings and to altered perceptions of time and space. The world is experiencing a smaller, more compressed place – a kind of global village. International travel and tourism has changed even the habit of eating, drinking and dressing.

The spread of English across the globe as a natural extension of globalization of economy is the result of an economic framework provided by international capitalism. In the changed global scene, the importance of English is beyond description. That may be why Braj. B. Kachru has said, “[…] knowing English is like possessing the fabled Alladin’s lamp which permits one to open, as it were, the linguistic gates to international business, technology, science and travel”(1).

Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian novelist in *African writers and English* comments: “Colonialism in Africa disrupted many things, but it did create big
political units where there were small scattered ones before [...] and it gave them a language with which to talk to another” (429). On the other hand, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o says “language and culture (through English education) were taking us further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our world to other worlds” (436). Ngugi examines the relationship of language to human culture and states: “Language, any language has a dual character: It is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture” (436).

2.4 English in India

No other language in our country has been asked to do so many things, in so many situations, remote from one another, both geographically and culturally, as English. In terms of the number of English speakers, the Indian sub-continent ranks third in the world, after the USA and U.K. This is largely due to the special position which the language has come to hold, in our country, where it has been estimated that some four or five percent of the people now make regular use of English – over forty million people towards the end of the last century. It is no longer an unhealthy hangover of colonialism. Now as Braj B.Kachhhruru has observed in The Alchemy of English, “English excels other world languages” and “is a tool of power, domination and elitist identity and of communication across the continents” (4). An examination of its history of England in the Indian soil will be quite interesting, for it is imperative in understanding the diffusion and impact of English, in our educational, cultural,
scientific, technological and economic transformations. English language teaching in particular and education in general, is as much a political and a pedagogic act shaped by a complex mix of historical, social, economic, cultural and demographic forces. The history of English in India is in close conformity with the changing phases of these forces. The history of English in India can be divided into three phases, each showing independent developments. The first phase, known as the missionary phase, begins in 1542, upon the arrival of St. Francis Xavier. In subsequent years Christian missionaries of various persuasions, volunteered to come to India to proselytize. In addition to the missionaries, there were committed social workers, in various parts of the country, especially in Bengal, who were convinced that better things could be achieved through knowledge of English and the so called English education. The missionary education continued in the post independence period in the form of denominational education run by indigenous as well as foreign religious societies.

Interestingly enough the second phase of English language in India is the result of the demand of Indians for English studies. This, according to Kachru, has been “considered vital by some scholars who believe that the spread of English was the demand of the local people and their willingness to learn it.” (35). A very significant fact about the emergence of English as a language and medium of education is that the early English merchants came across “the ancient civilizations, which they recognized at least as advanced as their own. In India for example the interest taken in Sanskrit by sir William Jones in 1780s led
to intense research in Europe into the historical relationships among languages and eventually to the re-construction of Indo-European” (Knowles 140). Thus, the popular belief that foreign rulers for carrying on their government business imposed English on a subject people is untrue. A great social reformer like Raja Ram Mohan Roy persuaded English East India Company to give instruction in English since it was the only language to allow young Indians gain access to the scientific knowledge of the west. Commenting on the emergence of English predominance in India Braj B Kachru says: “Roy’s proposal set off a controversy about Indian educational policy that resulted in the third phase. This phase began after 1765 and resulted in a controversy over the merits of different educational systems for India (South Asian, 35). A P R Howatt has recorded, “Published in Serampur in 1797 and printed by the author John Miller himself, ‘The Tutor’ is possibly the earliest example of a book written to teach English in what wouldtoday be called the third world. It is one of Alston’s most fascinating discoveries, the only known copy being in the library of Calcutta University” (67).

The first regular British contact with the sub-continent came in 1600 with the formation of the British East India Company by a group of London merchants who were granted a trading monopoly in the area by Queen Elizabeth I. The company established its first trading station at Surat in 1612, and by the end of the century, others were in existence at Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. English trade followed by colonial and imperial expansion spread English throughout India. During the period of the establishment of British government
in India, there was the implementation by the British, under Lord Bentinck, ‘of educational instruction’ in English, later on shaped by Macaulay in his “Minutes of Indian Education”. Macaulay had penned his 1835 education minute, as the law member of the Supreme council of the Governor General, Lord William Bentinck and as chairman of the general committee of public instruction. According to Barun D E, Macaulay summarily dismissed Indian languages as being “too fantastic and obsolete to be objects, for the patronage of the colonial government” (45). The education minutes, says Mark Tully, “set the pattern for development of English in India, a pattern that survives to some extent, to this day. It was intended to be a language of the Indian elite and it still is” (157). Macaulay’s demand was for a “class of persons, Indians in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinion in morals and intellect” (Kachru 68). His demand was effectively consolidated in 1844 by Lord Hardinge’s public announcement of the British policy giving preference to Indians with English education for government jobs. In 1854, the education dispatch absorbed both utilitarian and liberal educational aspects of this policy in a concrete programme for higher education. In 1813 the charter of the East India Company was renewed for another twenty years, and an annual sum was set aside for ‘the revival and improvement of literature, and for the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India. What is significant is that at that time no mention was made of the language to be used for that education. That was left ambiguous. Then along came Macaulay’s famous recommendations of
“All funds”, he said, “would be utilized for imparting to the native population a knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of English language” (Quoted in Rama Mathew158).

In course of time, the system of education gave a new direction to elementary education through the introduction of instruction at regular and fixed hours, a broad curriculum, and a clear-cut class system. The missionaries also stimulated the learning of Indian languages. Books were also printed in different vernaculars. It was during this period that the broadening of the study of science and humanities became a significant movement in Europe. These subjects were also taught in India in the newly started schools through the medium of English called “English education”. The language used was essentially the same as that used in England.

Although Macaulay’s Minutes decided the content and medium of instruction, the dissemination of education remained unsolved. As a possible solution, Sir Charles Wood chartered a policy in 1854 that English could be the medium of instruction at higher levels of education whereas the Indian regional languages could be the medium at lower levels. However, admission to University education depended on a sound knowledge of English and consequently the secondary schools offered English as an optional medium of instruction. This marked the growth of secondary and university education. The Hunter commission of 1882 recommended the higher priority of primary education through regional languages.
“Whatever is the attitude of Indian nationals towards English language” says Jerry Knowles, “By the nineteenth century, English had become the language of a world-wide empire and it was beginning to be influenced by its world-wide context (139).

Lord Curson’s resolution of 1904 recognized the extension of primary education as the duty of the states. In spite of the efforts of the British government, various missionary organizations and social workers who were inspired by national movement, the achievement of education on the eve of independence fell far short of the professed goal. Quite a majority of Indians remained illiterate.

Since the end of the colonial period and the dawn of independence, there has always existed the tendency to scale down, even to completely eradicate ‘education through English’ as it was viewed as a relic of the British School and colonialism. A section of highly influential Indians went to the extreme of believing that education obtained through the language of our erstwhile oppressors was a sure sign of unpatriotic.

Consequently, English lost its supremacy, and along with it lost its unique privileges. One of the early acts of the National Government in 1947 was to set up the official language commission. But the socio-political situation in the country necessitated the retention of English for all official purposes until January 1965, under article 342 (2), when it could be replaced by Hindi in due course. V K Gokak in his well-known book, English in India (1964) records,
“However, successive committees set up to investigate future language planning for the country wielded considerable influence to alter this arrangement” (15). The role of English, in post independent India varied from one state to another. In spite of the regional differences in the place of English in the school system, English is taught in every state as the main second language.

Three questions were posed in this connection. The first was concerned with the position of English to be assigned at various levels of education. The second question was the role of English, Hindi and regional languages in education. The last one was the model of English to be presented to Indian students and how that presentation could be made uniform and effective.

No proper solution could be found to these issues, the language problem in free India became an explosive issue and the govt. of India initiated various efforts to solve it.

The first step in this direction was the appointment of the official language committee by the president of India on 7 June 1955 chaired by B.G. Kher. This committee recommended the continuance of English as the official language until Hindi took over. Article 343 (1) of the constitution of India specified that Hindi would ultimately take over the position of official language. However, owing to the language controversy in various parts of the country, the parliament passed the official language act in May 1963. In order to reassure the non-Hindi speaking people this Act was made into law in 1967. The Act, according to Kachru, specified that “Notwithstanding the period of fifteen years
from the commencement of this constitution the English language may as from
the appointed day continue to be used, in addition to Hindi, for all the official
purposes of the union for which it was being used [...]” (90). It has been clearly
specified by Kotahri in his report of 1965 which reads:

The education commission of 1955 under the chairmanship
of H.N. Kunzru recommended that the change from English to an
Indian language as the medium of instruction at the university stage
should not be hastened and that if a change in the medium of
instruction from English to regional language is effected, English
should continue to be studied by all university students.
Subsequently the speech made by Prime Minister Jawaharlal
Nehru in parliament that English should continue to be an associate
official language at the centre, almost indefinitely, shows that there
was perfect awareness at higher levels, of the practical issues
related to language policy. (12)

Kothari commission of 1964, appointed to suggest measures to totally
restructure education, emphasized the inevitability of English as a library
language thus: “English should be the most useful library language in higher
education and our significant window on the world (12).

When in 1965; Hindi was proclaimed as the sole official language, the
Sasthri government was severely shaken by agitations. Only after students had
burnt themselves to death and a hundred rioters had been shot dead by police,
was it agreed that English should continue as an associate official language. In 1967, by the terms of the English language amendment bill, English was proclaimed ‘an alternative official or associate official language’ with Hindi, until such time, as all non-Hindi states had agreed to its being dropped.

On the cultural side, international and intra-national communication is possible only through English. Almost all our inter-state social communication is meted out through English. In fact, it is a unifying factor, uniting the different regions, speaking different languages into a single entity. Recent estimates show that in India over 30 million people use English as a matter of course. Rapid expansion of education during the past few decades has resulted in the diffusion of English bilingualism in India.

India is one of the leading countries in publishing books in English. It has recently been estimated, that, roughly one fifth of Indian newspapers (accounting for well over one fifth of circulation) and one third of all books published in India are in English. Apart from Hindi English is the only pan-Indian language available for use in broadcasting by all India Radio and in the widely expanded television network. Moreover, a considerable amount of creative writing in English has established major cultural claims for the language in the subcontinent, quite independently of further contact with the west. Electronic media, which play a significant role in education, have English as the medium for their educational programmes. In addition to this, western music and English feature films from different parts of the world find a significant place in the faires
that these media offer. Advertisement and publicity in these media and else where are mostly in English.

Indian literature in English has been recognized as an academic discipline and forms part of post graduate and doctoral courses in English in Indian universities.

Today, English is the medium of teaching / learning at various prestigious national institutions like I.I.Ts, I.C.M.R; C.S.I.R., N.C.E.R.T. and I.I.Ms It continues to be the only medium in the national fora. The competitive examinations conducted by various institutions of industry and businesses have only English as the medium of examination and interview. The proceedings of the Supreme Court are recorded in English under article 348 of the constitution. It continues to be the medium of national seminars, symposia, and academic discussions. Recently there has been a tremendous increase in the number of students enrolling themselves for various courses in science and technology, with a view to seeking employment abroad.

English is used very freely in Indian social circle as a language of social interaction at various formal and informal levels. More over the dialect of English known as Indian English has gained recognition of late as an efficient and stable variety existing in its own frame of reference and symbolizing a distinct socio cultural reality.
2.5 English in Kerala

In Kerala, English has assumed unprecedented importance over half a century because of its ever-increasing use in the higher disciplines of science and technology. The gradual increase for the past few years in the number of people going abroad for employment and higher studies has been instrumental in creating a higher level of awareness on the part of the educated Indians.

That is why students prefer to study through the medium of English, which opens for them the portals of a golden threshold.

2.6 English Language and Education in India/Kerala

The functions of institutions of higher education and the social development in a country are intimately related. As J A Farrant has rightly observed “education is a universal practice engaged in by societies at all stages of development” and that “it is society’s cultural reproductive system” (Principles 18) an agenda for education has always to be drawn on the basis of the challenges it has to meet in the contemporary world. In addition to helping the individual to grow and develop, education in general, and language education in particular, has always been found to initiate new knowledge and experience as it “describes the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties trained and skills developed”(19). Based on these realizations the prime consideration in any well-organized system of education is the learner, who takes the course and the courses are designed taking into consideration the student profiles.

The recent changes the world over, labelled as liberalisation, globalisation market economy, and consumerism have made education assume complex dimensions, for educational systems have become an integral
part of the socio-economic and political establishment. During the past two decades, higher educational institutions have gained an unprecedented diversity and significance, as these institutions are the driving force of economic growth and employment. In the fast changing world the capacity of a society depends on how best and fast it develops a system of education capable of transmitting, the accumulated experience – socio-cultural, scientific and technological. If higher education the world over has to respond effectively to the changes taking place across the globe, proficiency in English is considered most essential. English in its many forms, as we have examined, in the previous chapter, is today a medium for speakers all over the world. The modern technological advancement makes it inevitable to have a working knowledge of English which rules cyber space.

The role of English in India as a library language / link language / co-official language is no longer relevant in today’s context. The role of it as an effective vehicle for international communication, has changed its status and the language is undergoing change in an unprecedented speed and dimension, making teaching of English not simply teaching a language.

In the changed scenario, the conventional skills such as the ability to write prose are largely irrelevant. A change that has come into effect is to the effective communication of many users of English whose native language is not English.

Very many conventions of language use have been upset. Many of the conventional written texts are international. English teachers are well aware of these changes and they feel that a change in language teaching to suit it for the
requirements of today’s communicational needs is necessary. The English teachers at the University level feel it imperative to have a reassessment of the status of English in our educational system and a restructuring of English education. The teachers are well informed of the recent, worldwide boom that has brought about radical changes in the needs and interests of the language learners and the subsequent change in the English course materials and classroom interaction in other parts of India and abroad.

The teachers are also aware that India is expanding her role in the international world and English in the country is becoming more important than ever before. Socio-political context, ideological factors, technological development, all has been instrumental to changing ELT in other regions for the last two decades. So the long accepted assumptions about communicative competence, skill acquisition and indeed much of the ELT canon have been criticized for being sterile and ideologically laden. Almost all teachers feel that a radical change in every constituent of tertiary English education is inevitable, but most of them do not have a clear idea of the exact shape of the new course.

The present century witnesses a new stage in the development of the linguistic resources of English. This development came into effect at a hitherto unknown and unheard of speed and dimension. Assessing on the basis of the recent developments, what is going to happen will be more dramatic in its outcome. The first among those, who are to be aware of these changes, must be language teachers.
An effective language-teaching programme will precisely and explicitly state the relevant language proficiency of the learners at the end of the course. It will also state the quantum of language – the number of words and structures – the learner needs. Language skills/communication skills are directly related to the quantum of vocabulary and grammar, which the learner commands. The number of words and grammatical structures, at the command of the learner sets a limit on the skills, which he possesses. In preparing a curriculum for a language course, both these dimensions have to be considered. A good syllabus should state its objectives specifically and quantitatively. There should also be sufficient justification for the objectives the education programme has chosen, in terms of the individual needs and social requirements. The instructional objectives are to be realistic and achievable.

In the Universities of Kerala, the academic bodies concerned with the tertiary English language-teaching programme are silent or vague about the exact nature of skills and the quantum of language, which the learners are required to learn.

It is not that there has not been any attempt at academic reforms in English education in the universities of Kerala. An enquiry into the various attempts at academic reforms at the university level in Kerala reveals that the basic norms have not been maintained in any of the reforms. Any one who is properly aware of the basic functions of tertiary English education in Kerala knows well that it has drifted for decades without any proper direction given by regional, national or global philosophy or system. For the past half a century
there has not been any change in English education in the universities of Kerala. There has also been strong opinion that the quality of English education has been progressively deteriorating, on account of various constituents associated with language teaching, such as curriculum, syllabus, text books, classroom atmosphere, student variability, lack of teacher training, evaluation system etc.

Every one agrees that ELT at the tertiary level in the universities of Kerala has not responded positively to either global or national needs of communication in English on account of preserving an English teaching programme which has become obsolete. Neither the identification of the linguistic needs of the learner nor the pedagogical strategies to achieve the target in accordance with the already existing curriculum has been of any serious concern of the universities. 95% of the informant teachers and academicians strongly expressed the view that a thorough restructuring of English education at the tertiary level is inevitable. Only 5% of them felt that no change is necessary.

The exacting need of the change is further emphasized by the employment requirements of the multi-national companies. Today job openings are available only for those who are endowed with the faculty of effective verbal and social skills whereas in the past, paper qualifications were sufficient to secure a job. As the bounds of higher education institutions are not limited, to the boundaries of nations or continents, the globalisation of education has become a reality today and it emphasizes equally academic excellence and overall excellence. Therefore, what is required in tertiary English education is a curriculum
development aimed at preparing the youth to partake in the excitement of contemporary world.

In the recently evolved worldwide industrial and economic change, the students assume the role of customers and if they feel that they are not getting profit out of learning they become unhappy and this unhappiness will tell upon the existence of the institution itself.

The central aim of English teaching is at one level very straightforward and uncontroversial. At its simplest, the purpose of English as a part of curriculum is to develop the learners’ ability to use the language effectively. However, below the surface of that apparently incontestable and transparent statement lie all sorts of complicating opinions, ideologies, methodologies and philosophies evolved in different parts of the globe through the past eight decades. It’s in the light these findings that the investigator examines the topic that he is perusing.