Chapter Five: Observations and Implications

5.1. Preliminaries

This concluding chapter looks at some of the major pedagogical implications of the sociolinguistic scenario on English education in India. There is a discussion on the changes to be made in the various areas of ELT in the altered contexts of decolonization, democratization and globalization. Through a discussion of a very broad spectrum of issues concerning second/foreign language pedagogy, the focus shifts to the need to redefine the objectives of teaching English in India. Suggestions are offered for curriculum developers, syllabus designers, material writers, testers, and policy makers.

The chapter first discusses the major objectives of teaching English in the pre-independence India, before discussing what should be the objectives in the independent India.

5.2. Objectives of Teaching English before Independence

Before independence, English was a much-hated language for most Indians because of its colonial association. As stated in Lord Macaulay’s *Minutes* (1834), the British needed to communicate with the Indians for their administrative purposes in the subcontinent. It was also difficult for them to bring people from Britain to do all the clerical jobs of the East India Company at first and the British Raj later. They educated the Indians to be interpreters between them and the millions they ruled. They also trained people to do the clerical jobs in English. Thus, from the British point of view, the major objective of teaching English was none other than meeting their own practical needs. English teaching in the pre-independence phase in India always meant teaching of English Literature. The objective was also to develop an aesthetic appreciation of the British literary works. It gave them a chance to
present their culture as superior to Eastern culture and hence worthy of imitation. In that sense, it also had an integrative objective.

However, there were also some Indians, who felt the need to introduce English education in India. In fact, Macaulay was not ‘the man who started it all’ (Thirumalai, 2003, p.1). As Chaudhary (2002) observes, many people believe that the teaching of English started in India at the recommendations of Macaulay in 1835. The truth is that Macaulay only got the East India Company to support the teaching of English that was already in progress in the country (p.39). Raja Ram Mohan Roy, for example, was an ardent supporter of the introduction of English Education. When the East India Company decided to set apart one lakh rupees to promote Sanskrit and Persian education, Roy vehemently opposed the decision. He urged the crown to use it for introducing English education. In fact, Roy had already started an English school in Calcutta. He felt that English education was more important for Indians to get an access to Western science and technology (Collect, 1914). Thus, from the Indian point of view the objective of teaching English in India was academic, which was needed for India’s development. Proficiency in English, mainly in reading, was imperative to understand Western books and their knowledge. In India, English was seen as a developmental tool. Many ex-students of the Sanskrit College also felt that the education they received at the Sanskrit College did not help them in any way to improve their living conditions or social status (Thirumalai, 2003, p.33). People like Lord Macaulay supported them by arguing that it was unreasonable to “bribe men out of the revenues of the state to waste their youth in learning how they are to purify themselves after touching an ass, or what text of the Vedas they are to repeat to expiate the crime of killing a goat” (Thirumalai, 2003, p.37).
To conclude, the Indians demanded English education with a view to accessing western science, which they considered important for progress. Whereas it was a facilitating factor for the British as far as the British Raj was considered.

5.3. Objectives of Teaching English after Independence

English education and the very use of English was a subject of many debates in independent India. With the battle continuing on one side, English has established itself in India in a unique way. As Gupta (2005) observers, ‘From the despised instrument of oppression to the reluctantly adopted lingua franca to the status symbol of the upper classes to its position today as a second language, English has come a long way’ (p.2). Every change in the status of English was also accompanied by changes in the objectives in teaching English and rightly so.

As discussed in chapter one, the trend towards liberalization and privatization of economy has had its impacts on English education in India also. The establishment of many multinational companies and the increased migration to the western countries, the revolution in the field of IT and the innumerable call centres mushrooming in Indian cities have added all the reasons to learn English today. The changed scenario demands more than a passive knowledge of the language. It is not enough that one can read and understand English. Interpreters are not the need of the hour. In the absence of masters and the millions of subjects they rule, the issue of interpreters is irrelevant. The need of the hour is energetic people who can communicate competently not only with the people around them but also with a wide variety of people from all around the world. They need to listen to varieties of
English and effectively communicate with both native and non-native speakers of varieties of English. Thus, there is a need to rethink the objectives of teaching English today.

The general objective should be to enable learners to become competent listeners, speakers, readers and writers of English so that they can develop, grow, survive and flourish in the competitive job market and the modern world. Consistent with this objective, the learning outcomes and pedagogical plans need to be developed. To translate this into effect the desired goals should be more realistic and practical. In the Indian context, the first objective should be to build up confidence in learners. As Patil (2008) comments, Indians are primarily visual learners of English and not auditory learners (p.4). Most Indians do not have the chance to hear and speak English, as India does not fall within the inner circle countries. Moreover, English also does not enjoy a pan Indian second language status. Put the other way, Indians do not have the same exposure to English in all the parts of the country. The continuum varies from English speaking families to illiterates. Thus, there is a lot of diffidence when it comes to speaking English. Most learners from rural areas suffer from inhibitions, shyness and nervousness. The first and the most important thing on the road to making them competent speakers is to help them overcome the speaking anxiety. Dornyei (2001) proposes the following five strategies in this regard:

1. Teachers should help the students realize that competence is neither achieved in one day nor is it in a static condition. Learners should be brought to think that growth is gradual but sure.

2. Teachers should make sure that the learners are provided with a regular experience of success.
3. Students should get opportunities to contribute meaningfully. This will give them a sense of achievement and will motivate them to continue in the same line.

4. Teachers should praise the learners even for the slightest progress they make. Words of encouragement will elevate their spirits.

5. The classroom atmosphere should be stress free. It is not possible for anyone to grow in an atmosphere of stress and inhibition.

Dornyei also advises teachers to avoid social comparison and promote cooperation instead of competition.

The suggestions of Dornyei (2001) are very relevant to the Indian context where most learners suffer from inhibitions and diffidence. His proposals should be implemented if teachers are really desirous of making their learners confident. Teachers should stop on the spot corrections when their learners speak and allow them to express themselves freely. Such corrections only give them a feeling of inferiority and do not help in building up confidence.

The teaching of English in India should also aim at making learners communicate appropriately. A good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary are important tools of effective communication. However, they do not guarantee successful communication because communication is more than grammaticality and perfect accent. As Patil (2008) maintains, rules of grammar are important but rules of use are essential (p.5). To be appropriate in communication, one needs to know how to use the language in various social and interpersonal situations. This demands a basic understanding of how language is used in different cultures.
Appropriateness refers to the ability to use the language suitably in different contexts. For example, they need to know when to use formal language and when to use informal language. As discussed in chapter four, learners need to learn some aspects of pragmatics when it comes to using language for cross-cultural purposes. The teaching of pragmatics should consider not only native speaker countries and their cultures but also countries in the outer and expanding circles. As seen in chapter one, English is now used more among non native speakers than between non native speakers and native speakers. Therefore, it is also important to raise learners’ awareness of the pragmatic aspects of non native varieties of English. This is essential, as McKay (2002) maintains, to achieve comity or friendly relations when English is used with speakers of other cultures (p.127). The learners should be enabled to make correct choices at lexical, grammatical and pragmatic levels.

In the Indian context, it is also important to aim at making learners use live language instead of the bookish language they have learned from literary works. As discussed in chapter two, Indians tend to use flowery language and bombastic words where simple words and direct expressions are more suitable. One immediate objective of teaching English today should be to free the learners from this habit. The global context demands direct and simple communication.

Yet another important objective should be accuracy. Inaccuracy in any aspect of communication can lead to communication failure. Accuracy does not mean speaking like the native speaker. However, what is spoken should be intelligible to the listener. Therefore, instead of focusing on the minute details of pronunciation, which do not affect intelligibility, focus should be placed on those aspects that change the meaning and lead to
misunderstanding or sometimes no understanding. For example, aspirated /p/, /t/ and /k/ do not add anything to the meaning same as the unaspirated use of them do not delete anything from the meaning. So is the case with the weak forms in connected speech. However, substitution of consonants and inability to articulate certain sounds can affect intelligibility. For example, ‘veil’ is different from ‘whale’ and ‘park’ is different from ‘bark’. The main objective should be eradicating such serious errors that meddle with intelligibility.

Most second language/foreign language learners need English for academic purposes. Keeping this in mind, there should also be attempts to develop textual competence in the learners. As in the case of accuracy and pragmatic competence, it would be unwise to develop only native speaker textual competence. As McKay (2002) proposes, in the context of the global diffusion of English and the emergence of World Englishes, learners should be made aware that cultural factors play a vital role in rhetorical development. As readers, they should be enabled to grip on the different rhetorical patterns emerging from various cultures. As writers or producers of knowledge, they should have a sense of audience. It would give them greater acceptance and readability if they can follow the rhetorical pattern of their target audience (p.128).

The goals ought to be realistic. Unrealistic goals will only promote a sense of failure and negative attitudes to English. In the Indian context or in any other second/foreign language learning context, it is unrealistic to set native speaker accent as a goal. It should be more than enough if the Indian learners of English can speak General Indian English (the standard national variety of English) with a neutral accent devoid of their mother tongue influences. However, standards and objectives should be set according to the needs. As Patil (2008)
suggests there is no need to transform the Asian speakers of English into speakers of British or American English unless they are being trained to become air traffic controllers, pilots and members of intelligence services (p.12).

The ultimate goal should be achieving communicative competence. This can only be achieved if the priorities are set right. The first priority should be confidence building. Fluency should precede accuracy.

Having discussed the suitable objectives of learning English in the present era, the next section moves on to a discussion of the implications for the new courses.

5.4. Implications for the New Courses

As discussed in section four of this chapter, all the Indian learners of English do not have the same amount and kind of exposure to the language. Students with the same academic credentials from the same board of education vary dramatically in their proficiency in English. Marks obtained in the examinations are no indications of their ability to use English as and when needed. Students living in cities with low marks in English may communicate better in English compared to the high scorers from remote villages.

This is mainly due to the difference in their exposure to English. This presents serious problems to the latter group in the future course of their studies especially if they are poor in textual competence. Higher-level studies at the university level do demand textual competence and study skills such as note taking and note making. The disparity in language proficiency often results in academic failures as far as the rural students are concerned.
Bernstine (1958, 1959, and 1971) refers to a similar problem of communication. He looks upon this problem in terms of the differences between the social classes, with the middle class using the ‘elaborated code’ and the working class using the ‘restricted code’. The elaborated code is rich in vocabulary and accurate in grammar. However, the restricted code is simple in both. The language deficiency of the working class leads to cognitive deficiency, which in turn leads to poor performance in academics (as cited in Krishnaswami, Verma, and Nagarajan, 1992, p.52). Bernstine talks of the users of the standard language and its dialect. As it is the standard language that is used in academics, the users of the dialect usually have the disadvantage of coping with a different version.

However, the linguistic deprivation discussed here does not refer to the use of a standard language and its dialect. It is simply the lack of exposure to the language, be it the standard version or its dialect, resulting in language inequality. The use of the same teaching materials and expert teachers cannot be a substitute to this problem, which is purely sociological. No rural context can be the same as the urban. Thus, there is a need to bridge this gap to the benefit of the exposure-deprived rural students. When students from rural regional medium background come to their degree programmes in colleges and universities, most of them have a limited proficiency in English. Incidentally, these students find themselves in “submersion” programmes, which involve adaptation to the “majority” class-language (generally English) with no use for the home-language. The situation here turns into “dive at the deep-end, and somehow survive!” (C.f. Cummins, 1988; Genesee, 1987; and Swain and Lapkin, 1982). Consequently, these students often complain of their difficulties in understanding the prescribed textbooks and teachers are often seen expressing their frustration at the very low
proficiency level of their students in English. Ignoring this issue would be a cruel injustice to the majority of the Indian students. One way to address this to a certain extent is to build a bridge between the situation of “immersion” (Genesee, 1987), and the situation of “submersion” (Cummins, 1988) that involves ‘home-school language switch’ of ‘dive at the shallow-end and gradually move towards the deep-end’ (as cited in Sharma and Thakur, 2012, p.50). Students graduating from secondary schools should be placed in different levels according to the marks they score in placement tests. The levels may range from pre-elementary to advanced. Such foundation programmes should be offered to the Indian Higher Secondary graduates before they take up their university courses. English Language Centres should be set up in all the universities to prepare students for the respective future courses at the university level. This will be a good step towards solving the problem of language inequality in the case of English in India.

5.5. Implications for the Selection and Designing of Teaching Materials

The present socio-politico-linguistic scenario demands adaptations and reorientations in ELT. It is necessitated by the unprecedented revolutions caused by globalization and open market. The situation demands that people interact with a worldwide community. That means one needs to be aware of the language variations around the world. If one is unaware of the existence of the varieties of English around the world, it is sure to hamper his/her professional prospectus and profile. The fact is that many students in universities have little knowledge about the diverse varieties of English that are spoken around the world. They fail to understand that people in the USA or the UK speak unique varieties of English. They are also often not aware of the issue of language styles (Takagaki, 2005, p.4) and the intranational variations in the use of English. Students tend to believe that the only standard
English is the English they are exposed to in the language learning curricula which is usually American or British English. This gives them a one-sided view of English, which keeps aside the English of the vast majority of the people they have to interact with on international platforms. To excel in international communication, one needs to be aware of the diversity in the use of English.

Mastery over the language skills and a rich treasury of vocabulary are indeed advantageous. Nevertheless, they alone cannot guarantee successful communication. A basic understanding of sociolinguistics is imperative if one is to take full advantage of the globalized world and the opportunities it offers. Thus, English language teaching curricula should ensure that the learners are made aware of the existence of varieties of English. They should be exposed to as many varieties of English as possible. It should try to familiarize and equip them with the English of their target audience. That is to say, if learners are expected to mingle more with the users of Canadian English, they should be exposed to the major features of the Canadian variety. This will not only improve their sociolinguistic competence but also inculcate in them a respect for different varieties. Once they realize why English is used differently, they will begin to look at all the varieties with equal respect. There will be no question of superior varieties and inferior varieties. This will promote tolerance for different variety users and make the linguistic world a fairer one. Therefore, every English language-teaching programme should include activities to raise the learner’s awareness of the global use of English. Teaching materials should guarantee that activities regarding language variations, styles, multiculturalism, variations within the language and the international use of English are incorporated into them. The teaching materials and the curricula as a whole should aim at not only making learners fluent users of the language but also informed users of it. This could
be achieved by giving them opportunities to listen to a wide variety of Englishes. Authentic materials such as radio and TV programmes from around the world could be fruitfully tapped for the purpose. Journals and literary works from different countries are also a rich source to introduce the global use of English.

The global use of English also implies that one should be aware of the varying pragmatics of the language use in different cultural contexts. However, the present day teaching materials seldom prepare learners in pragmatic competence. Literary works such as poems and scholarly essays eschew such opportunities. This was acceptable when English teaching was primarily taken as a means to access western science and technology. However, in the present day context, the focus is also on communicative competence. This cannot be achieved merely through memorizing vocabulary items and grammar rules. As it is, there is a disparity between grammatical competence and pragmatic competence. Pragmatic competence is based on the knowledge of social and cultural conventions, which are to be followed in particular situations. The above-mentioned disparity stems from a lack of knowledge of these conventions. Thus, it is imperative that the teaching materials also include various activities to develop the learner’s pragmatic competence. This can be achieved, as Edwards and Csizer (2004) suggest, by enriching classroom input with real world materials. They may include films, TV and radio programmes, etc. There should be activities aimed at explicit teaching of speech acts in various English-speaking communities (p.17). For example, learners can be asked to compare how two strangers start a conversation in two different cultures. They can be asked to translate such a conversation from their mother tongue to English and then compare and contrast them. Each activity may focus on one or two speech acts such as openings and closings, inviting and accepting or rejecting invitations, etc. An awareness of
the differences will enable them to become more competent communicators in English. As Harlig and Taylor (2003) critique, a serious pitfall in the traditional second language/foreign language curricula is the failure to address the pragmatic aspects of language and language use (p.37). Learners need to be aware of how language use differs in various English-speaking communities. They need to know about the pragmatics of speech acts, conversational implicature, conversational management, discourse organization, sociolinguistic aspects of language use such as choice of address forms. Teaching/learning materials need to incorporate necessary language activities to achieve this.

Yet another need of the hour is to contextualize teaching materials and methods. Instead of imported teaching materials and texts written by foreign writers, locally prepared life-related materials should find a place in English language curricula. If the topics of a text are familiar to the learners, they will find it more friendly and motivating. Students should not feel that they are dealing with an alien culture. For this, teaching-learning materials should be made more life-related. There is no need to do away with the western writers completely. However, African and Asian writers should also be given their due in teaching materials. In the Asian and African contexts, they have greater cultural proximity to learners. Folk tales and grandma’s stories should become part of materials at least in the initial years of learning. It is to be remembered that English language teaching no more aims at upholding the western culture. The aim is to develop communicative competence, and to that end, familiar culturally bound materials are certainly more suitable and sustainable. Tribal and rural cultures and stories from ancient books such as the Puranas and the Panchatantras will make learners feel more at home in English classes. It will develop in them a feeling of greater attachment and a positive attitude towards English.
Textbooks also should take into consideration the cultural and linguistic diversities of the land. This is of great importance in a country like India with multiple cultures and languages. It is difficult to have a pan Indian syllabus representing all the cultures. Thus, there is a need to exploit local cultural and experiential knowledge for the teaching of English. As discussed in chapter four, universal norms no more stand valid. Children should be enabled to use English to communicate about their own cultures and life experiences. Discussions on metaphysics and literary criticism may follow but the first thing is to learn to express their own life experiences. One may know how long the River Nile is. However, equally important is the knowledge about the stream in his/her own village. Thus, there cannot be a common syllabus for students in the cosmopolitan cities and students in the agrarian villages of the country. Their life experiences and living contexts are different and that should reflect in their English syllabus. Imported or imposed material will require a lot of references for comprehending the text. This will take away the focus from the practice of the language to understanding the text. In most cases, learners also lose their interest if the texts they deal with are too alien to them. However, content pertaining to their local native experiences will make it more intelligible to them and thus sustain their motivation. Locally prepared materials dealing with things and topics around them and translations from the regional dialects can be judiciously used to contextualize English language teaching.

Yet another reason to have locally contextualized teaching materials is the fact that English does not have a pan Indian second language status. Therefore, it will be unwise and impractical to have a pan Indian syllabus for English based on the assumption that English is a second language to all in the country.
English today is an international language. That is to say, it is used for communication among all the countries irrespective of native non-native divisions. In fact, more communication takes place among non-native speakers than among native speakers of the language. As pointed out earlier, non-native speakers of English are fast outnumbering the native speakers. In the present context, teaching materials should not aim at culture teaching because English as an international language does not represent any individual culture. If at all any cultural element is to be incorporated, it should be the local culture of the countries using English. As Suzuki (1999) points out, inclusion of Western cultures in the teaching /learning materials will result in people having a feeling of inferiority about their own culture as they may think that the Western culture is to be emulated. This, according to him, will lead to auto colonization where people voluntarily accept cultural imperialism (p.145). Thus, teaching of English should be separated from teaching of Western cultures. The true purpose of learning an international language is not to immerse in foreign cultures but to describe one’s own culture and concerns to others. As smith (1976) points out, it no longer needs to be linked to the culture of those who speak it as a first language. English has become an international language and is used for describing not one culture but many. Producers of teaching materials and educators in general should bear this in mind. Teaching materials should include not only native writers but also non-native writers of English. Denying learners the opportunity to know how English is used in second/foreign language contexts will not help them on international platforms where they have to communicate with speakers of English as a second/foreign language. It is also to be noted that not all the Western patterns of behaviour are acceptable in many non-Western contexts. Cultural appropriateness of the learning materials has a vital role in developing positive attitudes towards English. Discussions on dating and dancing with partners of the opposite sex at parties elicit contempt among EFL
learners of Arab culture. In fact, it happened with the researcher’s Omani EFL learners when he taught them similar texts from Cutting Edge for pre intermediate students. The listening text appears on page 13.

Today’s is a world of consumerism and marketing and most marketing jobs require good communication skills from the candidates. Teaching materials should consider the needs of learners and prepare them accordingly. For example, engineering students should get sufficient practice in preparing technical documents such as site visit reports, consumer guides, minute description of machines, etc. Similarly, commerce students should be adequately trained in preparing various kinds of reports, minutes of meetings, memos, etc. That is to say, teaching materials should cater to the work place needs of the prospective employees. This necessitates the use of various authentic materials in the class. Prescribed texts alone, in the present context, will not serve the purpose. It also means that there should be a greater focus on the development of the language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. English in India has grown beyond the status of a library language and mere focus on reading is not enough to prepare learners for the world. There is a need to develop task-based teaching/learning methodologies, which will help learners become proficient users of the language. This has further implications for teacher training programmes as well.

However, in a democracy mere proficiency in skills is not enough. A democracy requires citizens who can think for themselves and take decisions. It is the responsibility of any educational programme to foster such abilities in learners. To this end, materials should also include tasks and activities that promote critical thinking. What is required is not just speakers of English, but resourceful and capable citizens who can also use English for
various communicative and professional purposes. This also implies that learners should be well informed in various world affairs. Thus, there should also be content-based language tasks that would help learners develop both language and content knowledge. This, as Hauschild, Poltavtchenko and Stoller (2012) opine, would eliminate the typical separation between language and subject matter classes and allow the learner to develop expertise on interesting topics (p.2). This is of great importance in a democracy like India where people have to take decisions for themselves.

Having discussed the implications of the new sociolinguistic context on the teaching material, it befits to discuss some of the important implications for the methodology of teaching English.

5.6. Implications for the Methodology of Teaching

The old methodology of teaching English does not match with the newly proposed teaching materials and the new objectives of teaching English. The old Grammar Translation method and Structural Approach would have sufficed when English was taught as a library language aimed at enabling learners to access knowledge in the target language. However, the changed objective of acquiring communicative competence in English as an international language demands a different teaching methodology.

The most commonly advocated approach is the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. CLT aims at enabling learners to use English in real life situations or for real communicative purposes. Thus, authentic materials and the practice of skills by learners are of paramount importance in this approach.
Though generated in the inner circle countries, CLT is not always a case of pedagogical imperialism. Many countries such as Japan, China, Korea, the Gulf Countries, etc. advocate the adoption of CLT. They believe that CLT is the most adept methodology to promote communicative competence among learners. Lo Castro (1996) observes that one of the primary aims of the new curriculum in Japan was to promote listening and speaking skills as a way to promote communicative competence (as cited in McKay, 2002, p.109-10). By implication, CLT has become the choice and not an imposition.

Despite the great popularity it enjoys in EFL/ESL countries, CLT has been a failure on many soils. Deckert (2004) points out some of the major reasons that complicate CLT. He attributes them to the variations in culture, inadequacies of the teachers, hostile material circumstances such as large classrooms and inadequate or insufficient materials and teaching aids, lack of administrative support, student perceptions that do not match with CLT, etc. (pp.12-7).

India needs a teaching methodology that will promote communicative competence of learners. CLT is the most suitable approach to achieve this objective. The primary purpose of learning a language is to convey meaning in appropriate ways and that is what CLT intends to achieve. It is well accepted as an approach. However, there are problems with its design and procedure. Therefore, enough care should be taken to see that it follows a successful design and a procedure. As in the case of standard English, there is no need to look to the inner circle countries for pedagogical models. The local educators should take up the responsibility of developing both teaching materials and pedagogies appropriate to the local cultures. As Ellis (1996) points out the most important reason for the failure of CLT is that it does not take into consideration the differences in the culture of learning. Thus, it often becomes
‘unsuitable for Asian learners and teachers’ (p.214). CLT is a homogeneous teaching methodology developed in the inner circle countries for a heterogeneous world. It fails to see how appropriate its teaching methodologies are in the local culture it is applied to. The implication is that it should not be used in India in its imported version. As Ellis argues, “there is a need to recognize the Western social principles that underlie CLT” (p.216). It is the responsibility of the local educators to trim it to size to match with the Eastern social values and principles because the culture of learning is not a homogeneous entity.

The adoption of CLT in India will demand changes in the roles of both teachers and students. The teacher will move from the role of an imparter of knowledge to a facilitator. The student will no more be passive recipients waiting to be fed by the teacher. They will have to take up very active roles such as volunteering, engaging in discussions, doing surveys, role playing, asking, answering, brainstorming, thinking critically, etc. This is a paradigm shift from the traditional classrooms, and this cannot be successfully achieved unless students are also involved in these pedagogical innovations.

The experiences of Shamim (1996), a Pakistani university teacher, should guide educators in this line. She tried to bring in more pair work and group work in her class in an attempt to make her lessons more learner-centred and in proximity with CLT. Soon, she found her students resisting to these changes and demanding a going back to the old lecture method. Towards the end of the semester, she was forced to assume more and more authority in her class. Shamim’s is not an isolated case. Among many others, Li (1998) and Medgyes (1986) confronted similar situations in Korea and Hungary respectively (as cited in McKay, 2002, pp.11-5). Their experiences show that there is a need to mediate between the CLT
methodology and the local culture of learning. Authority does not carry a negative connotation in all the cultures. A threatening attitude is different from being seriously and positively authoritative in matters of education. Studies undertaken by Burnaby and Sun (1989) showed that many Chinese students felt that the activities in CLT were like games and fun with nothing much to do with serious learning—the process defeating the end (as cited in McKay, 2002, p.113). Hence, as discussed above, local educators should decide on the most suitable pedagogy for their learners based on the local culture and the learner needs. Materials and methods should be locally developed and in case of using imported teaching materials, they should be adapted to suit the local contexts of teaching and learning.

English has a long history in India. It is, as discussed earlier, no more a foreign language in the country. However, most of the educated Indians are not in a position to converse properly in English. Even graduates and postgraduates from reputable Indian universities are incapable of communicating well in English. Such a situation has stemmed from the fact that English was taught as a library language in the country. Hence, the English of the educated Indian happened to be bookish and formal (Sanyal, 2006). The need of the hour is to emancipate Indian English from this. This can be achieved only through developing a teaching methodology that focuses on the communicative aspects of the language. Learners need to be given chances to practise all the four skills and not just reading and writing. Lecture method has to be done away with and learners should be raised from being mere recipients to active participants in the class. The only sound heard in the class should not be that of the teacher. Teacher talking time (TTT) should be minimized and student-talking time (STT) should be maximized as far as possible. It is for the student to develop his/her language skills and hence his/her need to practise the language.
Only a learner-centred methodology can help improve the communicative competence of the learners. However, in a democratic country like India, it is not enough that learners can merely listen to or speak English. The Indian learners of English need to interact with not only the spoken form of English but also the written form. In most cases, the latter is more frequent. Thus, as Holliday (1994) points out the weak version of CLT is not suitable in many second language/foreign language contexts. The weak version, which he calls the BANA version, overemphasises listening and speaking at the cost of the other skills. BANA stands for Britain, Australia and North America. What India needs is the strong version or the TESP version (tertiary, secondary and primary). In the TESP version, learners interact with written texts analytically and find out how a text is constructed (as cited in Mckay, 2002, pp.108-9).

CLT in India should not mean doing away with content-rich written texts. CLT is an approach to teaching. Any material can be used communicatively for teaching purposes. The focus should be on making lessons more learner-centred by giving the learner chances to use the language. At the same time they should also be prepared to contribute to the intellectual growth of the country and democracy.

Practising the language means practising the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Thus, language lessons need to follow an integrated approach where all the skills are included. As in real life, listening and speaking should go together. One can read and then respond to what he/she read either through a piece of writing or through a discussion on it.

CLT poses many challenges to the Indian teacher. Large classrooms with forty to fifty students, inadequate teaching aids and the diverse socio-cultural contexts are not easy to
tackle. Thus, the teacher has to appropriate very judiciously his/her teaching methodology in a communicative way.

When there is a change in the method and the material, there should also be changes in ways of testing. The following section looks at some of the implications of these changes on testing English.

5.7. Implications for Testing

Changes in the teaching methodology and material should also follow changes in testing. The validity of a test depends on testing what it really intends to test. When the objective of teaching English is to develop proficiency in English, testing should also match with that. There should be a one-to-one correspondence between the approach and the method and the method and testing. As Coombe and Hubley (2005) put it “... a communicative language learning approach must be matched by a communicative language testing” (p.3). The problem with the present system of testing is that it tests learners’ memory more than proficiency in the language. This challenges both the validity and the reliability of the test. It fails to test what it has to test. Moreover, a memory-based test may not give the same result at a later stage. The present system allows learners with knowledge of the meta-language to achieve excellence in the exams irrespective of their ability to use the language in real life for communicative purposes. What it tests today is knowledge about the language and not the ability to use it in a variety of communicative situations.

Thus, there is a need to adapt testing into communicative language testing. That is to say, it has to test not segments of grammar or memorized definitions and verses but real
communicative competence of the learners. Tests need to be performance based. For this, skill-based tests with accurate specifications have to be developed. Both the receptive skills of listening and reading and the productive skills of speaking and writing should be tested.

Listening tests should focus on real listening. It should test whether the learner is competent enough to comprehend what she/he listens. It should not stop with mere recognition of words. As in real life, the ability to listen should not mean simple reproduction of words and phrases one listened. The focus should be mainly on comprehension. The learner should not be penalized for minor spelling or grammar mistakes unless they seriously impair meaning. For example, ‘consious’ for ‘conscious’ should be an acceptable answer in listening but not ‘ship’ for ‘sheep’. What it tests is not the learner’s ability to write without spelling mistakes but her/his ability to comprehend. However, there can be variations depending on the purpose. As Wardeh (2005) proposes, the nature of the question decides whether the answers are to be written directly from the listening. For example, if the question tries to see learners’ ability to discriminate phonemes or to discriminate between numbers such as thirteen and thirty or understanding details such as names and years then the answers have to be direct (p.48).

Communicative language testing should assure that everything is close to real life. Therefore, the listening script played to the students should include dialogues, interviews, discussions, radio/TV programmes, etc. In short, they should be similar to what learners are likely to confront in real life. It should not be a read out version of a written test. That is to say, a real listening text should have all the features of the spoken discourse. There should be hesitations, backtracking, repetition, redundancies, interruptions, etc. as in real spoken discourse. As Wardeh (2005) suggests, a lot of ‘you know’s, ‘well’s, ‘I mean’s, ‘anyway’s,
know what I mean’s, ‘right’s, ‘wouldn’t you say’s should go into the listening script to make it sound spoken (p.45).

Yet another point to consider in preparing a listening test is the present sociolinguistic reality discussed in chapter two. As non-native speakers of English use English more today, a variety of Englishes should be included in listening tests. For example, both native and non-native speakers should be included in discussions, dialogues and interviews.

The traditional way of testing reading in India has done anything except testing reading. There is no guarantee that the learner will have to read the text to answer the given questions. Answers are memory-based and most questions can be answered just by listening to someone explaining or reading the text. The learner is expected to remember the content of various texts such as essays, short stories, poems and novels and answer the questions in the examination without a chance to refer to them again. It tests memory more than it tests comprehension.

In the ESL/EFL context, there is a need to make reading more comprehension oriented. Therefore, learners should be presented with the reading text in the examination, and his/her ability to comprehend the given text should be tested. There can be scanning questions based on newspaper advertisements, brochures, menus, itineraries, etc. In the present context of the global diffusion of English, one is sure to come across such reading materials very often. Longer texts should be given to check comprehension and the other reading specific sub-skills. There should be a variety of questions such as multiple choice questions, short answer questions, reference questions, identifying main ideas, identifying ideas discussed in the
preceding or the succeeding paragraphs, guessing the meaning of unknown vocabulary items, etc. At higher levels, there can be questions such as identifying the tone and purpose of the writer, identifying the method of organization of ideas (identify how the supporting sentences in a paragraph are related to the topic sentence), summarizing and paraphrasing a paragraph, etc. Line numbers can be mentioned in the case of pronoun reference questions and vocabulary questions. In the case of longer texts with many paragraphs, paragraph numbers also should be mentioned. This will make the test more learner-friendly.

As discussed earlier, when the objective and the methodology aim at developing linguistic competence, testing should match with them. Reading should test the learner’s general comprehension and the other sub skills of reading and not the ability to memorize.

Writing and speaking are productive skills. The global diffusion of English discussed in chapter one has its implications in the testing of these skills too. In India, most students fail in their English examinations mainly because of their poor writing skills. Their writing is considered poor because of the undue prominence given to form over meaning. Students are usually awarded zero for answers with grammatical errors. Writing tests focus more on grammatical accuracy. Moreover, native speaker standard is the touchstone for accuracy in writing. All nativized versions are considered incorrect or substandard.

With a change to CLT necessitated by the globalization of English, there should be radical changes in the testing of writing. First, as discussed earlier, teachers should not look for flowery language with complicated structures. Obfuscation and circumlocution should not be treated as meritorious. Global English demands proper and direct communication. Therefore,
simplicity and readability should be counted more important. In addition, grammaticality should not be the sole criteria while evaluating the written works of learners. Other aspects of writing such as content, organization, vocabulary and mechanics (spelling, punctuation and capitalization) should be given due importance. In fact, content should be given greater weightage. Learners’ attempt to generate ideas and to express them through English should be appreciated. It does not mean that teachers should ignore form and accept ungrammatical structures as correct. The idea here is simply that grammar is only one part of writing. As Johannsen (1996) suggest, teachers should not expect students to model their work solely on the monolingual framework of the native speaker countries (p.85). The aspects of indigenization discussed in chapter two should not be ignored while testing writing. Deviations are not always errors. Students may have positive attitudes towards their national variety, and that may find expression in their writing.

Another more important issue to be looked into is the authenticity of learners’ writing. Testing writing should not become a reproduction of the notes and essays dictated by teachers or produced by guide publishers. Traditional questions like describe the sinking of the Titanic or narrate Gandhi’s experiences in South Africa open up chances for such mishaps. To avoid this, tasks should be set based on pictures, diagrams, tables, etc. It should ensure that students write in their own language. It should also test the learner’s ability to communicate in writing for real life purposes such as inviting, accepting or rejecting invitations, placing orders, writing complaint letters, etc. The focus of the test should be on testing writing ability and not general knowledge. As Hughes (1989) proposes, in language testing the interest should not be to know whether the learners are intelligent or they have wide general knowledge (p.82).
Therefore, in a writing test the learners should be asked to write on topics they are familiar with.

Speaking has been a long neglected area in the Indian educational system. As English was taught as a library language, the major focus used to be in the receptive skill of reading. However, with the advent of globalization, speaking has gained an added prestige in the country. The presence of many multinational companies in India and the opening up of many call centres have made speaking skill inevitable for employment. As it always happens, socio-politico changes reflect on education also. Thus, speaking also has become a part of language testing today. However, as Ramanathan (2008) observes, assessment of listening and speaking skills is a recent phenomenon with most Boards of Education neither testing nor including them in a composite grade for English (p.118). The state board of education in Kerala, for example, tests the skill of speaking through the completion of a dialogue in writing. The paradox here is that though this question comes under speaking test, even a dumb student can answer it, as there is no real speaking but only writing. It is the writing of a dialogue. There is no speaking in it. It is a welcome thing that there is an initiation into the testing of the oral ability of the learner. However, this needs to be further strengthened.

Oral ability should be tested solely through speaking. Many Boards, as Ramanathan (2008) observes, do this by interviewing students or by making them speak for two to five minutes in front of the class of about forty peers (p.120). The disadvantage here is that not all the students can speak confidently to such an audience. Stage fear can stop them from speaking fluently. In the case of interview, as Hughes (1989) observes, the students may feel that they are speaking to a superior person and may not open up their minds confidently and take the
initiative (p.104). Thus, there is a need to assess the learner’s oral proficiency through a continuous assessment system. An observant teacher can do this without the knowledge of the learner.

The criteria for grading should include fluency, accuracy, appropriacy, range, flexibility and size. As in the case of the writing test, accuracy or grammaticality should not become the dominant concern here also. L1 influences in pronunciation are most likely to occur. The focus in such cases should be intelligibility. As discussed in chapter two, if such deviations do not affect comfortable intelligibility, they should be accepted. Native speaker proficiency should not become the target.

One that concerns the testing of all the skills is transparency. Clear and accurate information about all the aspects of testing should be made available to students. The secrecy and mysteries surrounding testing system should be done away with. The learners should know the marking criteria or the value points well in advance. That way, learners will also become part of the testing process. Patil (2008) expresses his concern over the examination phobia of the learners and the resultant suicides. He explains how classroom related and examination related stress affect students adversely. Most of the examination related disorders are due to the immense pressure on students to memorize trivial details such as grammar rules and definitions (pp.10-11). This also has a wash back effect on teaching. As it is, the success of a teacher is related to the success of her/his students in the examination. When success in examinations becomes the ultimate goal, teachers are forced to prepare their students for the examination with a complete disregard to developing language skills. However, the implementation of the above mentioned proposals are sure to bring in changes in the
examination system also. Moving away from testing rote memory will take away all the examination related pressures from the learners and help them succeed in linguistic competence.

5.8. Implications for Teacher Training

A teacher plays a vital role in effectively implementing any changes in educational policy. When the teaching of English in the country aims at achieving communicative competence in English, the first thing to look at is the communicative competence of those who teach the language. As it was, English could be taught in schools by any trained graduate. A bachelor degree in English or a B Ed in English was not compulsory to become a teacher of English in the country. However, there have been positive changes in this regard. Many states in India, including Kerala, have made both of these the minimum qualifications to take up a teaching career in English at school level.

The efficacy of the teacher training programmes needs to be viewed critically. The surprising fact, as Nair (2013) points out, is that a teacher of English begins her career with a little knowledge of grammar and a very insignificant degree of communicative competence. She leaves her career after a couple of decades with a slightly increased degree of grammatical knowledge but no communicative competence. He explains that this happens because her class room does not demand any real communication in English. Whether the classroom demands it or not, it is more than unfair to let the learners be taught by teachers who cannot communicate effectively in the target language. This is an issue to be addressed in the teacher training programmes. In addition to focusing on teaching methodologies and techniques the training programmes should make sure that the trainees acquire excellent communicative
competence. It will be unwise to expect incompetent teachers to train their students to be competent in English.

The candidates should also be trained to abstain from hours long lectures where they fondly listen to their own voices. They should be made aware that language teaching is different from subject teaching. Language is a skill and like all other skills it is acquired only through practice. They should also be adequately trained in material production. This should enable them to adapt and supplement the given materials if required. In short, teacher training programmes should be reoriented in such a way that the average teacher of English should start her career with remarkable communicative competence and having made a generation of learners competent users of English should leave her career with more remarkable communicative competence.

5.9. Scope for Further Research

This study suggests possibility of further research in the areas of ELT and TESOL Pedagogy. Empirical research projects could be undertaken to examine whether and to what degree (a) the English curriculum adequately equips learners with the skills and competency required for the job market, (b) teaching materials are effective in catering to the needs of learners, (c) the teaching methodology is feasible or viable to address learners’ needs, (d) teacher training/development programmes are effective and (e) teacher burn-out and satisfaction.
5.10. Conclusion

This concluding chapter has come out with suggestions to change the ELT scenario in India. All the suggestions are based on issues such as the global spread of English, nativization of English at different levels, factors affecting the intelligibility of English, inadequacy of a universal pragmatics for English, etc. It takes into consideration the present socio-politico-economic and linguistic scenario and proposes changes that suit the need of the hour. It mainly focuses on changing the objectives of teaching English, emancipating learners from bookish English to live English and developing learner’s communicative competence through changes in teaching materials, methodologies and the present system of testing. It also highlights the need to help the exposure-deprived students from the rural areas by offering them foundation programmes in English. It also suggests further areas of research in ELT.

To summarize, the English teaching scenario in India stands in need of some thorough changes. English needs to be treated as a set of skills and competencies, and not as a subject. The primary objective of teaching English today should be to acquire competence in communication. To achieve this, learning objectives, materials, teaching methodologies and the present system of testing should be remoulded. This is a challenge to be taken up by policy makers, material producers, teachers, test designers, students and all other stakeholders involved in the teaching of English and the building up of the nation in general.