CHAPTER I
PROBLEM AND THE CONCEPT

1.1 Introduction

Language is the primary requirement of mankind. It has to be learnt. Learning of a language is a continuous process. It has to be over a period of time. The mother tongue is learnt spontaneously in a regular course of life. However, the second language may be quite difficult to learn. Similarly, its teaching is equally difficult. During the recent past, considerable changes have taken place in the field of language teaching. Acknowledging that language is essentially a tool for communication, the prime need of most learners is not for a theoretical or analytical knowledge of target language but for an ability to understand and be understood in that language within the context and constraints of peculiar language-using circumstances. Language communication among human beings is characterized by the use of arbitrary spoken or written symbols with agreed-upon meanings. More broadly, language may be defined as communication in general; some linguistics regard it as a form of knowledge, that is, of thought or cognition.

The study of language as a means of expression or communication necessarily includes the study of gestures and sounds. Considering that animals gesture and make sounds, do animals as well as humans have language? In fact, most species communicate. Human communication, as distinct from animal, however, has been characterized by some scholars as unique in having the following seven features: (i) Human languages have separate, interrelated systems of grammar and of sound and gesture; (2) They allow new things to be communicated all the time; (3) Humans make a distinction between the content that is
communicated and their labels for that content; (4) In human communication, spoken language is interchangeable with language that is heard; (5) Human languages are used for special purposes, intent lies behind what is communicated; (6) What is communicated can refer to the past and the future; (7) Human language is learned by children from adults and is passed down from generation to generation.

Some convincing recent research in teaching American Sign Language (AMESLAN) to primates and other experiments, where chimpanzees used computers and voice synthesizers to produce basic sentences, indicate, however, that a number of these features may not be uniquely human. Nonetheless, it seems safe to say that although language as a system of communication is not uniquely human, human language, nevertheless, has unique characteristics. Humans string together discrete signs and units of grammar to form an infinite set of never-before heard, thought, read, or signed sentences. Infants who have not yet been taught grammar form their own rules of language by using their linguistic ability together with input from the speech community into which they are born.

The recent concept of communicative language teaching has brought about a revolution of thoughts and ideas and it has, in fact, become a challenging task for the linguistics to understand it in the right perspective.

The investigator, therefore, chose to know the way English is being taught in the country. English is being taught as a compulsory language in the Southern states from classes III/IV/V while in the Northern states it is taught from classes I/II/VI/VIII. It is optional in some states. In modern public schools, English teaching is mandatory from K.G. or Pre-nursery onwards. To begin with,
teaching of English, at present, at all levels, is either limited to structure or grammar or translation method. At the primary and secondary school levels, structures and vocabulary are taught through a structural syllabus and grammar translation method. It is believed that this would help the learners construct correct English sentences with the help of the structures learnt over the years. At higher education level, these structures are revised and more exposure to English is provided with the help of literary texts.

In spite of their wide application, the existing teaching approaches and methods often come under severe criticism for the mere fact that the learners who learn through these approaches do not 'learn' the language (English) in any real sense. Students who have received several years formal English teaching frequently remain deficient in the use of language in normal communication, whether in spoken or written form. The situation is quite pathetic. Every school is teaching English but the knowledge of English language is poor to the students. A lot of human energy and finance is being consumed. Still much talent is being wasted.

Traditional approach is not giving desirable results. It might just as well be argued that what is actually taught by the existing teaching approaches is the ability to compose correct sentences. The difficulty is that the ability to compose sentences is not the only ability we need to develop. Other skills are also to be developed. Communication takes place when we make use of sentences to perform a variety of different acts of an essentially social nature. In fact, we do not communicate just by composing sentences of different kinds but by using sentences to describe, record, classify and so on, or to ask questions, make request, give order, seek or impart information, etc.
One may argue that our existing teaching approaches have made the learners 'structurally competent' and have developed in them the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences. The truth is that they are unable to perform a simple communicative task. These 'structurally competent' but 'communicatively incompetent' learners know the grammar but lack the ability to be appropriate as well as fluent. These learners perhaps falter to know how to say a particular thing at a particular time. They know the rules of grammar but do not really know the rules of the use of language. D. Hymes (1971) rightly argues that there are rules of 'use' without which the rules of grammar would be useless.

In India, teaching of English is more or less content-based. The four fundamental language skills, namely, Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing are generally neglected. This is the reason why our students are found to be weak in Writing. Even at the senior secondary school level, students remember by heart leave application, stories, essays, paragraphs and get through the final examination but, later on, forget most of the things learnt or remembered. On an average, what is taught in school is writing applications, letters to friends and family members, essays, stories – all taught through the grammar translation-method and sometimes, through the structural approach. However, after completing school education, a person is required to write in English social letters, applications for jobs as well as leave applications, invitations, greetings and good wishes, complaints, diary, etc. Later on, while in service, one has to write minutes of a meeting, appointment letters, office orders, notices, telegrams, descriptions, etc. Generally such forms of writing are not taken care of in schools and colleges. This might be the reason why our students fail to communicate with the society they live in. Writing, which is an
important language skill, has been given its due place. Hence, the gap between what is taught in schools and what is required to be done in society after completing education or in office. The newly appointed officers frequently fail in writing notices, orders, etc. The situation is so bad that our students can neither write nor reply to an invitation letter. They are not able to see the differences between the spoken and the written, the formal and the informal forms of language. As a result, one can see the students using formal language in social letters and informal language in formal letters, producing in effect strange, funny and inappropriate expressions in writing.

Students, even after several years of learning through the existing approaches, fail to impart and seek personal information such as describing where they live, or inquiring and making statements about their profession, expressing likes and dislikes, requesting others to do something and expressing agreement and disagreement. Students mostly fail to communicate what they really want to do, not because they lack ideas, thoughts and feelings, but because they have not been taught so far how and when these communicative tasks and acts are performed. Consequently, they are not able to communicate and whatever they communicate is enough proof that their communicative competence needs to be developed.

The ideas, opinions, arguments and views of linguists, theorists, methodologists and pedagogues and the real English language teaching scene in the country give rise to queries like the following:

1. Does traditional language teaching pedagogy develop learner’s communicative competence?
2. Does a lot of exposure to the language help in developing learners’ communicative competence in written language?

3. Does a lot of practice in English grammar develop learners’ communicative competence?

4. Does a lot of exposure to the language as a whole develop learners’ communicative competence?

5. Does a lot of practice in writing develop communicative competence in English?

6. Does the present system of teaching English fulfil the learners’ needs? What are our learners’ communicative needs?

7. What are the teaching strategies required to be developed in order to develop learners’ communicative competence in written English?

8. Which method of teaching can be more efficacious and effective in developing learners’ communicative competence in written English?

9. What should be the approach after deciding the method of teaching?

10. How can teaching be effective and useful?

11. How can a balance be made between the learners’ requirement and the approach of teaching?

   Faced with such questions, the investigator deemed it worthwhile to conduct an experiment in the classrooms in order to find out whether communicative competence in written English among senior secondary school learners could be developed? This led to the identification of main problem and the need to study it
intensively. Hence, the need for the study and the statement of the problem.

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN WRITTEN ENGLISH AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS IN HARYANA – AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

1.3. Objectives

In the context of the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study may be specified as follows:

i. To study the communicative competence with special reference to written English.

ii. To study the communicative needs of the learner in social context for written communication in English.

iii. To analyze the written communication competence in English.

iv. To design a model for developing communicative competence in written English for senior secondary school learner.

v. To study the effectiveness of the model of developing communicative competence in written English.

vi. To make recommendation for implementation strategy of the development model in written English.

1.4 Hypotheses

Pooling together the objectives of the study, the following two main null hypotheses could be formulated for testing:

i. There is no significant difference in the attainment scores on written English communicative competence of students
exposed to the development model and students taught through the traditional approach.

ii. There is no significant difference in the efficacy of the development model and the traditional approach for developing communicative competence in written English.

These hypotheses may be further studied in terms of subsidiary hypotheses as for the communicative language needs of the sample of students selected for the study.

1.5 Delimitations of the Study

The present research study is delimited to the following dimensions:

a) To writing skills only, out of the four language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing).

b) Only to the 9th class learners of the Government Senior Secondary Schools.

c) To the Government Senior Secondary Schools of Sonepat district of Haryana state only.

d) To the development of communicative competence in written English only.

e) To learner’s communicative needs in social context in written English.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Certain terms that have been extensively used in this study are defined here as follows:

**Communicative Competence**

It refers to the ability to write/say something (ideas, thoughts, feelings, emotions, information, notions, etc.), which is
linguistically and grammatically, correct and accurate, structurally, situationally, functionally and socially appropriate, fluent, semantically intact, sensitive, consummate and formally feasible. It also involves the ability to use linguistic forms to perform communicative functions and tasks.

**Written English**

It refers to the forms of written communication in English that include telegrams, street-directions, instructions, invitations, season’s greetings and good wishes and description of places, things, events and persons through social and friendly letters.

**Social Context**

Here, it means the circumstances, situations and contexts including place, time, setting, role relationship in which persons make use of the forms of written communication referred to above (written English) and it also refers to the knowledge of the role of relationship between the reader and writer; mode of communication, difference between the formal and informal language. It extensively refers to the contexts of the society in and with which people are supposed to communicate through writing.

**ELT**

It is an umbrella term and refers to English Language Teaching including the content, approach, methods, procedures, devices, techniques and practices and theories of teaching English.

**CLT**

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), a recent development in the field of ELT, aims at teaching language (English) as and for communication and it advocates the extensive use of role play, simulation, dialogue, group work and language games
techniques and the focus of teaching is on linguistic appropriacy, fluency and feasibility of expressions. The term 'CLT' also include Communicative Approach to Language Teaching (CALT).

**TLT**

The Traditional Language Teaching (TLT) refers to the use of a Grammar-Translation Method, Bilingual Method, Direct Method, Structural Approach and Audio-lingual Methodology in the classroom by teachers. All the teaching approaches and methods, except the CLT, were considered the traditional Methods in this study.

**EG (E)**

It refers to the Experimental Group-I that was exposed to the experimental treatment through the CLT and was taught by the investigator.

**CG (C)**

It refers to the Control Group that was not given any experimental treatment but was taught by the TLT by another teacher in this study and was also given pre- and post-tests.

**Receptive Tests**

They refer to the tests which consisted of the questions with multiple choice answers and which aimed at finding out whether the learners could receive and recognize the right responses from among the four alternative responses provided.

**Productive Tests**

These tests refer to the tests that consisted of testing items without multiple choice and aimed at finding out whether the learners who received and/or recognized the right response in the
receptive tests could emit or give the correct response of their own accord.

*Comprehensive Test of Communicative Competence*

This test is both receptive and productive in the sense that it not only provided visual information but also asked the learners to reproduce the information in the verbal form. The test, in fact, aimed at testing the learners' linguistic accuracy, appropriacy, conventionality, fluency and technicalities of writing such as the use of punctuation marks, capital letters and the presentation and organization of information in the form of composition.