CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 ENGLISH AS A GLOBAL LANGUAGE

English is the most widely spoken language in the world; because of its great popularity and worldwide use, English has become the medium of international communication. English has ceased to be the language of only its native speakers and has attained the status of a world language. English is therefore going to play an important role in world affairs and it will be to our own advantage if we continue to learn English as an important foreign language.

English holds a near monopoly as the lingua franca of higher learning. Millions of computers sold worldwide have the English version of Windows 95-2000 and millions of Internet users surf the net using the English language. In conferences held worldwide, papers presented in science and technology and computer software, are only in the English language. Internet use has increased rapidly and people are able to correspond to each other around the globe anytime and the world has shrunk to a ‘Global village’. English plays a central role in this ‘Globalisation’ and it has become the language of choice for communication between peoples of different nations. It is estimated that about a hundred million people use English as their first and second language in the world (Prodomou Luke, 2000). People use different
varieties of English like British English, American English, Australian English and Indian English for communication. The Internet has enabled all L1 and L2 users of English (those who use English as the first and those who use it as the second language) to communicate with each other through any variety of English. In many fields including science and technology, English and computer literacy are considered to be absolutely necessary for career advancements.

1.2 ENGLISH IN INDIA

Other countrymen envy Indians for their propensity to learn English. It is the legacy handed over to us by the British rule. It is interesting and worthwhile to trace the history of the English language study in India. For the past 200 years, English has been playing an important role in the Indian educational system and also in our national life. The Britishers introduced English in the curriculum to produce cheap clerks and Indian mediators who could help them in their Company administration. As English-speaking Indians were preferred for employment in the British government, more Indians started learning English and English became more of a second language in India. The study of English united Indians and empowered them to free India from the British rule. It is through English our freedom fighters from different states of India could communicate with each other to plan their course of action to get independence. A large number of Indians- Gandhiji, Swamy Vivekanandha, Malavia, Aurobindho, Jinna, Srinivasa Sastri, Nehru, Nethaji, Rajaji, Tagore, Radhakrishnan and others used English effectively on par with native speakers. Writers like MulkRaj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan produced good novels and short stories that gained recognition worldwide. However, their writings
had an 'Indianness' in them and this gave way to a new genre of writing most popularly called 'Indian Writing in English'.

The English Christian missionaries started coming to India from 1813 onwards and they built schools at primary level for Indians where the language of instruction was the local language. Later on, these missionaries built high schools with English as the language of instruction, which obliged the Indians who wanted to do higher studies to have a good knowledge of English. The British rulers began building their universities in India in 1857. The universities they established were based on the British models with their emphasis on the study of English.

The 'modern' leaders of that era in India also supported the study of the English language. Indians who were good at English were seen as the new elite of India. Many new schools were established in which the language of instruction was English. According to the British laws, the language of instruction at university level was English and therefore ambitious Indians preferred schools that emphasized the study of the English language. Even after India's independence, English remained the main language of India. Even today, schools in India that use English as the medium of instruction are considered better than other vernacular medium schools. According to researches made in the 1980s about one-third of Indians studied in schools, where English was the medium of instruction. This number rose high in the 1990s. English became the first language in Indian education and it was easier for the Indians to read, write and even communicate in English than in their own Indian languages. This has rendered India the second largest English speaking country in the world after the USA.
At the time of independence in 1947, there were 19 universities in India. In 1997, there were 219 universities or institutions at university levels. Large universities have now many colleges affiliated to them. The language of instruction at the premier institutions is English. The students who pass out of these have good command over English and they also have sound knowledge of subjects, they have chosen to study. They score very high marks in International examinations like TOEFL, GRE etc. Because of this, many technology-oriented companies in foreign countries prefer Indian engineers and scientists.

1.3 THE OFFICIAL STATUS OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

Officially, English has the status of being the assistant language, but in fact, it is the most important language in India. After Hindi, it is the most commonly spoken language in India and probably the most widely read and written language in India. English symbolizes in Indians minds, better education, better culture and higher intellect. English is also widely used in important fields like legal, financial, educational and business fields in India.

English plays an important role as the national link language among Indians, who speak different languages. It is used for the purpose of inter-State correspondence and as the language of trade and commerce between different parts of the country. English has also greatly contributed to the growth of knowledge in India, particularly in the field of science and technology. It has brought home to us the different developments taking place at the international scene. The Constitution of India, adopted in 1950, had envisaged Hindi, as the only official language of the Union of India. English was to continue only for 15 years from the date of adoption of the Constitution. However, the non-Hindi speaking states reacted sharply and demanded that English should also
continue as the Associated Official Language. As a result, Parliament enacted in 1963 the Official Languages Act, 1963, providing for the continued use of English for an indefinite period. Prime Minister Nehru assured the southern states that English would continue to be the Associate Official Language for inter-state communication and communication between the States and the Centre, as English is the only language, which is understood by the educated people all over the country. In this connection, the clear and emphatic statement of Jawaharlal Nehru is worth quoting.

If you push out English, does Hindi fully take its place? I hope it will. I am sure it will. But I wish to avoid the danger of one unifying factor being pushed out without another unifying factor fully taking its place. In that event, there will be a big gap, hiatus. The creation of any such gap or hiatus must be avoided at all costs. It is very vital to do so in the interest of the unity of the country. It is this that leads me to the conclusion that English is likely to have an important place in the foreseeable future (Aggarwal, 1984).

In India, English language is used as a link language for inter-state communication, a lingua franca, a language of education and culture and the language of the central government. According to Chaudary,

some 350 million people use English here in their daily lives. It is India's language for national and international business, commerce, diplomacy, education, fashion, government, industry, politics, science, technology, etc. India has over 300 universities, 25,000 colleges, 250,000 schools, and over a million teachers teaching English. Today, India is the third largest publisher of English books and about 30,000 copies of English dictionaries are sold here annually (Choudary, 2001).
1.4 THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

When the East India Company came to India for trade, it concentrated on imparting English education only to the children of Anglo-Indians and the European employees of the company. After they started ruling over the country, they allowed Christian missionaries to undertake educational activities to spread Western culture and knowledge among the Indians. Charles Grand and Lord Macaulay were responsible for imparting education through English in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy also advocated the use of English language in order to popularise the study of Western Science and Literature. Initially in 1857, instruction in English was given to a few urban and elite communities through three Indian Universities. Then in 1900, all educational institutions in India started using English as the medium of instruction.

The main objective of the 19th century British curriculum which was introduced in Indian education was to enable Indians to understand the British culture through the study of English literature. Therefore, it was insisted that English should be taught everywhere in the same way as it was taught in Britain. As Howatt points out, the teaching of English as a foreign language emerged as a distinct field during the first half of the 20th century. In the early twentieth century, there emerged the notion of English as “a second language with a utilitarian function in the communication of knowledge” (Howatt, 1984). Later in the century, “English (or a nativized variety of it) has come to be recognized as part of the local literacy and cultural tradition of post-colonial societies because of its use in imaginative and creative contexts” (Kachru, 1986).
After independence, the Government of India adopted the policy of universal education through regional languages. This meant that every child in the country would receive primary education in his mother tongue or in the regional language. The adoption of regional languages as the medium of instruction at both the Primary and Secondary stages naturally had its effects on higher education. When a student came to college from a regional medium school, his great difficulty was in adjusting himself to the medium of instruction, which was English. Many college teachers were forced to use the mother tongue, even though they were supposed to teach subjects through English. If some teachers refused to use any language other than English, they could not communicate with their students. Students had to resort to the use of guidebooks when they could not follow lectures delivered in English. The result was a steady corrosion of the learning and teaching of English. After Independence, the demand for universal education resulted in the admission of vast numbers of students from all walks of life into educational institutions. Naturally, they presented a very wide spectrum of abilities in English. Some students from English medium schools were very good at English, while students from rural, regional medium schools were very weak in English. Today it is possible for students having almost no knowledge of English at all to go to a college for higher studies. Thus, unmanageable large classes and a wide range of abilities in English together with the accompanying dearth of qualified and highly motivated teachers have all contributed to the fall in standards of English language teaching and learning.

The problems of teaching English in India have been complicated by the great increase in the number of pupils. In any given class of students, the range of language abilities has become wider still. Over the years, the
differences in the levels of achievement became even more pronounced and it is difficult for the teacher to reduce these differences. In some states, English is taught from the primary stages. There are other states, which insist on the teaching of English as a compulsory language for defined periods, which range from six to three years. In some states, English is only an optional language; in others, although it is taught compulsorily the student is not required to pass an examination in English. Students coming from different states and with varying degrees of exposure to the English language may, however feel the same need for English once they come to the college level. Although English is not the medium of instruction at the college level in many states, the student soon finds that he must have a certain proficiency in the language. At higher levels, he may have to do all his studies through English. The medium of instruction at most important centers is English. This is particularly true about the institutes of national character, such as the Indian Institute of Technology. These institutions may admit students coming from States where there is practically no teaching of English at the school level and yet require them to follow lectures and answer all examinations in English.

This poses a real difficulty to the teacher of English at the undergraduate level. He finds that he must give the student, within a very short time, the proficiency in English that he is going to require when he comes to the next stages in the educational stream, viz. the graduate, post graduate, or professional stages. In the past, there was only one general course at each level which was to be taken by all students irrespective of their levels of achievement and their needs for English. Students of science and technology, commerce and humanities were given identical courses in English at the undergraduate level.
Soon after 1948, many States reduced the number of hours given to the teaching of English at the secondary level, in the belief that English would ultimately disappear. Today, it has been realized in many cases that the ability to use English necessary for the development of the country. However, the number of hours given to English in the timetable has, in many cases, not been increased. It is sometimes said, that if better syllabuses were produced and teaching methods streamlined, the standards of English would improve. We generally forget that today the students are exposed to the use of English language for only a few minutes each day. It is, therefore, necessary to have an increased number of classroom hours devoted to the teaching of English.

Large classes, the poor standards of students and inadequate time allotted for the teaching of language impose severe restrictions on the teacher. He cannot give his students enough practice in the use of the English language and the practice of linguistic skills. His main concern is to cover the syllabus within the time available; and students are concerned only with the passages to be memorized and reproduced in the examination. In such a situation, there is hardly any chance for the student to learn the language. While some changes have taken place in education, the syllabuses, textbooks and testing procedures have, in most cases remained unchanged. Students cannot understand the simplest of English sentences and so they have to rely on the simplified versions usually given in guidebooks. The examination consists of the old essay type questions, annotations and so on. The student, if he has to pass the examination, must memorize set passages and reproduce them in examination papers. Even the teacher is required to modify his teaching according to the demands made by the syllabus on the one hand, and the examination on the other. In such circumstances, it becomes impossible to teach language in the
true sense of the word. The problem is one of finding the ways and means of disseminating English among the millions who are being drawn into our educational system and thus opening up for them some of the opportunities which have hitherto been confined to a small elitist section alone.

In order to bring about substantial improvement in the standards of the teaching/learning of English, the Government is giving assistance through the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), Hyderabad for the setting up of at least one district Centre for English language in each State. Twenty six District Centres were initially sanctioned. There were eleven District Centres in operation as on 31st March 1998 in different parts of the country. The Government is also providing assistance to Regional Institutes of English and English Language Teaching Institutes of different states through the CIEFL and supporting them. There are at present two Regional Institutes of English and nine English Language Teaching Institutes in the country.

1.5 ENGLISH IN TAMILNADU

The Government of India introduced a ‘Three Language Formula’ in education at school level instructing that all pupils were to study three languages at school:

- the mother tongue, English and Hindi in non-Hindi speaking areas;
- the mother tongue, English and a modern Indian language in Hindi speaking areas.
This formula, however, bristled with difficulties and was doomed to failure... in the Hindi States there was lack of motivation for the study of a third language which had no apparent practical value in the daily life of people. In the non-Hindi regions political factors weighed against the study of Hindi (Sivaraman, 1984).

The people of Tamilnadu felt that the Central government tried to impose Hindi on them, which they did not like. Hence, they agitated and rejected the Government's policy. They wanted to have two languages only, namely, the mother tongue (Tamil) and English. English is used as a 'link language' for communicating with the Government of India and Governments in other states of India. In addition, the various Committees and Commissions appointed to review the study of English recommended the use of English as a 'library language' and 'a window of the world'. The Government of Tamilnadu has also understood the importance of the study of English as an investment contributing to the efficiency and productivity of the economic system because English is widely used in Banking, Commerce, Industry, Broadcasting and Communication, Publishing, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Medicine, Education, Science and Technology. Parents are well aware of the importance of English and want their children to study only in English medium schools.

1.6 THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN TAMILNADU ENGINEERING COLLEGES

The 10+2+3 pattern of education is being adopted from 1978 and those who pass Higher Secondary (+2) public examination with a minimum of
60% marks are eligible to join Professional Courses. About 20% of the students who secure high marks seek admission into technical and professional institutions that offer courses in medicine and engineering and technology. They also have to write an entrance examination for joining professional courses offered in 250 Engineering colleges in Tamilnadu, which were under different universities and now affiliated to Anna University, Chennai.

Generally learners who join engineering institutions are of a heterogeneous group with regard to their abilities to use the English language as they come from schools both English and regional language medium. As far as the motivation to learn English is concerned (when compared to the learners at the arts colleges) students of engineering are deeply motivated because they know fully well that they have better employment opportunities if only they are able to use English effectively and efficiently in their profession. Students who studied in regional medium schools find it difficult to understand the subjects taught in English and also all their subject books that are in English. Teachers of English also face the problem of having to teach large classes of students with varying language abilities, many of whom “are so ill equipped in their knowledge of English that they find it difficult to read and much more difficult to express, in that language” (UGC India, 1965).

Most of the teachers teaching English in engineering colleges have no exposure / training in ELT. They are all literature students. As Wingard writes,

The need is most urgently felt when what you have to teach is very different from what you have been taught. This is the case when a subject is changing rapidly or where the situation in which a subject is taught is changing rapidly (Wingard, 1983).
This observation is especially relevant in the context of teaching English in Tamil Nadu where teachers brought up on a mainly literature-based syllabus and a lecturing mode of instruction do not seem sensitive to changed circumstances and emerging language needs of students (Sivaraman, 1995).

1.7 THE NEED FOR THIS STUDY

This is an era of international communication and advanced technology and engineers and technical professionals have to convey technical information in English for various purposes. Therefore, besides learning general English as an international language, students of engineering colleges and technical institutes need to be equipped with adequate language ability to be able to communicate technical information clearly on at least a basic level.

After learning English in schools for 10 to 12 years, most of the students are not able to use English language effectively. They are not able to listen and comprehend the lectures given in classroom and they are also not able to communicate with others in English. They don’t know how to apply the basic grammar rules and make use of simple, concrete words. Their ability to express their ideas in clear and understandable English is poor. Some engineering students feel that learning English is a very difficult task.
Sood laments that,

After 6 years of learning English as a subject at school and 3 years of compulsory English at college, our average undergraduate cannot speak a correct sentence in English, write his curriculum vitae, or even read an English daily. This is no exaggeration. Complaints such as these are voiced all over the country. Parents, teachers, examiners and employers complain of learners' poor achievement in English (Sood, 1995).

Verma, former director, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad also aptly remarks,

With the regionalisation of the medium of instruction at the secondary level, a fairly large number of students joining the I year of the undergraduate programmes have either no English or little English or frozen English which they do not know how to use. What they need is a special intensive course in English designed to help them to the tertiary level courses with a certain amount of confidence. This is one of the reasons why there is a great demand for courses in spoken and written English. Since the public sector has not cared to produce need-based courses, the private sector has stepped in with teaching shops, repair clinics and an assortment of 'learn-it-fast' courses (Verma, 1995).

Students are aware of the importance of English. They need English to attend interviews, participate in group discussions and get good jobs. Students from city English medium schools who are good at English take up TOEFL examinations and go abroad for higher studies. Regional medium students find it difficult to understand classroom lectures, read subject books in
English and write assignments and examinations in English. They are also afraid of making mistakes while talking to others and hence they do not try to speak in English. However, they want to improve their language skills. Hence, if better syllabus, materials and teachers are available, it will be possible for them to acquire the skills much more effectively.

The skill of listening comprehension is usually neglected in the teaching of English in India and due importance is not given by course designers and practitioner teachers to the teaching of speaking skills. As the present syllabus does not cater to these basic needs, it is necessary to design an alternative Need based syllabus incorporating materials meant for the teaching of listening and speaking and make the syllabus much more need-based. In the minds of both teachers and students there has been a keen awareness of the dire need for a syllabus, which will directly cater to the career needs of students. They are not satisfied with their I year syllabus as the syllabus does not teach them anything new. The syllabuses have been designed by course designers on their own without considering the specific needs of learners who are actually going to do the course. They also feel that the standard of the material in the prescribed textbook is not challenging. The ‘topics’ appear to be uninteresting. Teaching merely the conversion of “Noun into verb and adjective” will not serve the purpose. True / False and short answer comprehension questions are found to be too elementary. There is nothing new about grammar items. They have already learnt most of them in schools. The overall picture is that the syllabus does not seem to take care of their specific needs. Hence, it is decided to study and find out what learners expect from the syllabus and how they could be incorporated.
The most important role that English has to play in India today is that of a Library Language. Books in all branches of knowledge are available in English. More than 60 percent of the world’s technical journals, newspapers, periodicals, etc., are published in English. Therefore, to keep themselves abreast of the latest developments in the field of science and technology our Indian students will have to acquire a reasonable amount of proficiency in English. The importance of English as a Library Language can be described in the statements made by the Radhakrishnan commission,

English however must continue to be studied. It is a language, which is rich in literature – humanistic, scientific, and technical. If for sentimental reasons we should give up English, we should cut ourselves from the living stream of ever growing knowledge; unable to have access to this knowledge; our standards of scholarship would fast deteriorate and our participation in the world movements of thought would become negligible. Its effects would be disastrous for our political life. English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world and we will act unwisely if we allow ourselves to be enveloped in the folds of dark curtain of ignorance (Report of Radhakrishnan Commission, 1963).

1.8 THE AIM, OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND RELEVANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The study attempts to identify and analyse in a formal format, the perceptions of teachers and learners towards the present syllabus. The study also enables us to find out how meaningful the syllabus appears to them. The first year of the engineering course marks the stage for building up students' confidence and provides them with the last chance to improve their language
ability. Due importance is to be given to the identification of learners’ needs, their academic, social and professional needs. The needs are to be examined from the linguistic point of view. They need to read technical literatures, advertisements, tenders etc. and comprehend their full implications. They have to write project reports, record of work planned, work done etc. and various types of letters. They will have to listen to others’ ideas, lectures, speeches, news and discourse. They must be able to speak with the public and the peers in English accurately and appropriately. It is also high time that the teaching of neglected language skills (listening and speaking) were given due importance in the proposed syllabus. A survey was conducted among students, English teachers of various engineering colleges and working engineers in Tamilnadu. A suitable alternative syllabus based on the findings of the survey has been designed and recommended.

1.9 HYPOTHESIS

The first year English syllabuses offered by the universities of Tamilnadu (at present all self-financing colleges that were once under different universities have been affiliated to Anna University) to the first year students of B.E /B.Tech Degree Course need revision. A uniform and alternative need-based syllabus should be designed for all engineering colleges in Tamilnadu.

1.10 CHAPTERWISE SUMMARY

The first chapter stresses the importance of the study of English and describes the contemporary scene pertaining to the teaching of English as a Second Language. The description also takes into account the growth and
development of the study of English in India. It also outlines this researcher's attempt to establish the need for new initiatives in syllabus design to bring about a qualitative improvement in the teaching/learning of English in institutions of engineering and technology. India is a multicultural and multilingual nation. In India, regional/national languages are developed side by side with a common language for intercommunication i.e., English. As it has already been pointed out English is taught as a compulsory second language in all States at the secondary school level.

The second chapter carries a detailed account of different techniques, approaches and methods followed with a view to improving the teaching of English at the school and college levels. In the past, language teachers and syllabus and course designers tried in many ways to solve the problems they encountered in teaching a language. They produced materials of varied kinds, linked them to particular methods and approaches. They are Aural/oral Method, Grammar Translation Method, Audio-lingual Approach, Situational Approach, Natural Approach and Communicative Language Teaching. A few new language teaching methods were also devised with communication as a primary goal. Gattagno's Silent Way, Curran's Communicative Language Learning, Asher's Total Physical Response and Lozanov's Suggestopedia all emphasize the teaching of purposeful communication, through the effective use of language. However, there is no single model that is universally accepted as the only method for the teaching of the four language skills. Different methods and approaches have been recommended and tried out over the years in teaching English as an L2 (in India). However it cannot be claimed that one of these classroom methods is the best way to make learners learn English.
The third chapter delves deep into history to discuss the syllabuses used for teaching English for general purposes and for specific purposes as well. It also analyses the first year engineering course language syllabuses used in various universities in Tamilnadu. Indian students need English for limited, special purposes and they always don’t need it for general proficiency in all areas. Many linguists and teachers of English have rightly felt that it is necessary to introduce the student to the particular kind of English, which he / she may need for specialized studies in his own subject. The ELT situation in India has not changed significantly. Something concrete must be done to improve the present situation. For any course, syllabus is the base and starting point. Hence, it is decided to start this research with syllabus design, the primary requisite for the success of any language programme.

Syllabus describes what the learners are expected to know at the end of the course or the course objectives. It also explains what is to be taught, when it is to be taught, how it is to be taught, and how it is to be evaluated. The syllabus should become an important learning tool that will reinforce the intentions, roles, attitudes and strategies so as to promote active, purposeful and effective learning.

Syllabuses can be divided into two broad categories: Product Syllabuses and Process syllabuses. The product syllabuses specify in a range of possible ways what is needed in order to learn a language (e.g. to learn grammar, vocabulary, functions, etc.), whereas a process syllabus concentrates on how the learner learns a language (e.g. learning strategies, affective considerations, the learning environment, interaction, etc.). However, any useful syllabus will address both the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of language learning.
The following types of syllabuses have been designed and tried in language classes by teachers of English:

- grammar - translation syllabus
- structural syllabus
- notional-functional syllabus
- situational syllabus
- skill-based syllabus
- product syllabus
- process syllabus
- procedural syllabus
- task-based syllabus
- content-based syllabus

Curriculum designers frame a general syllabus for different levels without considering the linguistic and cultural background of learners. They have to realize the unrealistic nature of English curriculum followed in Tamilnadu universities. The main aim of a syllabus should be to help learners learn and improve language skills and develop their communicative ability. But how far the present day syllabuses prescribed for various universities of Tamilnadu achieve this aim is a big question mark. When the syllabuses of first year engineering followed in Tamilnadu universities were analyzed it was found that almost all universities have similar types of syllabuses that are heavily based on grammar items and writing. More emphasis is on grammar and usage. As several syllabus items involve students in mere mechanically repetitive exercises, a lot of class time is being under utilized. Moreover, there seems to be no visible increase in the proficiency level of students. Therefore, if
their reading and writing improved during the degree course, it was in all probability in spite of the first year syllabus. Hence, the syllabus must provide not only what the curriculum experts feel that they need but also what learner needs and wants, even if they are not what the curriculum theorists want them to be. With the ever widening gap between the policy makers, syllabus designers and the teachers with their indifferent attitudes and with our rigid educational system it is seemingly impossible in the near future. But the scenario may change if all the people involved in the system realize the drawbacks in the present system and take steps to get it reformed.

The main aim of learners is to understand their major subject well through language. When their language ability is not up to the required level and when they are not able to understand the language of their subject, how can they communicate effectively to fulfill their needs? Keeping all these in mind, curriculum developers should concentrate on selecting appropriate topics of high pedagogical value to motivate students. Courses should be designed with tasks that demand students' active participation in classes. There should be variety in course content. Samples of free / structured writing, case studies, projects, seminar papers, business reports and general purpose articles / texts can be used as sources to develop writing abilities in students.

While designing a syllabus, the course designer should involve English teachers, working engineers, their employers and even students for whom a syllabus is framed. It would not be an exaggeration to say that it is only the classroom teachers who are fully aware of their students' needs, their levels and interests. They are thoroughly familiar with the educational system within which they teach. Teachers also have the significant advantage of knowing their
first language. So they must be allowed to take part in prescribing suitable items in the syllabus and deciding on the appropriate methods that would suit the effective handling of the syllabus. Hence it is proposed by the researcher to conduct an extensive survey in order to identify learners’ specific needs and interests and frame an appropriate syllabus that would cater to their particular requirements.

The fourth chapter gives an account of the survey project, including a detailed analysis of students’, teachers’ and working engineers’ responses, duly supported by the statistical data presented in tabular columns. This account has a bearing to the questionnaires provided in appendices. In the light of this researcher’s experience, this constitutes a refreshingly new dimension to ELT studies at the tertiary level. This survey was conducted at the state level involving three thousand five hundred students from 40 engineering colleges affiliated to various universities in Tamilnadu and Pondichery states in India. The opinions collected provide first hand information about the ELT situation in engineering colleges in Tamilnadu. Syllabus designers will find the outcome of this study very useful.

Two types of questionnaires were designed, one for the first year and the other for the final year engineering students. Questions were asked to find out the problems faced by students while learning the four language skills and the possible solutions to those problems. Questions were also given so as to assess the suitability of their present syllabus and textbooks and the kind of lessons / topics they would like to have in their English textbooks and syllabuses. Two more questionnaires were also designed and administered to English teachers and working engineers. As English teachers are fully aware of
the ELT situation and involved in teaching English to students of different levels, it was decided to get their views through questionnaires. The questionnaire for working engineers was prepared to know the nature of language used in their workplace, so that language teaching can focus on the skills, which are needed for working engineers to carry out their job successfully, to communicate well with their higher officials, co-workers and the public.

The fifth chapter proposes syllabuses for three semesters framed by this researcher after analyzing the views of students, English teachers and working engineers as expressed in the filled-in questionnaires. The analysis of the data collected from the responses of students, English language teachers and working engineers leads to a discussion of the problems of learners in the institutions and in the industries and their concern for the effective learning of English and also of their recommendation to the syllabus designers. The views expressed by them will have to be borne in mind while framing the syllabus and designing materials. Students seem to be more worried about their speaking abilities, because interactive communication is the order of the day, especially in professional circles. English teachers are also worried about the poor performance of learners in using the language and they look forward to using a better syllabus.

Therefore, any ELT course meant for students of science and technology should include the teaching of oral communication as an integral part of the curriculum. To develop their confidence in speaking and improving their listening comprehension students suggest activities like Group Discussion, Debates/Speeches/Quizzes, Presentation in Seminars, Brain-storming sessions,
Question-Answer Sessions and Conversation Practice during class hours. Skills like speaking and listening that have been neglected for a long period can also be taught and tested through a syllabus that provides scope for it. Listening and speaking should be taught and tested. These are the most important skills to be used while attending interviews and taking part in group discussions. Separate examinations can be conducted to test listening and speaking skills. Forty marks can be awarded as internal assessment marks for tests that examine speaking and listening abilities. Another semester end examination for sixty marks can be conducted for testing reading and writing skills.

No formal learning process could occur without a well formulated syllabus. So inferentially, a syllabus needs to present items, topics, themes, methodology and evaluation processes in order so that teaching and learning processes are effective. For the processes to be successful, a syllabus must provide aspects and elements of a course that are apt and appropriate to the student body who take up the course. Courses should be designed with tasks that demand students' active participation in classes. There should be variety in textbook content.

Chapter VI, the concluding chapter, emphasizes the need for framing an appropriate common English syllabus for all learners of engineering and technology, supported by interesting and suitable materials. It also deals with the scope for further research and wider fields of experimentation. Our students learn English for twelve years in schools; but still have problems in communicating with others in English. Hence, it is necessary to design an alternative common syllabus for the first year students of engineering and
technology to develop their language skills especially listening and speaking, which have been neglected in language teaching.

An ideal syllabus should have clear unambiguous objectives. In this thesis, objectives are defined to suit the needs and interests of learners. These are derived from the responses of students, English teachers in engineering colleges and of working engineers, recorded in questionnaires. It is also evident from the responses that important speaking and listening skills are neglected in engineering institutions. Hence, the significance of the teaching of listening, speaking, pronunciation and grammar is discussed in detail. Taking all these factors into consideration a new syllabus is also proposed and presented in this thesis. The teachers’ role in implementing this syllabus is also described to do full justice to the chosen topic of study.