CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

David Crystal in his book *English as a Global Language* (1957) estimates about the users of English that of the 1.5 billion people who know English, about 337 million use English as the first language; about 350 million use it as a second language; in addition, there may be about 1 to 1.5 million people who are actively learning and trying to use English; this constitutes about a third of the human race. Braj Kachru, an Indian American Linguist, classifies the variety of English and its uses in term of three circles.

![Diagram of three circles: Inner circle, Outer circle, Expanded circle.]

Inner circle: UK, USA, Australia, Canada (320-380 million).

Outer Circle: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Singapore etcetera (350 million).

Expanded circle: China, Japan, Russia, South America etcetera (100-1000 million).

The inner circle refers to the traditional base of English where it is used as first language. The outer circle shows the earlier phase of the spread of English (may be due to the establishment of the colonies, trade etcetera) where it is an important second language. The expanded circle involves those countries and areas where English is recognized as an important international language and is taught and learnt as a foreign language. The role of English as a language of international communication has expanded rapidly by the 1950s.
“Where as in medieval times English was the language of an island nation and French was the language of a continental one, in the twentieth century English has become the language of the world, thanks to the linguistic legacy of the British empire, the emergence of the USA as an English-speaking super power and the fortuitous association of English with the industrial and technological development of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (White 1988, pp9-12).

The information expositions in the world have happened in the English language and so it has become the language of the info-age.

“English is the world’s way of communicating internationally just as the Christian calendar is the world’s way of tracing time, just as the Arabic numbers as the world’s way of counting and first as the matrix system is, for the most part, the world’s way of measuring”(Huntingdon,1996 pp123-134).

The English language is no longer a language of national or cultural or class identity; it has become a language of technology and of communicational necessity. In fact the English ‘tsunami’ is lashing every country in the world.

1.1 English in India

Since the colonial days English has expanded considerably to the extent that it has acquired the constitutional status of an associated official language. Though Indians who use English are estimated to constitute only about 10 percent of the nations’ population but they control the national administration and play an important role in policy making. English is widely regarded by the students and parents as the language of opportunity and a ladder to social mobility. Consequently there is a wide spread general desire to learn this language. According to an estimate there are approximately twenty million students learning English throughout the country at this time.

1.2 History of English Language Teaching

English as an international language and a language of communication supported the need for a practical command of English for people all over the world rather than an academic mastery of the language as one might acquire in a typical school course. The initial response of the English language teaching profession was to explore new directions in methodology. It was assumed that in order to meet the changing needs of language learners, more up to date teaching methods are needed that reflect the latest
understanding of the nature of language and of language learning. From antiquity to modern age there are developments of various theories and attempts in the field of teaching English as a second language. The historical development of English language teaching as a second and foreign language from antiquity to the present is reviewed under five rule divisions spread over –

- The Middle age
- The Renaissance
- Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries
- The Nineteenth Century
- The Twentieth Century

Before the foundation of the Roman Empire, the Romans studied Greek as a second language. They engaged Greek tutors, nurses, Greek speaking slaves and servants in their household. The process was similar to the acquisition of the first language i.e. by direct living contact with the speakers of the foreign language and by imitation and reproduction of the sound, words and sentences of the target language. During the middle ages, as the Roman Empire expanded, Latin became an International language of the western world, Latin was then taught as any living language was taught – at first orally through an initiation of the language of the native speakers and later through extensive as well as intensive reading and writing. The same methods of language teaching were later adopted to teach modern languages like English by the practitioners.

In the nineteenth century, the two opposing trends were contending for supremacy. One was the teaching of language by direct contact either by oral or written form and second trend was the dependence on a systematic teaching of grammar, based on prescriptive rules of various kinds. Karl Plotz popularized the grammar-translation method as the principal method of teaching modern languages.

But in the final decades of the nineteenth century grammar – translation was attacked as a cold and lifeless approach to language teaching. The majority of language teaching reforms in the late nineteenth century and throughout the first half of the twentieth developed in opposition to grammar – translation. The Reform movement in
the last two decades of the nineteenth century was preceded by the work of a few individual reforms.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the teaching of English as a second language emerged as an autonomous profession. English established itself as a second language with a utilitarian function in communication. The monolingual methodology of the direct method and its applied linguistic base provided the foundation as well as the impetus for a number of teachers, phoneticians and linguistics in Britain to evolve several new methods. Danial Jones published a number of source books like *The Pronunciation of English* (1909), *The English Pronouncing Dictionary* (1917), *An Outline of English Phonetics* (1918) etc. Harold E. Palmer published a number of books on methodology as *The Scientific Study and Teaching of Language* (1917), *The principles of Language Study* (1921). Michael West published *The New Method of Grammar* (1938) and many more.

These developments in Britain were paralleled with the growth of applied linguistics as a discipline in America. Descriptive linguistics was introduced in the USA with the works of anthropological linguistics like Franz Boas and Edward Sapir at the beginning of the century. The emphasis on imitation and practice also received theoretical support from the behaviorist psychology of B. F. Skinner. The audio-lingual method which was thus in part a reflection of the availability of audio technology during the 1950s and the structural views on language retained its influence from about 1959 to 1966. From the beginning of this but increasingly since 1964 audio-linguistic was challenged. Eventually, by 1970 it was severely criticized on theoretical grounds, particularly after the attack on structural linguistic and behaviorist psychology by Chomsky.

Rejecting behaviorism and structural linguistics, language pedagogy began to seek in transformational grammar and cognitive psychology a basis for second language teaching. The cognitive theory which ensued as a consequence, stressed the intellectual understanding of the language as a system by the learners. The behaviorist view of learning in terms of conditioning, shaping, reinforcement, habit formation and over learning has been replaced by an emphasis on rule learning, meaningful practice and creativity.
In 1966 Dell Hymes introduced the concept of communicative competence in the USA and British applied linguistics such as D. A. Wilkins, Christopher Candlin and Henry Widdowson recognized the functional and communicative aspects of language that a real shift took place in the language pedagogy. The goal of language instruction shifted to building up learners’ communicative competence. Making its appearance in the 1970s, communicative competence focused on socio-linguistic concerns and considered linguistic competence merely as an adjunct to communication. A distinction was made between grammatical rules of usage that enable users to construct correct sentences and the use of language to accomplish some kind of communicative purpose.

As a result of this shift from linguistics competence to communicative competence, several communicative syllabuses have been proposed.

Kinds of communicative syllabus-

1. Functional Jupp and Hodlin (1975)
2. Structures plus Functions Wilkins (1976)
3. Notional Wilkins (1976)
4. Learner-Generated Candlin (1976)
5. Interactional Widdowson (1979)
6. Functional – Spiral around Structural Core Brumful (1980)
7. Competency- Based Grognet and Crandall (1982)
8. Task -Based Prabhu (1983)

But despite all these, there seemed to be something of a vacuum in methodology during the transition period of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Carroll Ney and Marckwardt made a significant plea for prudent eclecticism, suggesting a synthesis of methodologies. These humanistic reflections are reflected in various contemporary methodologies like Caleb Gattegno’s Silent Way (1972) Georgi Lozanov’s Suggestopedia (1978) Ashar’s The Total Response Method (1982) and Carran’s Counseling Learning Methodologies. These are concerned not only with increased language proficiency but also with many facets of personal growth. Recognizing the
learners’ active role in acquiring his language, they evolved strategies to lessen classroom anxiety and promote a warm accepting climate for the learners.


**From 1830 to present time**

<table>
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**1.3 English Language Teaching in India in Present Scenario**

At the international level, from antiquity to modern age, there were a number of important developments in the area of linguistics and second language teaching. The emergence of these methods, in India too, necessitated the need for pedagogic reform. Trainings at all levels were given importance. Some English Language Teaching Institutions were established in collaboration with the British Council. In 1960’s, the developments in the field of ELT in USA and Britain pushed the structural approach to the back stage and new ideas began to emerge which influenced ELT in India. In 1970 Prabhu and his project team undertook an experiment in ELT called the Communicational Teaching Project (CTP). Launched at the RIESI Bangalore, with the blessing of professor Victor Devasundaram, Director of the institute in 1979, the CTP was conducted in Bangalore, Karnataka, Madras and in Tamil Nadu, involving five classes, Primary and Secondary in five schools both government and private and about five hundred students who learnt English as a second language in regional
language medium schools. The syllabus that has resulted from the experimental project is called the procedural syllabus which is a list of mind-engaging real-life or life-like tasks for the learners to do in classes using English. The Government of India, with the help of the English and Foreign Language University (EFLU) and numerous Regional Centers has been taking several measures to strengthen ELT in the country such as periodical revision of the syllabus and teaching materials, regular refresher courses for teachers of English, in-service trainings, national level conferences of teachers and teacher educators to discuss the problems of ELT and find possible solutions, advance training to ELT teachers in UK, and USA and encouragement to teachers to do research in the field of ELT etc.

But still the teaching of English whether for beginners or for the advance learners has been a challenging pursuit for the teachers of English especially the area that covers the acquisition of skills of language. It may be due to such differences as in the levels of initiation of instruction, differences in the socio-economic status, differences in urban and rural background, scarcity of teachers’ well-versed in content matter as well as the methodology of teaching, lack of adequate aids and instructional materials, hamper in their own way the successful handling of English in the classrooms. Universities in India still follow the colonial pattern of education; it is deeply entrenched in the colonial system. Teachers of English are not willing to change their mind-set. They don’t want to accept the changing role of English in the world. English is no longer projected as a study of culture for humanistic purpose; English has become an important tool of international communication but there is no serious attempt to redefine the goal of teaching English in post–colonial India; all this results in an aimless drift.

It is unfortunate but true that ELT in most of the academic situations in India seems to be ineffective and impractical. English language proficiency and communicative competences of a majority of students are open to question. At the collegiate level, most of the students, who have passed university exams, are not able to communicate either orally or in written form. This is the reality in spite of the fact that they have had nearly 1000 hours of formal language instruction in their language classes before their entry into the collegiate level during nearly eleven years of schooling, but most of them have a very poor command in English. Reasons are many.
• Out-dated pedagogy and teacher domination

In fact ELT in India has been suffering from an out of date pedagogy and teacher dominated mode of presentation for more than a century. In this type of chalk and talk exam–oriented system of instruction, a teacher acts as a narrator who infuses knowledge in to receptacles through a parrot-like imitative process. This process in language classes, which are mostly run through a hybrid of grammar-translation method and audio–lingual methods, entails translation, repetition, memorization, recitation and reproduction.

Such instructional system which is running in most of the government and semi-government schools and colleges in India is based on individualistic competition among students. Their focus is on cramming the package so as to get ready to regurgitate them whenever they are called upon or disgorge them in their exam papers which usually test nothing but their short term memory power and their knack of working rapidly under extreme pressure. This wash back effect in turn has had pernicious impacts on learning process and consequently students’ abilities for language use.

• Use of vernacular medium of instruction

What worsens the situation is that English is usually taught in the vernacular for the benefit of students who are not capable of comprehending or communicate in English even at the collegiate level. They speak English with a concoction of regional words and local slants. Consequently teachers are not able to sustain students’ attention. Shortly after the commencement of the class students’ attention starts to waft and by the end of the class boredom is generally rampant. SMS-ing’, chatting, emailing, listening to music, yawning, dreaming or even sleeping are common activities in English language classes.

• Learners’ needs are ignored

One main problem of this situation is that learners’ needs are constantly being ignored. The fact that students are coming from different backgrounds, complicates the situation in language learning classes because their socio-cultural backgrounds creates huge gaps in their communicative competencies. The differences between their skills, learning style, learning strategies and activities are ignored. According,
they lose their interest and lack motivation for learning and thereby get poorer and poorer day by day.

- **Teacher–Centered approach**

Another greatest problem in ELT is the destructive impact of the traditional teacher-centered approaches which are being applied from primary to college level. There is very little scope for genuine and meaningful interaction and effective language learning. The result of this type of instructional system is nothing but short term mastery of the course material by the students, but the after effects of this system of education are lower opportunities for transference of academic strategies and social skills. Education thus becomes an act of depositing in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and parrot back. This is the “banking” concept of education in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filling, storing the deposits.

- **Less use of technology in ELT classroom**

Despite all the deficiencies in teaching English, a number of teachers and students have a penchant for it. Teachers prefer it due to hesitation about the feasibility of application or level of effectiveness of new innovation. Most of them believe that the new innovations are not practical in real classroom setting. But the reality seems to be the fact that they lack the knack to open up their minds for the new emerging trends in the field of education. A considerable number of teachers lack the methodological savvy. Students also like this product–oriented approach as it dispenses the information they need for securing their marks in minimum time. By mastering some survival skills suffices them to make their dreams come true.

- **Lack of collective awareness**

Another problem is the lack of collective awareness in different authorities. Central Universities, Deemed Universities, The CIEFL, RIEs, ELTAIs, KHS,CBSE,NCERT, Navodaya Vidyalayas, Kendriya Vidyalayas, NCTE, Autonomous Colleges, Curriculum Development Centers, Academic Staff Colleges, Refresher Courses, Open Universities and Schools, DIETs, Operation Blackboards, Education for All, Computer Assisted Language Learning, Language Laboratories, National Testing
Service, Action Plan etcetera, all are big names and high sounding words but all these agencies don’t have co-operation regarding language teaching. Due to this lack of co-operation, English language teaching is carrying on mechanically as rituals.

It is the business of linguistics and ELT to make a learner proficient and competent in the use of English as tool for communication. This proficiency and competence is essential for anyone engaged in learning English and once this competence is attained he/she can then go on to dwell in the realms of Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Goldsmith, Jane Austen, Wordsworth and so on. And to inject this competence in the learner is the job of a specialist. Such specialists are the need of time in Indian situation.

The most emerging issues for an English language teacher are -

- How to add variety and remove boredom from an ELT classroom?
- How effectively and fruitfully can language games be played in ELT classroom?
- How can language communication skills be developed in the learners?
- How can we construct a realistic but effective curriculum?
- How can a teacher evaluate the performance of the learner throughout the year?

These various aspects of ELT with precision and clarity seem to be the need of the day.

Despite all these measures, the situation in the country can’t be encouraged if teacher trainers continue to load the trainees with the useless theories and teachers of English continue to use age-old methods in their English classes and learners continue to be incapable of using English whenever they need.

- **Lack of knowledge of curriculum**

A good knowledge of curriculum and syllabus is essential to the teachers of English because it gives them directions for their classroom teaching. The knowledge of various methods makes a teacher knowledgeable and helps him to choose the right method but the knowledge of the curriculum and syllabus helps him to develop his own method in order to suit the needs of his learners.


1.4 English language teaching in Haryana

Like all over India, learners in Haryana, too lack competence in English. The teaching of English in Haryana at all three levels i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary level is still fraught with a multitude of difficulties and obstacles. Realizing the demand and importance of English, like other states of India, in Haryana too, English is taught as a compulsory language and from the very first standard, even then the outcome is unsatisfactory.

Reasons are many. Some are canalized to portray a picture how English is being taught in Haryana. When a child enters in school, stress remains on formation of alphabets not on speaking and listening. To enhance vocabulary, they are forced to cram a long list of words. When these learners enter at secondary level, they are competent enough in writing and understanding English language but all this is cramming based. At tertiary level situation becomes more pathetic. Class size is most often very large comprising a wide range of initial proficiency and learning needs. Over centralization of educational policies, academic inflexibility of the system not only stifle innovative and pragmatic deviation but also create a flow with the current, pacifistic resignation among resourceful and well motivated educator. Teachers have very little to say in designing the curriculum, choosing the materials and textbooks or developing assessment technique. The only assessment that matters is the year end examination and students simply cram answers of likely questions. Such questions and answers can be readily found in guidebooks or crib schools for which there has been a flourishing market, or the answers are abstracted from notes dictated by teachers in classes. Some students especially the ones from vernacular medium schools, insists that they find the study guides more useful in exams than the class room instructions. In fact the low rate of literacy, contempt for manual work, emphasis on humanistic and literary education at the cost of technical and vocational education, the craze for university degree and government jobs, political and bureaucratic interference in education, the increasing corruption in educational institutions and society, malpractice in examinations, the vastness of the country and other such factors make English a premium product. So, students struggle to get degree in English by hook or by crook.

University systems of Haryana are not sensitive to the changing needs of the society. Departments in English in Universities and colleges have not cashed in on the
changes that are taking place in the world. When the world is using English for international, intercultural communicational and technology purpose, universities and colleges in Haryana still follow year’s old syllabus and teach literary texts to which neither the teachers nor the students understand and are interested in.

Overall English teaching situation is not much different from what it was 40 years ago. A very few teachers can fully understand what they teach. A cursory examination of college students reveals that they are still studying same syllabi. The randomly chosen questions from some of the recent university examination demonstrate how English syllabi are still dominated by selections from literary classics universally taught in the days of yore.

1. What is Shelley’s message in his Ode to the West Wind?

2. How does Emily Dickenson present death?

3. Justify the title Great Expectations by Dickens?

   “… the content of the literature based text books is often unrelated to the lives and experiences of the students studying them, resulting in students’ feeling of cultural dissonance between themselves and the topics portrait in the literature [and ] feelings of alienation from text with overly western theme”(Ramanathan page, 225).

The lake of any significant changes in the English language curricula, teaching methodology, examination system, persistence of the Herculean task of teaching English in very large classes is truly saddening

There seems to be three strands of students in higher education sector.

1. A majority of students graduate from regional – language – medium school with some books or rote knowledge, but little communicative ability in English. They then enter in English medium institution of higher education and struggle with varying degrees of success to cope with the English language requirement of higher education. Most of them manage to develop English largely formulaic and cliché – ridden, to meet the English related demands of their education and of the career they have been forced to choose.

2. A small segment, having graduated from English medium schools (in Indian jargon “convent schools or expensive public schools”) enter in colleges with a glib fluency in
English and enjoy an initial advantage as well as some social power over their peer group. Most of these students have acquired their English proficiency at the cost of alienation from their native language and culture.

3. As for the much large group of students from regional language schools who enroll in colleges where all subjects are taught in the regional language and where English is only one of the subjects, they often go through college, with very little use of English and end up pursuing career which requires only a minimal use of the language.

Rural students are very much affected by this ELT system. There is great mismatch between urban and rural students. Urban students somehow manage to learn English. They are third generation learners, having spot from parents and often get learning environment. But rural students are first generation learners who take English as foster language and throughout their life they are not able to cope with it in spite of their best efforts. They learn without knowing what they are learning. Linguistic research says this is how a feeling of backwardness itself embosses among these learners. Most students find it difficult to understand the substance of the prescribed literary selection.

Mother tongue influence can also be seen in these students because they are not given proper pronunciation drill at primary level. So whatever they speak, vernacular effects are there. For e.g, School /sku:l/Book /bu:k/Student /setu:dent/etc. At tertiary level it’s impossible to correct these learners.

Atkinson 1999, who has also studied this situation in India, observed that students from rural area are typically excluded from the kind of access, enjoyed by their urban social-middle class counterpart; consequently, they are in effect, denied important benefits of English known students. These students who are not sufficiently literate in English are essentially unable to participate in a number of domains such as global business. English proficiency and access to English may also be a strong factor in the polarization between urban and rural communities.

So English language teaching at all levels is not up to the mark. Government is doing all possible efforts to make English language teaching effective but still it is a big challenge for English language teachers. Much needs to be done in this direction.

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