Chapter II

GOAL, SCOPE, PERSPECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

2.0. Introduction

The thesis deals with the position and function of English language in the communication network and pedagogical set up of India in general and West Bengal, a province of India, in particular. For India, English being a colonial legacy from the British, has grown like an alien implantation on its indigenous soil just as the other Western institutions (economic, political, legal, and administrative legacies) have entered and resided in India since the age of imperialist conquest. In the former colonies of Britain, English has ever remained the language of power, prestige and privilege. It not only acts as a medium of expression in various levels of communication network, but presents a model lifestyle to be aimed at: 'smart', 'modern', 'efficient', 'high-profiled', capable of satisfying the fetish for the best commodities of life. However, there is a small population of mother-tongue English speakers in India for whom, English is a mark of linguistic identity, the only language they know, or can speak fluently by generations.

The section 2.1. defines the problematic areas connected with English in India and West Bengal. The section 2.2. explains the goal of the thesis. In the section 2.3. the scope of conducting research on a topic like this has been examined. In the section 2.4. the corpus collected, sorted and selected for discourse analysis has been described. The section 2.5. presents the perspective in which the research takes its course in both real-life situation and in fictions. In the section 2.6. a brief introductory account of the linguistic dilemma in West Bengal has been given. The section 2.7. describes the method that has been followed in this thesis. The section 2.8. concludes the thesis.
2.1. English Language: The Problematic Space

The journey of English from a colonial master plan to a post-colonial global metaphor has cast many shades and shadows over the plurilingual milieu of the Indian society. Debates and dilemmas are its constant companions. Discourses enumerating such shades are determined and decisive on one hand, without which the English language might not have survived for so long with so much vigour in India – and hesitant and confused on the other, which characterize so many changes in the government policies in both pre- and post-independence period and so much fear and anxiety among those who remain at the receiving end. Together, they mark the presence of a foreign tongue that has its own function to perform in a multilingual and multicultural society like many other languages which co-habit side by side. The existence of English has been at the same time solicited and rejected, praised and hated, demanded and thwarted by different quarters of the civil society, the government and its people, by interest groups and social activists and also those who have been put to learn the language on a compulsory basis. English being an international language of communication, such discourses delineate the connection between the economic systems in India promoting and preserving the instrumental value of English in the job market, and the controlling centers of global capitalist machineries which run the worldwide English industry and treats this language as capital. English has been poised between the inner conflict between these two in retaining its instrumental position in a society with multilingual communicative nexus at the grassroots-level, and the global conflict of widening disparities in distribution of capital closely connected with the operation of English industry, internationally and particularly within the developing countries e.g. India.

West Bengal, a province of India, (constituted with a part of the Bengal Presidency of British India) with its capital Kolkata (i.e. previous Calcutta, once the capital of British India) is at the center of the debate for decades, over the teaching-learning of English in its government sponsored educational institutions. In the process of consolidating British rule in India, the rise of a Westernized middle class, educated in European philosophy,
literature, science and technology transmitted through the windows of English was much solicited by the rulers. The mediating class negotiating between the upper and the lower strata of the society, sustained the potentially operative nexus between the socio-political domination and cultural as well as linguistic hegemony exercised by the colonial rulers. Transmission of education in India reflects the dividing practice of a foreign enterprise and the resultant class difference between the so-called ‘educated’ and ‘uneducated’ in terms of knowledge, power, skill and money. The whole institution of education, especially the teaching-learning of English has given birth to conflicts and dilemmas in pre- and post- independence India. The resultant economic crisis in land and industry, acculturation and de-institutionalization especially in the rural sector aggravated the cultural conflicts. It gave rise to a cultural counter-force supporting indigenous languages in the name of ‘nationalism’— not rejecting English completely but attempting to subvert its power. In post-colonial phase English enjoyed a renewed status which came in a winding and stormy way through debates and conflicts. In West Bengal the conflict centers round the mode of teaching-learning of English as a compulsory subject in the Bangla medium school curriculum.

English is the Associate Official Language of India. It acts as a medium of most part of the legal and administrative communication across the country and within the provinces (i.e. the political segments of the Indian Union). It is the biggest language medium (in terms of the number of speakers) used by the Indians in international communicative network. According to 1991 Census (Annexure-3b: Non-Scheduled Languages-1991) (Bhattacharya, 2002: 72), the number of English speakers who use it as their first language is 0.02 per cent of the total population of India. Among them the percentage of English bi-lingual and tri-lingual speakers are 66.99% and 27.50% respectively. Most of the speakers of English in India reside in urban areas (95.40%) (ibid.81). Despite the nominal speaker-strength of English as first language, this language still remains at the center of the socio-political discourse. Its colonial legacy was extended with the attempt to reconstruct and modernize independent India. Though English has often faced tough competition from other Indian languages (e.g. from Hindi and Hindustani at the center
and from various state languages in the provinces) in occupying a particular position recognized and valued by the state, the instrumental necessity of learning English on a compulsory basis has seldom been questioned.

A mastery over the communicative English which shapes an elitist dream, largely rests on the target of achieving an urban monolingual (English only) or bi-lingual (English with any other Indian language) competence. In reality, urban bilingualism includes a wide arena of linguistic performance: from grassroots level purpose-bound scattered vocabulary of English to an accepted range of code-switching and code-mixing. But to enter through the gateway of the elite circle, it is the ‘fluency’/ ‘verbal communicational skill’ in English which is believed to have the right key. In a post-colonial plural society like that of India, affected by globalization, the changing face of job-market and entertainment industry triggering media-friendly consumerism, this lifestyle creates another range of audience and spectators with ‘desire’ but with little or no means to access and afford the required competence in English. The ‘English space’ in such a population is largely unstable and mostly based on illusions, sometimes leading to dangerous consequences like language rivalry, heading towards class rivalry and communal tensions. For the rest of the population, mostly very poor and marginalized section of the society, English is a non-issue as they constitute the part of the population that is least affected by the language planning or educational planning designed by the state as a means of economic enhancement.

2.2. Goal of the Thesis

The goal of the thesis is to study the sociology of English in India in general and West Bengal in particular. It aims at understanding the process of introduction and culmination of English along with the imperial power that thrust India into geo-political subjection for centuries. The factors related to linguistic imperialism in both pre- and post- independent India have been considered as the objects of study because of their unique features. In India, no other tongue as foreign as English has received such unique treatment with
contradictions like love-hatred, intimacy-alienation, desire-fear, fantasy-certainty, Otherness-Togetherness, and many shades and shadows between them. The thesis undertakes the task to excavate into the conflicting discourses on English, its position and function in language planning which is invariably a part of socio-economic and political planning in India and in West Bengal.

In the scope of its research, the thesis identifies the domain of English education as problematic. English being a language of power, in India and its provinces, this language is always planned from above. This is compatible with the Euro-centric model of language planning with 'monism' as its keyword. The thesis studies the hierarchical relation of English with its equals (if any) and the subordinate languages with various speaker strength and literary tradition. In the domain of education the implementation of such planning starts from below. The 'English space' in the upper strata of the society, with its elite speakers, privileged position, prestigious disposition and primacy in higher education, puts a tremendous pressure on the lower levels of education, i.e. the primary, the upper primary and the secondary level of schooling. It takes a toll on the young learners, with limited access and motivation in a system of education where English is taught as a compulsory school subject. The thesis examines how English, is received and produced by the learners Bangla-medium schools of West Bengal: their attitude towards this language and motivational factors involved in learning the language, as also their overall response to the educational policies of the state which often remains very unstable and critical for the learners to handle. It is the goal of the thesis to observe language education from its socio-linguistic perspective, as produced through discourses coming from socio-political interaction. In doing so, it becomes an inter-disciplinary study based on sociology of language and deploying other branches of science for the sake of deeper understanding.

The thesis concentrates on (i) the socio-linguistic relation of English with the multilingual population of India, (ii) the attachment and alienation between a foreign tongue and the colonial and post-colonial subjects, enforced through socio-economic and cultural
hegemony and (iii) the linguistic fetish associated with English, justified by its long presence in the Indian soil and the claimed intimacy or alienation of the Indian population with this language.

2.3. The Scope of Research

Theoretically and empirically the scope of the research covers a wide geo-political area. English being the international language and closely connected with global power centers and capital market, it is affected by any alteration in the balance of power in the Anglophone world. On the contrary, such assault on English is susceptible to influence the socio-linguistic equilibrium up to the grassroots level of the society which may be responsible for bringing massive changes in the arenas related to language planning and other related planning procedures. Examining the importance of English as a world language, the thesis concentrates on the Indian perspective and gradually narrows down to the context of West Bengal which is an integral part of India, but enjoys a certain level of autonomy being an individual province of the Indian Union. On the time scale, the thesis studies the proliferation of English industry in both pre- and post-independent India.

2.3.1. The Existing Literature

The sociology of English in India and the world has been viewed by various scientists from various perspectives. There is a considerable number of critical literature on the time and space which the thesis attempts to cover. However, such intensive studies are limited in the context of West Bengal.

The extensive socio-political research on the role of English in the context of colonial and post-colonial societies include Phillipson, (1992), Tollefson (1995), Pennycook, (1995) etc. They and the other researchers who reflect on English as an international language of power, have pointed out the power relationship between the donor and the receiver of this
language, producing various kinds of inequality and discrimination, as English has been manufactured and nurtured as a global market capital.

This thesis also takes into account the works of Stokes (1989), Guha (1999), Said (1993), Dasgupta (1993) etc. for the socio-economic interpretation of discourses on English especially in India and the Orient. Their writing provides a transparent yet complex historical analysis of the intrusion of imperialist power which exerts hegemonic control over the subject in colonial and neo-colonial/post-colonial mode of domination.

In the Indian context, Dasgupta (1970) presents an analytical history of language politics and language debate and its implications in pre- and post- independence India. The structural aspects of linguistic hybridization in English and other Indian languages have been explained by Kachru (1983) within the scope of the sociology of language. Pattanayak (1981) marks English as an alien tongue and posing to be a threat to India’s grassroots multilingualism and the natural media of education. Singh (1992) suggests a pluralistic paradigm of planning for India, capable of minimizing the evils of language hierarchy which breeds linguistic injustice and language problems. Dasgupta (1993) analyses the linguistic hierarchy in the context of South-East Asia and India. His research depicts the English language as Other to the masses of India generating a diglossic situation in the society placing English as the higher code. Khubchandani (1997) marked English as a ‘superposed’ sensibility in India’s multilingual repertoire—much detached from the ‘authentic’ code of the British and much varied in itself. Agnihotri and Khanna (1997) describe the language learner’s motivation as “unmistakably instrumental” in case of English, on the basis of extensive sociolinguistic case studies conducted mostly in Northern part of India.

2.3.2. The Present Objective

The English space being problematic, it has been often described with extremes of binary
terms like master-servant, donor-receptor, good-bad, powerful-powerless, intimate-distant, self-other. While the binaries come real in a given time and context, they often manifest themselves in various other shades which lie between the two extremes and which may not be separated in a water-tight compartment. For English, it is a rather confused space, a state of 'aporia' which is the combination of extremes or contradictions at the same time. The present thesis endeavours to capture such aspects of confusion and dilemma which are the characteristic features of the whole gamut of discourses produced so far on English. Empirically reflected, this language is poised between the feelings of love-hate, desire-apathy, otherness-togetherness at the same time and space for those who possess it and for those who do not have easy access to it. The current task is to observe the phenomena that center round such features of discourses on English.

2.4. The Corpus

The thesis is based on the discourse available in both verbal interaction (monologue/dialogue) within the geo-political boundary of India and also in the written records. The corpus consists of published official reports on language, education, research works in the related fields, various public opinions available in the printed form, obtained through interviews and media reports. The empirical evidences collected in a sample survey conducted on the school students of West Bengal, belonging to various districts in urban, rural and semi-urban areas have been critically analyzed by deploying the methods of Discourse Analysis and the Discourse Reception Theory and by deploying methods of quantification. The students have been interviewed personally as the survey was designed to draw the learners' profile with their linguistic attitudes, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds (where available), their linguistic exposure and motivation for learning various languages, especially English.
2.5. The Perspective

The perspective of research could be sought both in the historical analysis of near and distant past and also in the fictional texts produced in the context of a time of history. Though it cannot be claimed that literature is a true record of the events of real life, it can be considered as a truth room where a fictional reality is produced which would present a different perspective of looking at the problem.

2.5.1. English : The World Language

The discourses regarding the power and hegemony of English industry can be classified into three broad categories: the preacher’s voice, the dissenter’s voice and the collaborator’s voice. The first category operates mainly in the donor’s mode. The second and third categories characterize the receivers’ mode. Sometimes these two categories overlap on each other. However, it is also plausible to find the donor and the receiver changing their places in a given spacio-temporal context and the transmission of power altering its direction. In the global context, the preacher’s discourse is transmitted predominantly through the medium of English or through partial deployment or apparent promotion of the receiver’s language (e.g. the regional languages in India, Malay at Malaysia, Swahili in Tanzania by the British colonizers (Phillipson, 1992 : 132), Arabic and Hebrew by post- Second World War USA (Ovando and Wiley, 2003 : 145), or by mastery over the heritage language of the receiver (e.g. Sanskrit by the British Orientalist scholars in India). The dissenter’s voice was raised completely rejecting the preacher’s tongue.

The establishment of colonies in all the six populated continents during the 18th and the 19th century by the English speaking Britain was the primary cause for the worldwide transmission of the English language, especially in its colonies. The rise of United States in monetary and military prowess during and after the First World War abetted the growth and spread of English language along with capital aids and technological support.
to the developing nations, ex-colonies and war-devastated European nation-states. In USA the state run tacit language planning policies to standardize and homogenize the English spoken by the settlers, the radical abolition of American-Indian native tongue and other foreign languages from the domain of state directives before the Second World War, the large number of immigration to USA creating the ‘melting pot’ situation in communicative network — together contributed to the linguistic journey of American English.

Kachru (1996: 356-7) has indicated the existence of three circles to encompass the consumers of the worldwide English Industry: the Expanding Circle, the Outer Circle and the Inner Circle. The Inner Circle includes the countries of the world with majority English speaking population like UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand which produce the traditional, cultural and linguistic bases of English. The Outer Circle contains Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Zambia, mainly the former colonies of Britain in which English has passed through educational and governmental institutions imbibed from the West, where its institutionalized non-native varieties are predominantly used. The Expanding Circle covers countries like China, Egypt, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, USSR, Zimbabwe, where English plays a restricted function of a foreign language having no official status. Kachru’s list is not exhaustive of course and there is indication that the list can be further extended but it indicates the different contexts where English language discharges different functions based on the linguistic backgrounds of the speakers.

In the Inner Circle of USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, the English space was constructed on the graveyard of almost all the native tongues to a varying degree. In the Outer Circle, within the countries like Kenya, Nigeria and other countries of East Africa, English occupied the dominant position in education from the primary level. In other colonies, local languages were often barred from the arena of higher education showing the cause of the underdeveloped status of those languages. In the post-colonial linguistic
hegemony, the center of English lies in USA and UK who ardently try to exert their control over all the non-native varieties through a strong hold on print media and electronic media. Such control has both the exclusive and inclusive features. On the one hand English is constantly kept under close surveillance to prevent from contamination and fall of standards. On the other hand, it exercises almost alarming flexibility in borrowing words and phrases from other languages to enhance itself conceptually and lexicographically. This endeavour on the part of the propellers of worldwide English Industry takes a perpetual attempt to strike a balance between the centralized and the decentralized mode of operations to keep the process going smoothly. The recent phenomena related to globalization of economy, outsourcing of jobs, spread of computer literacy and treading the path of a world of simulation/virtual reality have assisted linguistic imperialism to grow hand in hand with the growth of telecommunication industry.

2.5.2. English in a Plurilingual Society: A Case of India

Socio-linguistically India represents a plural network of verbal communication quite different from western concepts of linguistic matrix, language boundaries and linguistic identities. As Indian socio-linguists like Pandit (1977), Pattanayak (1981, 2000), Srivastava (1987), Singh (1992), Khubchandani (1997) Annamalai (2001) have pointed out that the functional multilingualism in India operates deploying a number of codes for various communicative purposes, depending on the context of situation and to satisfy multilateral social relationships between the communicators. It is characterized by frequent code-mixing and code-switching within a rich repertoire of languages, thus revealing the unstable, overlapping, fuzzy boundaries between languages. At the grassroots level of communicative set-up, the synchronized horizontal existence of a number of codes, makes the Indian speakers articulate according to his requirement and purpose. The encroachment of an alien and powerful language, formally placed on a higher rank of socio-political status bar, is rather detrimental to this kind of communicative network and disrupts its spontaneity and functionality. In such a
situation, the definition of a ‘linguistic area’ is not the one containing the majority speakers of a single dominant language, but multilingual communicators participating in decentralized and evenly balanced circuit of codes holding their respective positions by the power of functionality. This process is quite contrary to the center-periphery relationship of a monolingual state in which a prime language dominates its subordinate languages. In a multilingual society, the linguistic identity of the speaker is defined not by the ‘mother tongue’ alone as there may be more than one ‘mother tongues’ spoken by the subject. The choice of languages is determined by needs and conveniences in both private and public domains. The pluralistic language spectrum assigning different values to different modes of socio-cultural interactions unites and binds the speakers with a sense of ‘collective reality’ in a Kshetra as Khubchandani (1997: 81) defines it as the Indian realization of a space of communication with wide range of linguistic and cultural activities, transcending the western concept of language ‘region’. This space of communication and its boundaries are heterogeneous, fluid and flexible as against the homogenous unitary and hierarchical structure of a monolingual speech community. In the perspective of cultural heterogeneity and linguistic diversity, plurality is the norm of India’s grassroots multilingualism. The norm is people intensive, serving its purpose and transmitted through generations, in the shadow areas of economy, where the production process goes on uninterrupted without any capital investment. When the capital market encroaches this arena of pluralistic practice assisted by some outer force or abetted by governmental initiative to design ‘language planning’ and ‘educational planning’ as a part of state planning, the socio-cultural equilibrium is disturbed.

The concept of techno-industrial modernity with print capitalism and standardization of major languages placing them on a hierarchical scale of privilege and relegating the other minor languages to the periphery, affected India since the era of its colonial subjection. Extensive borrowing of linguistic items along with socio-cultural concepts from Europe to the Indian languages through the medium of English, characterized the mixed cultural mosaic of India, especially the language repertoire of Indian speakers. However, borrowing words and expressions from Indian languages enriched English vocabulary in
a much lesser degree. The once borrowed signifiers have become a major part of bi-
lingual vocabulary of a large number of Indian speakers which they frequently deploy
consciously and unconsciously, under compulsion and by choice. It is a well-known story
of any imperialist invasion and India is no exception to the process.

In the homogenizing space of state planning, existence of many languages is considered
problematic, instead of being treated as an asset. The system is functionally a tool of
politicizing the socio-cultural life of the nation. It works to the interest of the governing
bodies to run the state machinery and produce ‘good citizens’ to support ‘democracy’, as
they define it. Even when the policies focus on preservation of linguistic and cultural
diversity (as in the agenda of Council of Europe working for political and economic
unification of Europe) it becomes a tribute to the ‘democratic citizenship’ and ‘human
rights’ exercised through the diction of law. In a way it is also a kind of ‘monistic’
planning projected and monitored from above, percolated through the mediating classes,
intended to spread to the lower stratum of the society. For India’s socio-cultural reality,
the introduction of a ‘monistic’ option denotes the implantation of a political power
structure, alien and destructive in its essence. It breeds intricate problems related to
linguistic identity, educational achievement, livelihood and so on. Dasgupta (1993: 182)
describes the process of transition from colonial India to post-colonial Bharat: in the
post-modern context, Bharat has been constituted as a group of collectivities, inclined to
learn the norms of social modernity from each other to suit its inherent heterogeneity. To
treat the heterogeneity as a rich resource, Singh (1992: 90-101), following the reasons
extended by Pattanayak (1981), suggests a pluralistic paradigm of planning for India’s
multi-faceted dilemmas over languages and other areas related to languages. The
problems of language planning could be divided focussing on the processes of
standardization, modernization and graphization. The paradigm proposed by Singh
could be a possible solution to combat the situation as found in the image of ‘the
Sunflower syndrome’ as Singh defines it (1992: 19), i.e. the inclination of masses in the
periphery to follow the elite of the center pushing its fellowmen belonging to the same
plane. The pluralistic paradigm should describe the language planning strategies on the
basis of understanding the language planning typologies, distinguishing between comprehensive and partial, global and local, predictive and predicative and combining them together where the necessity arises.

The suggestions forwarded by the Indian sociolinguists for the language planning to suit the Indian heterogeneity have the openness to incorporate all the possible chemistry of language problems arising out of a plurilingual society. Singh (1992) explains that this planning strategy may lead to take apparently ‘conflicting’ policy decisions for the same linguistic group or national community depending on the geo-political and linguistic situational demands (ibid. 69).

It is observed time and again that language problems often arise through conflicting interests of the agencies conducting planning from above and those heading the planning from below. This situation has become prevalent with the adoption of a nation-statist paradigm for India, the idea being borrowed from its Western proponents. In independent India this paradigm was primarily sought in the reorganization of Indian states passing over to the Indians from the custody of the Raj. They were (i) the provinces under direct control of the British, (ii) the provinces under local princes and (iii) the vast arena of the sub-continent which was not directly governed by the colonizers but which suffered their economic exploitation, as India was exposed to the colonial mode of production. Language being the module followed in the political division of the country, there emerged a number of sub-nation-states (smaller geographical units with some political and economic autonomy, modeled on and emerging out of a bigger and sovereign nation-state) within India with a dominant state language for each of the provinces.

The scheme extended privilege to some linguistic communities, enhancing their language with political and legal recognition, and all the facilities of corpus planning for education, standardization and modernization that a centralized system of nation-state requires. On the other hand such political division left the other languages in the margin, sometimes dividing a single speech community into different states (as in the case of Santals),
denying the linguistic minorities the demanded status in education and administration. Since independence, many a times periphery struck back against the centralized system of distinguishing languages into covert categories of privileged and non-privileged languages, promoting economic deprivation, educational backlog and underdevelopment of the community as a whole. Telengana movement, Santali language movement, language movements for Gorkhali/ Nepali, Maithili, Rajbangshi, Konkani are cases in point.

Several other socio-political upheavals arising out of (i) conflicts between neighbouring languages (e.g. Bhojpuri, Magahi, Maithili in Bihar) or, (ii) imposition of dominant national and official languages (Hindi and English) or (iii) barring the required access to the privileged languages (various official languages of the provinces and of the Union territories), also emerged out of such dilemmas. The conflict between competing languages gives rise to a phenomenon which Singh (1992:19) describes as 'The Sunflower Syndrome'. In such a situation the languages competing with each other for the place of domination on the scale of hierarchy may be engaged in rivalry with each other while looking up at a dominant language present above them. The situation is just the opposite of what Leuprecht (1999: 33, borrowing the term from Antonio Perotti) has described as 'daisy' simile while asserting his faith in open and multiple linguistic and cultural identity : like the daisy, one's identity is not defined with a single treasure belonging to him/her but comprises of a multitude of petals. Though applied to the context of European cultural diversity, this simile aptly describes the inner surge of a multifaceted society like India where heterogeneity is the norm and the only element each and every social sector has in common. The structural pressure of a centralized system has the tendency to crush the grassroots level horizontal communication network and mutual distribution of functionality among the neighbouring languages and foster monism by promoting politically strong languages. The process is supported mostly by elite competence acquired through institutionalized formal training which leaves the privileged language/s alien to the lower rung of the society.
The 'sunflower syndrome' has a profound effect on status planning of languages and defining their role in education. The promotion of monism is a capital-intensive process in the background of a multi-lingual country. Here language is treated as a capital and not as a resource, thereby rendering the demands like 'mother tongue education' impossible, where there is a number of mother tongues present in the society. The privileged language fostered through 'sunflower syndrome' generates a strong sense of desire to grab it, especially among those who have minimal access to the language. It creates an aura of fetish like other consumer goods and leaves a deep sense of dissatisfaction, anxiety, remorse and anger for the learners who fails to achieve desired competence in the language. In the circle of limited access to the linguistic resources, the learner’s mind is torn between the fetish for a ‘privileged’ lifestyle to which the dominant language is a passport, and the fear and tension of learning an alien tongue under the created pressure of ‘requirement’ for achieving his goal. Such forced monolingual option which fuels a mass movement abets dilemma and discrepancy in policy formation and implementation, drives crucial public discourses on a one-way track and turns other vital issues related to planning and action to 'non-issues'.

The national policies introducing Hindi, as the Official Language and English, as the Associate Official Language and also the official language/s of the Indian state/s, are struggling since independence to cope with the linguistic minorities and the speakers of underprivileged languages of India. The English industry in its new status, supported and sustained by global capital market, has become the sole medium of elite communication in business, academics and job market for the Indians within the country and abroad, the definition of elitism being more fluid and comprising of a wide range of socio-economic status. The fetish of English has marked the language as an ‘intimate Other’ for those who take recourse to it infatuated by its prestige and promise, and struggle to invest themselves with required Englishness, moving away from their roots. The English space in India denotes a space of indecision, of ‘aporia’. Frequent changes in policy decision and the resultant public reaction to them, indicate its status of instability. The public domain of English discourses has marked a space of hybridity: the ‘intimate Other’ (i.e.
English) cohabiting with other Indian languages. Together, they form a mixed variety of language where English cohabit with other Indian languages and frequent code mixing takes place.

In recent times, the proliferation of fast pacing wider mode of communication, especially in the urban space, connected by information technology and mass media has enhanced the phenomenon of hybridity as the global capital manipulates the localized value system and cultural resource in the name of 'Globalization'. It is, in its core a multinational enterprise like that of the English Industry, which penetrates through the grassroots level indigenous resources, to capture its place, using the socio-cultural tool preparing for a favourable ground to make its products acceptable at a good price. This in turn, strips the local resources and industries off their natural gift and usability, destroying every prospect of flourishing in the indigenous market. The national media channels and international channels connecting India, arranging special programs for Indian folk, promote such a mixed variety of English-infected Indian languages, sweeping the English educated young urban generation towards a new mode of linguistic practice. The whole media network defines and determines the punch of words and idioms, the mode of accent and presentation. The advertising industry has successfully promoted such mixed code while displaying the mixed identity of the 'Globalized Local', termed as 'Glocal' (Bandyopadhyay, 1999: 13) to increase the sell of products to the target groups.

Advertisements

- “Yeh dil mange more” [about a soft drink]
  this heart wants more
  (This heart wants more)

- “jo cahe ho jaye / Coca Cola enjoy”.
  whatever happen
  (Whatever happens, enjoy Coca Cola)
It could be noticed that the same trend has also entered in the titles of TV programs with the massive increase of private TV channels in last ten years. Some of the examples are as follows:

**Talk show**
- "Talk jhal miSti"
- Talk hot sweet
  (hot and sweet conversations)

**TV Serial**
- "janata express"
- public express
  (the express train to carry the masses)

This language is now a conscious choice even though initially, it was a product of monolingual teaching of English at the English medium schools, with a rigorous effort to ban all the Indian languages from the school premises by language militancy in the name of teaching. The students are often been punished for using their mother tongue or any other tongue except English in the classes. The hybridity of expression resulted from the cleavage between the learner’s home language and his/her school language as also the discrepancy between the life they lead and the life depicted in the English books. The utter mismatch between the linguistic experience and the experience of daily life creates dearth of English words and phrases to describe the Indian realities around them and translate the feelings born in an Indian soul, deeply ingrained in its native culture and tradition. In this situation frequent code-mixing became the norm to keep the balance between the signifier and the signified, outside the school boundary and in the peer group discourses beyond the watching ear of the teacher-instructor.
Fact-1: togetherness/selving

Ganadevata ("Demos’ God", 1967) is the famous novel of Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay. The novel sets its plot in the midst of the rural surroundings of West Bengal, in the context of a changing scenario of the late colonial period under the British Raj. The novel reflects on the land settlement and tax system leading to colonial mode of production and distribution and its impact on the village folk of Bengal. While writing in Sadhu bhaSa, a high, formal written variety of Bangla language, the author has mixed many English words in course of narration: railway bridge, union board, free primary school, fashion, Matric pass (passed the school leaving examination), bodice, cigarette, police, diary, election, vote, constable, president, district, chairman, tax, notice, member, ward, bank, timepiece, enquiry, telegram, warrant of arrest, report, camp, circle, deputy, member, post office, form, wait, settlement, haSpatal (hospital), Daktar (doctor), mEjiSTreT (magistrate), bElesTa (barrister), jONSOn (junction) etc¹. The words and phrases intrinsically connected with the politico-economic structure brought by the British in India have made way through the sacrosanct variety of written Bangla, thus colouring hybridity with a colonial consciousness.

In this novel, one of the characters, Haren Ghosal, the man with a degree in school final and modest amount of competence in English, boasts of his English at every opportunity. His house is called "Ghosal House". The drawing room of his residence has the label of Parlour stuck on its door, while there is another room called Study. The very house in which he lives is thus invested with the overdetermined air of Englishness, which is however hilarious in exaggeration as no English house could be found with rooms containing such labels on their doors. It shows an unprecedented mockery of his ‘Self’ by trying to step into the English space by artificial means, thereby constructing the partial and incomplete representation of colonizer, in the form of a ‘mimic’ man. However, when Debu Ghosh, a literate farmer, who is often referred to as ‘ponDit’ (scholar) by the
villagers, was arrested for disrupting the administrative procedures of the Raj, he was first garlanded by the mimic man Haren Ghoshal. In the space of hybrid consciousness, his patriotic Indian self cohabits peacefully with his mimic self and alters according to the demand of the situation.

**FACT-2: otherness-togetherness**

Tiner tOloar ("The Tinned Sword" or "The Simulated Sword", 1971/1995) is a famous play by Utpal Dutta. The play has for its theme, the colonial experience of British India, in the first decade of 20th Century. The plot of the play is set in 1876, in a locality of north Calcutta, famous for its tradition of Bengali theatre. At that time those theatres posed to be a cultural weapon to fuel mass protest against the colonial control of the British over Indian territory. The movement took a fierce turn, enough to frighten the British authority in Calcutta, the then capital of the Raj, to ban all the plays and abolish the operas through legal means to prevent mass agitation led by such upheaval.

Bachaspati, the neighbour of “Great Bengal Opera”, a Bengali theatre group, accuses Benimadhab, the director of the opera and his group of actors/actresses of conducting shameful activities in the locality and attacks them along with his body-guard (ibid.35). Priyanath Mallick, the young playwright, can sense the possible danger at once and starts threatening them in English in a peculiar manner:

“I shall take you to court for this, trespasser ! Bandit ! I shall bring in action battle against you.”

It is to be noted here that the new paradigm of theatre which was borrowed from Europe in the nineteenth century Bengal disrupting the indigenous theatre, was opposed by a section of the then middle class Bengalees along with the support of print media. Priyanath, the representative of Bengalee Westernized middle class, defended himself and his clan by deploying legal infrastructure built by the British in India.
As a result, the opponents shrink back quickly. The body-guard exclaims in great surprise: “How strange! He is speaking English!” Priyanath knows very well how to slip into an authoritarian role and he deploys the linguistic medium accordingly. His instant use of English to rebuke the “unruly native” creates the desired distance and alienation between the subject and the master, turning Priyanath, the “Indian Sahib”, at once to a ‘true’ representative of the British masters. The power and prestige associated with the language legitimizes Priyanath’s action. Here English is a weapon against ‘immorality’, ‘savagery’ and ‘barbaric action’, justifying the colonial hegemony that is also a derivative of the Victorian legacy in England and its Empire.

Priyanath, a typical representative of Westernized middle class in the 19th century was rendered a refugee in his homeland, a playwright whose manuscript was treated with utter callousness by the director of the opera, just treating it like a garbage. When he was advised by Benimadhab to reject ‘English’ dresses as well as English codes and conducts, he in return, charged Benimadhab regarding the English name of his theatre-team.

“If you have so much apathy against English, why have you given an English name to your theatre: The Great Bengal Opera?” (ibid. 36).

Faced with the question of deciding what to do with English, the inhabitants of a hybrid space continuously tread a realm of duality between mimicry and manipulation. At times English is a valuable weapon, to be adored and exercised and at times it is a mark of shame, its appeal being futile to the common masses to represent popular culture, beyond the boundary of the English educated elites. The position and function of English is in a state of constant flux bearing a tension between acceptance and rejection suspended in the undecided domain of colonial psyche.

One may also note the hilarious act of translating Priyanath by Haraballabh in the same play. Haraballabh was translating Priyanath’s English phrases, sentences and idioms using pompous Sanskrit words and Sadhu bhaSa. This co-habitation of native archaism...
and Anglicism and frequent switching over from one code to the other produce the humour of the play, overtly indicating its apparent absurdity. On one hand, the colonized subjects search for their lost selfhood, and on the other, they construct their new selfhood, living (i.e., cohabiting) together with English as far as possible.

**Fact-3: togetherness/otherness**

*English August: An Indian Story* (1998) is a novel by Upamanyu Chatterjee. In this novel Kumar, the Superintendent of Police at Madna, a small town in northern India, ascribes a unique identity to Agastya, the young IAS (Indian Administrative Service) officer who accepts it rather reluctantly, without a sign of objection (ibid. 23):

Kumar: “Hahn, you look the English type”

“The English type?”

“All Indian who speaks English more fluently than he speaks any Indian language I call the English type, good, no?”

“Yes, Sir.”

Agastya, the young IAS officer was named after an Indian saint belonging to the epic era. The saint appeared in two great Indian epics Ramayana and Mahabharata. In Hindu mythology, the saint was an adventurer and a miracle man. In Chatterjee’s novel Agastya represents a mixed blood, born out of a Bengali father and a Goanese mother, speaking English as his first language. He is the representative of a hybrid culture, belongs to the class of Anglicized youth, nourished under English-medium education. Agastya is a member of an Indian elite community in which English is used as the home language, as it is the sole medium of verbal communication between the married couple who belong to two different linguistic communities. English being an essential pre-requisite for a
prestigious job like that of an IAS officer since the era of Raj, Agastya fits perfectly well to the position and status which marks him and his equals as a class apart, quite alien from the mainstream of life. At the same time, Agastya feels ashamed and embarrassed of choosing ‘English’ (i.e. English literature) as his ‘discipline’ in college, (ibid. 59) as he has the impression like many others in the society that it is not ‘respectable’ enough like Physics or Economics or Mathematics or Law. In post-independence India it has been often criticized as the ‘useless subject’, as marked by Srivastav, a senior IAS officer, unless it helps one to master the language (ibid. 59). The cleavage between the English literature and the English language is distinct here. In post-colonial India, the linguistic competence in English still holds an important position in terms of ‘utility’, where the study of English literature for its own sake is assumed to be the sheer wastage of time. The cleavage is built up on a sharp vector pointing towards generation of capital. But there is a linguistic explanation as well. Srivastav argues that the uselessness of English literature can be established on the basis of the ‘fact’ that the English which the Indians speak is far more different from what they read in English books. So the functional strength of communicative English, however alien the accent/s may seem to the native speakers, serves the purpose of a link language, within the Indian sub-continent and renders its literary counterpart selected and prescribed by the British, futile in exercise.

A hybrid man like Agastya with a Sanskrit name and English air, who can easily place Bhagavadgita, the philosophical text of Mahabharata, beside Marcus Aurelius, (ibid. 83) is a subject of queries and curiosity even to his countrymen whose linguistic and cultural identity is well-defined and stable compared to that of Agastya, and who ascribes the unique identity to Agastya.

Agastya could easily accept the arguments put forward by Srivastav, in favour of learning English just as ‘a vehicle of communication’ (ibid.) and speaking it with an Indian accent without feeling ashamed about it. Because for Srivastav, the mode of speaking doesn’t matter as long as the speaker can get his idea reached across. He is rather proud of being self-taught in English, shading off his lack of competence in the language which was
generated being admitted to a lower standard of Hindi-medium school. The knowledge of English invests him with confidence by securing his success in the Civil Services examination. For Srivastav, the nationalist zeal to throw away English from the post-independence schooling in India is far less important than ameliorating the overall standard of education, proper training of the teaching staff and improving the working conditions of the academic institutes.

Srivastav has his own strong reason guiding his consent and dissent regarding his strategic relationship with English. He is not an exception though. Like Agastya, he could find his support among many Indian hearts though they may not assert their positions with such confidence. Srivastav’s strategic manipulation of the English language is like the game of Cricket, as in the famous Hindi-English bi-lingual film Lagaan by Ashutosh Gawrikar in 2001 where the colonial subject learns the game of cricket under sheer pressure of securing their livelihood and means of existence but plays it in an Indian way which serves their purpose very well. Both the Cricket and the English language become the integral parts of their strategic ‘self’ and open a gateway to something optimistic, rendering them with ‘confidence’ about their capacity and providing them something to look forward. But for the Indian colonial subjects, it does not entail adopting the English way of living or thinking exactly as prescribed by the guardians of English and Cricket. English, as well as cricket were often used by the subjects to subvert imperial power and win a position by manipulating them as weapons.

**Fact-4: selving-othering**

*Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) is the title story of the first collection of short stories by Jhumpa Lahiri, the famous US born Indian writer. In this story, the tourist guide Mr. Kapasi is an interpreter by profession. He acts as an interpreter of foreign tourists visiting spots in Orissa, a state rich with cultural heritage at the eastern part of India. His knowledge of English secures the freelance job of a tour guide for him on Fridays and Saturdays. For the rest of the week Mr Kapasi earns his meals by acting as an interpreter.
between Indian languages. His knowledge of Gujarati, the language, which he inherited from his father provides him with the opportunity to bridge the communication gap between an Oriya speaking doctor and his Gujarati patients. A devoted scholar of foreign languages, Mr. Kapasi was a teacher of English at a grammar school. His job as a Gujarati interpreter started with his son being affected by typhoid and he was acquainted with the doctor now he works for. Initially the job gave him the capacity to bear increasingly expensive medical bills. But later on, as the work of mediation between Gujarati and Oriya started paying him twice as much as he could earn through his knowledge of English, he forsook English and opted for Indian languages of demand. In the course of the story it was revealed that his work as a tour guide was only a source of extra income blended with pleasure of holidaying. The vast multilingual population of India creates unique linguistic situation, often very intriguing and necessitates the quick removal of language barrier. It can be even more intriguing an act of responsibility (as Mrs. Das, the NRI (Non-Resident Indian) tourist to the temple of Konark propounded) (ibid.51), than teaching an elite link language to the native children who have vast resources of language but a dearth of interpreter who could bridge the gulfs between them. That was why the doctor had to pay a good amount of salary to draw Mr Kapasi to his assistance. The institutional support of the state policy supporting English Industry in India has produced ample number of English interpreters while neglecting its multilingual resources and those rich with such resources. The success of cultivating the fruits of multilingualism depends largely on private planning (as the doctor in the story did it) even when the question of providing the primary service is concerned (like dispensing and medication). Here English is weighed on an equal weight as the other major Indian languages in terms of instrumental use and estimated rather low in its function when the question of ethics and responsibility is involved.
2.6. West Bengal: The Debate on Language

A province within the Indian union, West Bengal has been the center of debate on the teaching/learning of English as a second/foreign language in the government sponsored Bangla medium schools.

With an area of 88,752 in Km², the total population of West Bengal as at 0:00 hours of 1st March 2001 stood at 80,221,171 registering an increase of 17.84 per cent over the population of previous census. In terms of population it holds the fourth position among States and Union territories in the country.

**Number of Literates:**

- Persons: 47,821,757
- Males: 27,784,750
- Females: 20,037,007

**Percentage of Literates to Total Population:**

- Persons: 69.22 %
- Males: 77.58 %
- Females: 60.22 %

Estimated number of schools according to English taught as second language at various stages of schooling in West Bengal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>language</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prm</td>
<td>U Prm</td>
<td>Scnd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1123</td>
<td>4177</td>
<td>2934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1871</td>
<td>6280</td>
<td>4673</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prm – Primary, U Prm- Upper Primary, Scnd - Secondary

(Source: Sixth All India Educational Survey, 1998)

West Bengal, a sub-nation state of India poses a potential ground for exercising policy decisions over language. The linguistic scenario of West Bengal was in the state of constant flux over teaching of English in the Bangla medium schools.

The question of fixing the appropriate age of starting with English in the schools and the suitable methodology are the two burning issues. A number of committees have been appointed by the ruling Left Front government (and also in the short interval by their opposition who hold power for the time being). The policy makers erased English from the primary level syllabus and designed new curriculum and method of teaching with the help from British Council which has been implemented since 1984.

This change in the policy was faced with severe criticism by different quarters. Changes occurred frequently after the mass upheaval against the government's decision. But the issue is still unsettled and there are persisting public grievances about the teaching/learning of English and the whole educational scenario in West Bengal. A detailed discussion of this scenario has been presented in the Chapter V. In the post-modern analysis of the sociology of schooling, the type-cast educational institutes have been criticized as the center for psycho-somatic repression which led to the proposals of alternative schooling from the scholars like Foucault, Freire, Illich, Tagore and various institutions who ardently try to make reading a pleasure. It is also in the scope of this
research to examine the teaching-learning of a foreign/second language within the boundary of a conventional educational institution.

2.7. Methodology

This thesis aims at bringing out the multifarious facets of the linguistic dilemma concerning the management of English language in the national and the state policies related to administration as well as education in India in general and West Bengal in particular. As West Bengal is an integral part of India and education though enlisted under 'concurrent list' as per the constitutional provision, the policies are necessarily affected, if not directed, by the scenario of higher education, especially in the all-India academic institutes as well as the institutes abroad, and the job prospects in the national and international market of employment.

In understanding the problematic aspects of learning English as a second / foreign language by the Bengali speaking school children, the thesis has embarked on describing and analyzing various discourses generated for decades, centering around the issue. Discourses are picked up from different sources in different languages (especially, Bangla, English and Hindi) in printed words or through formal interviews and non-formal discussions. The discourses thus received are studied not inquiring into their linguistic structures and components but against the backdrop of various non-discursive formations regarding the social, political and economic scenario prevailing at a given time and place. It aims at approaching this material along the path of the post-structuralist method of discourse analysis that analyses documents of history at the level of discourse, by transforming the inert documentary materials into a living figure of the subject of study. The historical documents cited and analyzed in this thesis appear in certain discursive formations in some particular time and place as they have been chosen and categorized. The discursive formations, which identified English and the study of English at the center of conflict, have been explored in this thesis with evidences from past and present. The
The sixth chapter of the thesis, however, does not belong to this genre of method and it is an empirical study of the data and discourses collected through direct contact with the learners. The juxtaposition of both the methods has been considered necessary in order to make a comprehensive approach to the heart of the dilemmas, especially when the discourses range over centuries down to the present time and deal with some burning issues of recent educational conflicts. The empirical evidences, collected through personal interaction with the learners, are expected to explore certain corners of the conflicting interests, which have been considered essential for more in-depth understanding of the problems. In this thesis, the Likert method adopted for statistical analysis of students' responses is not intended to reduce the living opinions into mere quantifiable numbers without flesh and blood, or to derive some hardcore deterministic conclusions from the observations. Rather, it is a tool to categorize and compare heterogeneous attitudes and opinions in order to infer their relationships and the relative importance of the zones in which the learners' linguistic experience of English is situated. It is a search into the learners' domain with an organized yet open-ended bunch of queries to let the discourse take its own course and in this process reveal their experience and experiment with the target language.

As the discourses that figure in interpreting the conflicts center round a language, viz. English, the language-discourse relationship emerges as an essential feature in analysing those discourses. While dealing with a socio-political history of a language, it is found that there is a body of discourse that adheres to the image of the language, the worldview it represents and the way it is practiced. In the case of English, it also affects the worldwide industry of teaching English 'properly' and 'effectively'. The discourses in and about the language in question create a ground for linguistic policy formation and their implementation. In the case of India the socio-political statements denoting the role and function of English in the multilingual communication repertoire of the various
English-Indian language bilingual speech communities construct the body of knowledge about the language. This language-discourse relationship has been the object of Pennycook’s (1998: 7-8) inquiry as he studies “how certain discourses about English adhere to English” and how they reciprocate with other discourses within the discursive field. Pennycook’s work takes its cue from the cultural construct of colonization imprinted by the colonizer upon the people under domination and carried over to the period of post-colonial reconstruction of that nation. He selects ‘language’ as a significant cultural component and an effective medium for transmitting colonial ideologies which leaves its lasting impression on the captive people for which there is no psychological end of captivity.

Pennycook’s search for the growth and nourishment of this cultural construct within the discursive field of English, redefining the colonial and the postcolonial history in the context of pre and post independence colonies like China and India, follows the Foucauldian path of discourse analysis. This thesis recognizes similar phenomena in the socio-political and academic representation of English in the colonial and post-colonial India as well as West Bengal. It attempts to identify the areas of conflict and convergence in the discourses that give shape to the image called ‘English’ in India, and again, its impact on the process of linguistic and educational planning of the society in question. The thesis has been greatly influenced by Pennycook’s method of analyzing discourse in the similar contexts of study.

Pennycook’s study takes into account the method of constructing the Orient as characterized by Said (1978:3). Said described the overall systematic construction of the Orient by European cultural discourse during the post-Enlightenment period. In this, he considers, it is the Orientalist discourse which played a major role in shaping the Orient as the image of an Other rather than as a free subject. Both the writers endeavoured to explain how the statements emerging out of the discursive fields shape and modify the concept of ‘reality’ prevailing in a society in a given time and space. For the method followed in this thesis, Said’s idea of a manufactured Orient has been considered as
presenting an altogether new insight for the overall understanding of the process of colonization as it describes the impact of creating an *Oriental Other* against the colonizer’s magnified *Self*, on the concept of colonialism.

To understand the constructs of colonialism in the nineteenth century India and the East, the experimental approaches chosen by Said (1978) and Chatterjee (1999) when applying the Foucauldian methodology to some altogether different contexts and subjects deploy the post-structuralist method of discourse analysis in a way that enables them to provide an effectively social science analysis of conflicts other than those that had been the initial objects of post-structuralist discourse analysis in the work of Foucault, who never accepted social science research in its canonical sense as a viable enterprise. Chatterjee examined the ideological history of the autonomy of Indian Nationalist discourse against British domination. While constituting his discursive field, Chatterjee conducted his study on the nationalist texts not at the level of *language*, but at the level of *discourse*. He explicitly comments:

> I did try to do something like a “Discourse Analysis” in Foucault’s sense of the text of Bankim, Gandhi and Nehru. (Partha Chatterjee, personal communication via e-mail dated 26th October, 2006)

His analysis is an attempt to inquire into the relationship between the discourses and policies of the Nationalists in British India. He studied the conflict between the emergence of Nationalist discourse as a discourse of power against the imperialist control and its acceptance of ‘modernity’ based on a universal concept of knowledge ingrained in the post-Enlightenment European intellectual history within the Foucauldian framework of knowledge-power nexus.

The studies mentioned here were based on the basic ideas laid down by Foucault about discourse and its analysis in the context of a discursive field. These studies were conducted in particular space-time contexts and dealt with particular aspects of socio-political reality, that were in some respects radically different from Foucault’s own work,
and differed from him not only with respect to the object of study but also with respect to acceptance or rejection of the basic enterprise of the social sciences. While we must recognize their methodological indebtedness to Foucault, it is also clear that their ways of collecting, categorizing and arranging the discourses and their choices regarding the proper contextualization of these discourses in relation to their archival sources differ both from Foucault and from each other; each time the method has been moulded to corroborate with the direction of analysis required by the object of study as seen by the analyst.

The present thesis, working within this tradition, is a diachronic study of the movement of a language in a society though it does not aim at a chronologically arranged continuous and linear historical description of the same. On the contrary, the research is intended to capture the significant moments in its movement – the epistemological thresholds (Foucault, 1972: 4), breaks or ruptures in the former direction of discourses, or a crossroad of ideas which give way to conflict, contradictions and dilemmas. The breaks, as they appear, may indicate discontinuity in a specific course of history and paradoxically represent an instrument of discourse analysis and an object of study in itself as Foucault (1972: 3-17) has mentioned. But the present research will also examine whether there is a hidden continuity underneath the cleavage and try to find out shades of cleavages on an apparently linear continuum of discourses.

While defining the term ‘discourse’, Foucault (1972: 117) explained:

We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation; it does not form a rhetorical or formal unity, endlessly repeatable, whose appearance or use in history might be indicated (and, if necessary, explained); it is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined. Discourse in this sense is not an ideal, timeless form that also possesses a history; the problem is not therefore to ask oneself how and why it was able to emerge and become embodied at this point in time, it is from beginning to end, historical – a fragment of history, a unity and discontinuity in history itself, posing the problem of its
own limits, its divisions, its transformations, the specific modes of its temporality rather than its sudden irruption in the midst of the complicities in time.

Foucault's analysis of discourse transcends the analysis of language and its components at the level of the strict denotations invoked in the structural approach to discourse analysis. His approach takes into account the whole discursive field where the discourse occurs. It arranges the discourses, divides them, categorizes them, places them against the backdrop of socio-political, economic and linguistic systems, and identifies the rules and conditions operating in those systems which make such discourses occur at a given time and place. It is an attempt to focus on the discourses to be studied in the whole gamut of discursive practice manifested through various institutions, their roles and functions which turn the statements into events. Foucault (ibid. 118) explains:

Generally speaking, the analysis of discourse operates between the twin poles of totality and plethora. One shows how the different texts with which one is dealing refer to one another, organize themselves into a single figure, converge with institutions and practices, and carry meanings that may be common to a whole period. And in this way one substitutes for the diversity of the things said a sort of great, uniform text, which has never been articulated, and which reveals for the first time what men 'really meant' not only in their words and texts, their discourses and their writings, but also in the institutions, practices, techniques and objects that they produced.

The establishment of discursive relations between the speakers or the authorities delivering the discourses and among those associated institutions, practices, techniques and objects is necessary in order to understand the relevance of occurrence of the dispersed and heterogeneous statements at a given space and time period. The analysis of statements within a discursive formation thus becomes a historical analysis with a view to capturing the causal factors behind their formation, the conditions which gave birth to such discourses and the possible effect of these conditions on the generation of other related discourses about the same object. While explaining the characteristics of the Foucauldian method, Chatterjee also points out the double connotation of the term 'Discursive Formation':

48
Foucault means by Discourse a set of rules of practice that allow certain connections between concepts of ideas, that create room for the generation of some meanings and disallow others. He uses discursive formation both in an “archaeological” sense as a certain historically formed strata or layer that can be identified in a certain historical period (thus for him the “classical” period or the “modern” period) and in a “genealogical” sense whereby specific elements in a particular discursive formation can be traced back to elements in earlier discursive formations. (Chatterjee, personal communication, ibid.)

Foucault’s analysis differs from a prominent genre of earlier historiography. The traditional method for writing history endeavours to organize people, places and events on the basis of a linear series of chronology to form a totality. It tends to describe an entire civilization as an organized whole with times of rise and fall placed in ‘natural’ sequences, likely to come one after the other. The historian is busy finding ‘inevitable’ links among the historical events, dates and participants, arranging them along a chain of cause-effect relationship with definite staging decisions that make certain figures appear in the scenario to complete one story and to prepare for the next story. The spotlight is not on the issues of conflict or convergence, of dispersed motives or overlapping interests, but on the characters or events of significance. Together, they represent a complete whole within themselves forming the centers of attraction. All the other contemporary historical events appearing in its periphery seem to be directed towards the ultimate power-centre of the story and together they form a homogenous, almost natural network of causality. The role of the historian is to explore historical documents, identify characters, dates and events of importance, discover the linear path to link them with one another and establish the ‘inevitable’ consequences of some ‘real’ cause located in an obscure origin, what they believe lies hidden in those documents.

When this act of hunting for objective historical facts among the documents of history was gradually overtaken by the post-modern concepts of historical analysis, the inert documents turned into living discourses by the active participation of the historian to
construct a ‘past’ by choosing, classifying and organizing the statements on a particular subject of importance. The new method of analysis gives recognition to the fact that there cannot be an objective truth in history, or a way to go back to the essence of historical events and unveil them for knowledge. It is not about discovering the historical facts hidden in the shadows of ancient monuments, but to rebuild them with the subjective gaze of a historian, penetrating through the statements produced across the decades and centuries and consciously systematizing them to corroborate his analysis.

Foucault explores historical documents and works on their arrangements with a view to understanding the unity or the dispersion of the discourse they produce about a particular object and its related domains. He characterizes his purpose of exploring historical documents in the following words (ibid: 6-7):

Now, through a mutation that is not of very recent origin, but which has still not come to an end, history has altered its position in relation to the document: it has taken as its primary task, not the interpretation of the document, nor the attempt to decide whether it is telling the truth or what is its expressive value, but to work on it from within and to develop it: history now organizes the document, divides it up, distributes it, orders it, arranges it in levels, establishes series, distinguishes between what is relevant and what is not, discovers elements, defines unities, describes relations. The document, then, is no longer for history an inert material through which it tries to reconstitute what men have done or said, the events of which only the trace remains; history is now trying to define within documentary material itself unities, totalities, series relations...........history is the work expended on material documentation (books, texts, accounts, registers, acts, buildings, institutions, laws, techniques, objects, customers, etc.) that exists, in every time and place, in every society, either in a spontaneous or in a consciously organized form.

Continuing Foucault’s line of methodological reflection, Chatterjee reiterates,

...“documents” have to be read as texts that make sense only within particular discursive formations. Thus, there is no transparent meaning of documents that can be extracted without reference to the institutional practices that set the rules of discourse in a particular institutional arena or historical period. (Ibid.)
In the present study the corpus consists of verbal statements, conversations as well as historical documents which have been analyzed following this basic notion of discourse analysis as explained by Foucault. Its discursive field consists of various institutions and practices, policy formation and their implementation as also the receivers’ responses in verbal statements and action in different period of time. As these discourses are dispersed over several centuries and over a wide span of history, the documents are treated as the stepping-stones to capture certain events which shaped and moulded the study of English language in the context of India and West Bengal. An attempt has been made to cast them so as to highlight certain ideological frameworks and strategic moves that characterized the position and function of English in the pre-and post- independence India.

Although empirical study of opinions and conversation analysis do not usually belong to this genre of discourse analysis, these have been considered essential in the presentation of a burning debate of a recent history the effect of which is yet to be fully assessed by the contemporary social scientists and educationists. So, the sixth chapter does not adhere to historical texts or documents, but presents results of empirical research within the limited bounds of selected questions and answers. The resort to quantification serves here merely as a way of limiting and regrouping major and minor statements of opinions elicited through direct interaction with the participants in the system against the backdrop of countless discourses that already exist in this domain of contemporary history of English language learning. Such an approach is expected to reflect the crux of the present conflict in the backdrop of the past action and decisions of the target language community chosen in this thesis. Hence the decision to present the empirical sixth chapter against a background established by the discourse analysis chapters that precede it.

The term ‘dilemma’ indicates more than one opinion at the crossroads. In social sciences as well as in the natural sciences a certain scientific problem is judged from its various facets and represented differently by those who reflect on it. Ideas and opinions of various schools of thought are found to develop along parallel paths and at times they
collide with each other. In such a situation, drawing a unitary conclusion or to prescribe a single solution to a multi-dimensional conflict amounts to adopting a coercive method to empower one school of thought and silence the others. It would be clear even within social science approaches other than Foucauldian discourse analysis that such a monistic solution, assigning hierarchical status to the languages of a country, could be fatal for the subtle cultural components. Within the post-structuralist perspective adopted here, the salient point is that society exists with its agents constantly at war with each other on various issues. Post-structuralist terms of reference regard it as unintelligible a project that tries to get to the essence of the conflicting interests, to explain the core reasons of dilemmas from within or to remove them in order to reach to a deterministic solution for all. The present thesis, for these reasons, takes 'conflict' as a significant component in the configuration of a society and attempts to describe the current scenario of the warfront in terms of various battling bodies and their crucial weapons, instead of offering some decisive means for ceasefire to a centuries-old warfare regarding English. If for certain readers it is important to find "closure" in a document in order to understand it, the point of closure in this thesis is the very finding that the forces that are at war in the field studied here hold each other at bay, leaving the state and civil society with no means for pushing one particular solution through. This is a diagnosis, and the present thesis should be read as offering such a diagnosis in the hope that wider understanding of the crisis in these terms will itself change the basis for social action, and perhaps lead to a scenario that makes consensual or other widely acceptable solutions available.

The methodological position taken in the present thesis is that forcing our material into the format of a thesis leading to a definite policy recommendation would take us back to positivism. This is a point that may need to be clarified in some detail. In the positivist approach to 'normal sciences', the theories which win the battle of acceptance in a society and succeed in establishing themselves above others in a given time and place, by virtue of their unique qualities and present ample scope of further research, are called 'paradigms' by Kuhn (1962: 16). The other paths of knowledge cultivating the same scientific query remain defeated under the shadow of a dominant paradigm, not
necessarily because they are unscientific or worthless in their approach, but because they are not armed enough to command the attention and the ultimate confidence of the scientist community, the society and the state in solving certain problems. According to Kuhn, the conflict of ideas, the existence of more than one paradigm at a time with their congenital differences, is absolutely natural and essential (ibid. 102). And if from the competing theories a new paradigm emerges and replaces the existing dominant paradigm, it would actually “replace ignorance rather than replace knowledge of another and incompatible sort” (ibid. 94).

The way to some new knowledge about the nature or the society involves collection, selection and codification of existing discourses on a particular problem as its foundation and work on it to present the new observations. Concentration on selected discourses to organize the arguments supporting a scientific theory leads to specialized documentation of relevant facts and choice of methods. Beyond the boundary of a dominant discourse setting a ‘paradigm’ there rests a parallel and vast arena of defeated discourses – describing a scientific fact in some different ways. The arena of these alternative discourses or description of facts is a potential birthplace of a number of paradigms that can challenge a dominant paradigm of science in some other time and/or space by forwarding counter-examples supporting a possible counter-theory.

Kuhn compares “scientific revolution” with “political revolution” in some points: both kinds of revolution start with a growing sense of crisis in the existing paradigm pointed out by a small group in a scientific/political community (ibid.91) and the revolution in either of the spheres is the result of the most effective strategy of mass persuasion by one of the revolutionary groups in a scientific/political community. It is this restricted unit of scientists which determines the choice of a particular paradigm in scientific research like a certain political institution in a state (ibid. 92-93).

The argument above shows that in Kuhn’s viewpoint empirical science and politics occupy two distinct parallel positions that neither meet, nor influence each other. In the
paradigm set by Kuhn in writing the history of science the authorities of state and society are distant spectators of the activities regulating cultivation of science. It presents an autonomous idea of normal science, free of socio-political, economic, commercial or any other extra-scientific interest which may promote or hinder the progress of scientific research and extend or restrict scientific discourse. As both the natural science and the social science have been highly institutionalized, scientific endeavour has become the pursuit of a small group of the society with specialized knowledge in some subject. The state and the society are always inclined to promote research in those areas which may bring direct benefit to them and work to satisfy their interest rather than broaden the horizon of pure knowledge. Many times in the history of science it has been found that scientific pursuits have been encouraged just to satisfy narrow political interest by the ruling authority. As a large scale research project necessarily involves large demand on the country's economy for funding, the scientific research has often been directed and controlled by the sponsoring authority and remains in the hands of those who hold the center of power. Kuhn, however, deferred such socio-political factors while constituting his analysis of 'paradigms' in scientific research. So, the balance between the winning paradigm and the defeated one often depends on extra-scientific factors and is rather a problematic space and provide ample scope for debate and conflict.

Different modules of a dominant or less dominant discourse emerge advocated by different social groups representing their respective social interests, constituting or justifying their identities on the basis of that particular module. Such an identity may be held up by the members of a political group through active participation and physical presence under a banner. Or it may be invented and asserted through the discourse articulated by them from their apolitical position and surface as opinions, comments and reactions in both verbal and written medium. The conflicting discourses based on contradictory ideas reflect the existence of many theories in a society at a given time and place. They may have their roots in the scientific theories of a very near or distant past and reassert their relevance in analyzing the present context as a legacy of the past. In this
perspective, contradiction of ideas becomes a law of discursive formation characterizing a subject, rather than exception.

The dilemmas centering round a subject reign in a society if two or more conflicting ideas gain equal or almost equal strength abetted by 'power' (socio-political and/or economic). To arrest a cultural dilemma at the crossroads of many differing ideas and theories it is necessary to maximize the scope of their incorporation in the task of illustration and exemplification. Not a single should be ruled out as irrelevant or illogical.

As one remembers that the less popular discourse supporting a counter theory of the dominant paradigm could be silenced not because of its intrinsic weakness but because of many other non-scientific factors, their inherent merit may contribute to the sustenance or negation of the fruits of a new research. Such comparison may save the scientific pursuit from the error of being overdeterministic and overgeneralized. J.S. Mill (1991: 20) points to the inherent danger of such determinism in the following lines:

......the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.

The philosophical arguments in both Indian and Western history of thoughts regarding the nature of 'truth' and 'error' (whether truth is one-dimensional or multi-dimensional) can subscribe or subvert the idea projected by Mill. But those cannot falsify the basic premise of his comment that an open-ended theory is a virtue in itself while all deterministic theories supported and sustained by some powerful authority (be it state or any religious institution or business magnets) exercise some kind of coercive power on the other theories and in his opinion, "the power itself is illegitimate" (ibid. 20).
In both natural and social science, treating knowledge as ‘natural,’ ‘neutral’ and ‘universal’, obtained by observing the objectified phenomenon in a laboratory state, outside its natural environment and ignoring the researcher’s subjective gaze in the act of observation, constitutes the violence of reductionist approach. Such approach of reducing a living integrated system to its parts and collecting factual as well as mechanical evidences about certain phenomena, irrespective of their socio-political environment and projecting it as ‘scientific method’ has been criticized by those who attach conscience and ethical values to the pursuit of ‘science’. Shiva (1999: 236) summarizes the epistemological violence of reductionist science in the following lines:

All this is the stuff of politics, not science. Picking one group of people (the specialists), who adopt one way of knowing the physical world (the reductionist), to find one set of properties in nature (the reductionist/mechanistic), is a political, not a scientific, act.

The focus on such illegitimacy of a deterministic theory has led a number of scientists for ages to construct their rationale on a ‘liberal’ plane on the basis of a simple assumption that ‘No theory is complete in itself’, they are only ‘provisional’ as Stephen Hawking (1998: 11) looks upon the physical theories, “in the sense that it is only a hypothesis: you can never prove it”. He judges a scientific theory only as a model of the Universe or a restricted part of it, in which quantification is done based on the observations made by the researcher. It’s a theoretical construct that “exists only in our minds and does not have any other reality”. He elaborates his views and explains the essence of his methodology in the following lines (ibid. 11):

No matter how many times the results of experiments agree with some theory, you can never be sure that the next time the result will not contradict the theory. On the other hand, you can disprove a theory by finding even a single observation that disagrees with the predictions of the theory. As philosopher of science Karl Popper has emphasized, a good theory is characterised by the fact that it makes a number of predictions that could in principle be disproved or falsified by observation. Each time new experiments are observed to agree with the predictions the theory survives, and our confidence in it is
increased; but if ever a new observation is found to disagree, we have to abandon or modify the theory.

Hawking's proposition indicates towards an immediate attribute of a theory which is a production of some particular observations made by a particular person or group of persons in a definite context of space and time. It is vulnerable to alteration if any of these conditions changes and it is always susceptible to change as the observer/s of fact/s is/are himself/herself/themselves a product of the same background on which he/she conducts his/her study. Hawking extends the provision by saying, "but you can always question the competence of the person who carried out the observation" (ibid.). The individual competence put into question becomes all the more pertinent in the perspective of his/her association with the entire social and intellectual history that has contributed to his/her mental disposition as well as his/her academic training. In Haldane's words:

We must remember that the investigator, whether a biologist, an economist, or a sociologist, is himself a part of history, and that if he ever forgets that he is a part of history he will deceive his audience and deceive himself. (Haldane, 1938: 2)

The scientists who recognize the ideas expressed in the above paragraphs regarding scientific theories consider such vulnerability to alteration as a virtue of science itself. They deny acceptance of a single construct to interpret the natural as well as social phenomena, in the name of 'science' and 'reason' as predominantly preached by the so-called 'Western' worldviews, and search for its alternatives that question, contradict and even refute the absoluteness of a dominating theory in modern science. Feyeraband (1988) looks upon such violations as neither accidental, nor a result of insufficient knowledge or of inattention, but as a necessary pre-condition for the advancement of scientific theory. Feyeraband who recognizes Mill, Kuhn, Bohr and Lakatos as his predecessors and projects himself as an Anarchist who works as a secret agent in the game of reason to undercut the authority of Reason, goes so far as to prove in each and every remarkable 'achievement' of modern science a certain amount of 'numerical disagreement and qualitative failure' (ibid: 39). His propositions led him introduce what
he called the "pluralistic methodology" (ibid. 21) which intended to falsify the reign of Reason and the supremacy of Inductive method by arranging counter-inductive arguments in its support. A scientist adopting this methodology should compare his/her ideas with other ideas rather than with his/her own experience, and try to enhance the lost views or the views that lagged behind in competition with the dominant view of an era. This emphasis on defeated ideologies underlies the presupposition that an ideology gains supremacy not so much for its own virtue but being enforced by some non-scientific agencies like state, church (or any other religious authority), political party, money etc.

Feyeraband contends that a scientific knowledge is much more 'sloppy' and 'irrational' than the so-called traditional methodologies in use try to put it like. Such methodologies restrict the method of empiricism into narrow countable data, easy to quantify and fit in the frame a researcher sets in order to prove his/her point. Beyond that limit lies a vast resource of discourse which is also very much a part of the 'reality' which it is a norm to overlook by the scientist with the excuse of non-conformity with Reason. Feyeraband's proposition associated itself with all the ideas related to a subject whether they claim to be scientific or not (it includes myths, both ancient and modern, social prejudice and individual passion that characterize the particular field of study). Though highly sceptical about the accuracy and adequacy of empirical data collected from firsthand observation, it, however, did not exclude the experiences of objective science from its domain, but exploited them with a different purpose: in order to dethrone them with a battalion of counter-arguments. He propounded that it was through the contradiction, and violation discharged by the less favoured views, that knowledge of a subject progresses. He would assert, without 'chaos', no knowledge, without a frequent dismissal of reason, no progress (ibid. 163).

His idea of incorporating the apparently neglected discourse on a field of knowledge becomes all the more pertinent when it comes to deal with society as a whole which constitutes of men and women of flesh and blood, where both reason and un-reason
coexist, intellect and emotion cohabit, where decision and indecision walk hand in hand leading to chaos and dilemma.

Research on a subject is standardly carried out in order to find out the ‘truth’ about it. In the present thesis, it has been acknowledged that ‘truth’ is not something fixed and one-dimensional idea about a natural or social phenomenon. Hypotheses emerge in the subjective worldview of the researcher with his/her attachment and awareness of the environment he/she belongs to. The hypotheses are tested, celebrated, modified or rejected in specific environments as the theoretical and empirical exercises open the door of several ‘truth-rooms’ which contribute to the overall understanding of certain phenomena. In this thesis, both the dominant and the alternative discourse regarding the topic have been treated critically in order to understand the plural aspects of the problem. Empirical evidences to the hypotheses have been sought in order to perceive the situation in a more concrete form through informal discussion and discourses available in written media in the perspective of a given time and space. The process of quantification has been deployed on a limited set of data in order to understand the thrush points of certain thriving issues in order to explore the graveness and importance of a living problem as faced by the learners of West Bengal. In the present research aims have been set to comprehend the subject from every possible angle and through each probable avenue through discourses.

While studying the dilemmas and conflicts regarding teaching-learning of English in the context of Bangla medium schools of West Bengal, it must be admitted that however sincere the commitment may sound, in reality, it is very difficult to denote the extra-pedagogical factors contributing to the issues, as no tool seems to be sufficient to capture them for sure. One can only take care of what comes to the surface at a particular time and space, i.e. what is articulated both verbally and in written words at the time of interviews or in self-explained published documents. The thesis has for its corpus both official and unofficial discourse like Governmental documents, reports, published statements as also newspaper reports and other media reports, verbal interviews, leaflets,
pamphlets etc. collected through field work. This process of collecting public opinion obviously has its own limitation which is applicable to the present thesis as well. Hence, no claim has been made to reflect the accurate picture of the scenario it endeavours to explore. The received corpus has been analyzed by deploying the plural and heterogeneous apparatus of discourse analysis by inquiring into the discursive practice of a community through 'listening' as suggested by Dasgupta (1993). For him, a discourse is "a set of written and spoken texts and practitexts" (a practitext being a discursive practice based on some prescribed contents with a flexibility to be reproduced differently in different time and space). In this thesis, listening to the learners' opinions has been considered necessary in order to understand how they establish their linguistic identity in the domain of English, within the process of selving / othering the language, while learning it through the formal system of schooling.

The present research relies on empirical data collected from the young learners of English in West Bengal. The goal is to understand their attitudes towards the language and motivational factors associated with the teaching-learning process. It is indeed difficult to convert attitudinal and motivational factors in hard numbers and there always remains the necessity to make provisions for special comments, queries and further explanations, which should be noted carefully and separately, from each learner. Opinions can be as varied as each and every individual human being is. But this method can be effective in a socio-linguistic perspective if based on assumptions formed and supported by non-empirical resources regarding some specific aspects of the problem, and conducted with questionnaires that are open ended and designed to incorporate a possible range of responses, instead of relying on merely deterministic 'yes'/ 'no' type answers.

The empirical research carried out among the school children is not intended to reduce the varied responses to subtle generalized concepts but to understand how the learners from various walks of life treated with same educational instruments, react to the centralized language planning policies. It is also to be studied whether some alternative system emerges from their points of insistence on a specific issue related to educational
planning. The point is to ensure recording each individual reply to a single set of queries based on the issues held important in the on-going debate between the policy makers and the public when those policies are implemented. Empirical analysis is supposed to give strength to both individual and collective voice of those who lie at the receiving end of the policy decisions and seldom get the opportunity to articulate their judgment in the matters that affect them most.

The results of empirical research have been obtained through field work in the Bangla medium schools at various districts of West Bengal following the method of Sample Survey. The measures of quantification undertaken to codify, compute and rank the responses based on the Likert Method have been discussed in detail in chapter VI. The substantive nature of the task on which this method is being brought to bear needs to be viewed in the context of the theoretical framework of the topic and an understanding of both discursive and non-discursive situations in which these questions become intelligible.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter delineates the objective of the present inquiry, the scope of research and the methodology followed in this thesis. The following chapters would study and analyze the problems on the discourses selected and categorized as the corpus of the thesis. English Space in the Colonial India and in the post-colonial era, its effect in the context of West Bengal. The third and the fourth chapter deal with the sociology of English with regard to the planning policies in the pre- and post-independence India respectively. The fifth chapter concentrates on the linguistic dilemma arising in the context of West Bengal over the issues of teaching-learning of English. The sixth chapter is an attempt to capture the language learners' profile, who are most affected in such conflict, and to understand their point of views at that particular point of time when the survey was conducted.
Endnote:

1. Kuhn’s (1962) notion of “scientific development” narrates a pure and ideal state of affair. In his discourse on ‘normal science’, ‘scientific evolution’ takes the shape of natural evolution – like the evolution of species, with all its novelties and wonder. He argues for keeping its sanctity intact and maintaining proper chronological sequence and steps of development heading towards a paradigm shift or transition to a new paradigm, what he calls a “scientific revolution” (ibid. 9)

2. The symbols for phonetic transcription used are as follows:
   S = paleto-alveolar sibilant
   D = voiced unaspirated retroflex stop
   E = front mid-low vowel
   T = voiceless unaspirated retroflex stop
   O = back mid-low vowel
   N = velar nasal
   e = front mid-high vowel

   The rest of the symbols are not listed as they agree with the IPA convention followed by Ray et. al. 1966.