THE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH TEACHING IN KERALA

CHAPTER 2
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CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH TEACHING
IN KERALA

Language teaching has been changing for many centuries. Various influences have affected language teaching. Reasons for learning languages were different as and when times changed. In certain periods, languages were taught for the purpose of reading. In certain other eras, they were taught to use them orally. These differences influenced the methodology of teaching in various periods. Besides, theories about language and learning have also changed. However, many of the current issues concerning language teaching have emerged at various points of time.

2.1. THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH TEACHING METHODOLOGY

The history of teaching a foreign language can be traced back to the ancient Greeks. They were interested in learning about mind through language learning. The Romans were the first to start studying a foreign language formally.

In Europe, before the 16th century much of language teaching meant teaching Latin to priests. In the 16th and 17th centuries, there was a common language to speak to foreigners. So it was taught widely during this period. The language books (materials) of those times indicate that questions such as practice versus learning rules and formal study versus informal study were considered in those times also. During these centuries, the status of Latin changed from a living language to a dead language. Still, the analysis of grammar and rhetoric of classical Latin became the model language teaching between 17th and 19th centuries. The emphasis was on learning grammar and rules and vocabulary by translations, and on practice
in writing sample sentences. This method was later known as grammar-translation method. When modern languages were taught as part of curriculum, from 18th century, they were taught using the same method as that was used for teaching Latin.

2.1.1. The Grammar Translation Method

The grammar translation method was the dominant foreign language teaching method in Europe from 1840's to 1940's. Even today, a version of this is widely used in some parts of the world. The grammar translation method was based on the assumption that language is primarily graphic, and that the main purpose of second language study is to build knowledge of the structure of the language either as a tool for literary research and translation or for the development of learners' logical powers. The process of learning second language must be deductive, which requires effort and must be carried out with constant reference to the learners' native language.

Even as early as the mid-19th century, theorists were beginning to question the principles behind the grammar translation method. During this time, there had been a growing demand for the ability to speak foreign languages. Theorists such as C. Marcel, F. Gounin, both French reformists and Pendergart, an Englishman began to reconsider the nature of language and learning.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries linguists began to think of the best way to teach languages. They include Henry Sweet of England, Wilhelm Vietor of Germany, and Paus Passy of France, who believed that language teaching should be based on scientific knowledge about language. It should begin with speaking and go on expanding the other skills. Words and sentences should be presented in context and grammar should be taught inductively. These ideas began to spread which, eventually pave way to the Direct Method.
2.1.2. Direct Method

The Direct Method allows to work on all the four skill areas (reading, writing, speaking and listening). Structural patterns are practiced in meaningful interactions. The syllabus develops according to learning abilities and needs. Although translation is not used at all, the native language is considered a resource because of the overlap that is bound to exist between the two languages.

The Direct Method insists that the Teacher should take into account what the students already know. The students are expected to speak and communicate a great deal in the target language as if in real situations. Reading and writing are taught from the beginning though speaking and listening are emphasized. Grammar is learnt inductively. Assessment is continual but only to determine continually changing learning needs. The Direct Method became popular in language schools, but it was not very practical with larger classes or in public schools.

Development in the field of psychology had a great effect on language teaching. Scientists like Ivan Pavlov, B.F. Skinner, John Watson did experiments on animals. By studying the animal behaviour they came to believe that animal behaviour is formed by a series of rewards and punishments. Skinner promoted the idea that parents or other caretakers hear a child say something that sounds like a word in their language. They reward the child with praise and attention. The child repeats the words that are praised and thus learns language.

Behaviourism along with applied linguistics had a great influence on language teaching. Theorists believed that languages were made up of a series of habits. If learners
could develop all these habits, they could speak the language well. This gave way to Audio-lingual method

2.1.3. Audio-Lingual Method

The audio-lingual approach was very popular from the 1940s to the 1960s. It is based on behaviourist psychology and structural linguistics, which assume that language learning is the acquisition of a set of correct language habits. The learner repeats patterns until he is able to produce them spontaneously. The teacher directs and controls students' behaviour, provides a model for imitation and reinforces correct responses. New vocabulary and structures are learned through imitation and repetition. Audio-lingual method emphasizes everyday speech and uses a graded syllabus from simple to difficult linguistic structures. Role-demonstration, role playing and structure drilling are predominant activities.

The audio-lingual approach does not depend so much on the instructor's creative ability and does not require excellent proficiency in the language, being always ruled to sets of lessons and books. Therefore it is easy to be implemented, less expensive to be maintained and is still in use in many packaged language courses.

2.1.4. The Mid to Late 20th century developments

The years that followed World War II stand for a period of increased language diversity with a corresponding increase in the enthusiasm shown in the realm of language teaching and learning. People from all social strata started learning languages. International travels and socio-cultural exchanges increased the need for language learning. Between 1950s and 1960s a lot of attempts were made
(1) to use technology,

(2) to explore new educational patterns (individualised instruction, bilingual education, immersed programmes, etc.), and

(3) to establish methodological innovations.

However, the expected effectiveness of language education did not materialise.

From mid-1960’s onwards, the audio-lingual method has confronted with a number of theoretical challenges. Noam Chomsky questioned the behaviourist model of language learning, proposing an explanatory account of the innate Language Acquisition Device (LAD) and theory of Transformational Generative Grammar. There are other theorists also who have put forward new ideas. Stephen Krashen, for instance, proposed the Input Hypothesis, which states that language is acquired by virtue of comprehensible input which is slightly beyond the learner’s present proficiency. Learners make use of the comprehensible input to deduce rules. Krashen’s views paved the way for a de-emphasis on the teaching of grammatical rules and a greater emphasis on trying to teach language to adults in the same way as children acquire language.

In continuation to that, since 1970s there have been various developments such as greater emphasis on individualized instruction, more humanistic approaches to language learning, more focus on the learner, much emphasis on communicative abilities in the place of linguistic competence. Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, and Total Physical Response are some of the recent methods that have gained momentum. Let us briefly examine these methods one by one.
2.1.5. The Silent Way

The theoretical basis of Dr. Caleb Gattegno’s Silent Way is the idea that teaching must be subordinated to learning and thus students must develop their own inner criteria for correctness. The teacher develops open-ended materials and games for the early stages of language learning. This includes a box of rods, set of pictures, and worksheets and charts showing the principle function words of language. But more important than these materials is the way they are used. For example, self-correction techniques play a key role in a Silent Way classroom. Various gestures, especially, those employing the fingers, are used to help students correct their own mistakes, rather than rely on the teacher to make corrections (Pint, 1997). All four skills — reading, writing, speaking and listening— are taught from the beginning. The teacher’s silence helps foster self-reliance and student initiative. The teacher is active in setting up situations, while the students do most of the talking and interacting.

In the Silent way, the role of the teacher becomes a most delicate one. He is no longer the repository of knowledge to be passed on to students; he is rather a “scientist who closely observes his students at work and, according to what he sees, changes the amount of material presented on the way of presentation.”(Perault, 1973)

The real difficulty in teaching in the silent way is to surrender to the spirit that animates its techniques. This is not practical in a social and formal setting. The Silent Way is very difficult to apply in a classroom in a time-bound manner. Since the pedagogy depends on the charisma of the teacher, the teacher’s role becomes very crucial. Teachers will have to be trained as pure professionals. The silent way faces another problem. It makes use of pre-designed materials depriving the student of the freedom to develop their own materials. Students should have a creative role in the preparation of learning materials.
2.1.6. Suggestopedia

Suggestopedia was created by a psychiatrist, Dr. Geogi Lozanov in 1960’s. It is a system, which redefines the speed and depth at which learning is possible. Advocates of suggestopedia believe that the more satisfying and enjoyable an experience is, the more thoroughly will it be remembered. By creating a pleasant, relaxing and stimulating environment, where all information has a positive emotional content, the teacher can help students to create networks of pleasurable associations with the new material, which in turn will help the students remember it longer.

The role of the teacher in suggestopedia is crucial. He is the ‘motor of the suggestopedic machine’ (Gateva, 1990b). A large part of a suggestopedic course depends on the suggestive effect of the teacher’s behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal. One of its unique goals is to release the learner’s mind from the existing framework of the ‘social-suggestive norms’ (Lozanov, 1978). The important task for a suggestopedic teacher is to put students in a state of mind called “concentrative psycho-relaxation” (Lozanov, 1978). Lozanov describes concentrative psychorelaxation as the optimal state of brain activity for learning, in which the level of relaxation is neither too deep nor too shallow. Teachers can use all interactive communicative activities in suggestopedia, especially in the elaboration part of the lesson. Techniques such as role-plays, games, quizzes are all effective. The learning environment is relaxed and subdued, with low lighting and soft music in the background. Students choose new names and personal background (character) in the course (target language and culture) so that they can be released from their real life problems or status which Lozanov believes, often work as factors against learning (Hagiwara, 1989). Suggestopedia introduces artistic elements into its teaching methodology and materials to stimulate learners’ creativity. These include music, visual arts, stage arts and concert sessions. In the concert sessions the learners
are in a pseudo-passive state (Lozanov, 1978); that is, they are physically relaxed and mentally activated.

Several adaptations of suggestopedia retaining the same name exist throughout Western and Eastern Europe. They include Super Learning, Suggestive Accelerative Learning and Teaching (SALT), psychopedia, Learning in New Dimensions (LIND), Optimal Learning and Holistic Learning. Elements have been introduced or omitted over the years, some according to sound research findings, some simply at a personal whim or more often for better commercial validity. This has resulted in confusion about the exact structure and content of a suggestopedia course. One important element missing in the research has been a precise description of the evolution of suggestopedia since its inception in the 1960s to the present day.

Suggestopedia has undergone a variety of changes over the two decades of its existence. As already mentioned there are a few extensions of suggestopedia. They are Super Learning, SALT and psychopedia. The chief contribution of Super Learning is the inclusion of synchronization of breathing and presentation of words during the passive concert session. The most important contribution of SALT is the inclusion of mind-calming during the presentation phase. Psychopedia has inserted a reproductive phase before concert sessions. The rationale for this was to break up the long passive states which suggestopodic students face. Depamo and R.F. Job (1990) in their study have pointed out they were not able to observe any significant improvement with SALT methods. According to them SALT, Suggestopedia and Super Learning are methodologically flawed. The material is decided by the teacher. It is presented in three sessions. The first one is the active presentation in which the material is vividly presented by means of visual images, association cues and dynamic vocal intonation (loud, normal and soft). The second one is a passive form in which students
sit relaxed with eyes closed and their breathing synchronized with music in the background. Teacher revises the lesson using oral intonation. In the third session students enact a dramatic presentation of the lesson until some level of proficiency is achieved (Palmer, 1985). The suggestopedia techniques are highly structured. Children do not have any role in the production of the material. Practice is the main strategy to achieve proficiency. There is no slot for the students to generate their own linguistic expressions. At best suggestopedia and its kins help to activate memory of the learners.

2.1.7. Community Language Learning

Community Language Learning (CLL) came up in 1970’s as a strong reaction to the general lack of affective consideration in both audio lingual and cognitive code. This is an example of humanistic approach which focuses on the affective domain for educational purpose and the learner as a whole person. Humanistic approach maintains that ‘a human individual needs to be understood and aided in the process of fulfilling personal values and goals. CLL was developed by Charles A. Curran, a specialist in counselling and a professor at Layola University. He applied counsellor learning theory in which the counsellor (teacher) gives advice, assistance and support to the clients (students) to language learning. The teachers become the so-called “language counsellors” dealing with the fear of students. Teachers help students feel secure and overcome their fears and thus help them harness positive energy for learning. At last, students are encouraged to exercise their own communicating initiative for learning. In CLL, the teacher must be a keen observer and a helper. He must keep good relationship with the students. Besides, the teacher has to be a capable guide.
The most important skills in CLL are understanding and speaking the language especially, in the early stages. Focus is on fluency rather than proficiency; grammatical correctness is less important. The syllabus used is learner generated, in that; students choose what they want to learn to say in the target language. However, there is no systematic syllabus since the students decide the content. Some students who are not used to this kind of method may feel uncomfortable. The concept of security stressed in counselling learning is a matter of maturity, which is a long-term target to be viewed as educational goal.

In CLL classes, the individual decides the syllabus. Students whose needs interests and capabilities are different will be going for thematically diversified materials of various linguistic levels. Consequently, it will be difficult for the teacher to closely monitor every individual. Moreover, it will be difficult to cover an unstructured syllabus in a time-bound manner. Though it is ideal that every individual has the freedom to choose his own material, we have to bear in mind that a society like ours, which has passed through generations of formal education, has its own assumptions about the role of teachers and textbooks. Because of its deep-rooted conservatism, our society may not appreciate formal education without proper textbooks and syllabus.

2.1.8. Total Physical Response Method

Asher’s Total Physical response Approach begins by placing primary importance to listening comprehension and then moving to speaking, reading and writing. This method stems on the emulation of early stages of mother tongue acquisition. The student’s comprehension is demonstrated by the performance of commands issued by the teacher. Teacher provides novel and humorous variations of the commands. The activities are
designed to be fun and provide opportunities for students to assume active learning roles. Activities always include games.

Recent developments in cognitive psychology, linguistics and teaching methodology suggest that integration of various skills is appropriate for providing natural learning experience for children. This implies that all skills are to be catered to, simultaneously. The total physical response gives an upper hand to commands ignoring the fact that language is acquired through a variety of language discourses.

2.1.9. The Communicative Approach

The inadequacy of grammar translation method and audio-lingual method led to the development of the communicative approach. This approach stresses the need to teach communicative competence as against linguistic competence. The functions are more emphasized than forms. Primacy is for the oral and listening skills. It is assumed that reading and writing skills need to be developed to promote students' confidence in all four skill areas. Grammar can be taught but less systematically. Students usually work with authentic materials, during which they receive practice in negotiating meaning.

The communicative approach, which conceives language as communication does not account for the concept of language. Even if it is administered the way it has been envisaged, it is doubtful whether the learners will be acquiring competence in the targeted language. This is mainly for two reasons: Firstly, this approach ends with creating language fossils. Once language gets fossilised, it loses its productivity. Secondly, the communicative approach fails to bring about linguistic competence in learners. Following K.V. Tirumalesh (1996), we will shortly examine in detail the major claims and limitations of the communicative approach.
2.1.9.1. Communicative Approach: Major claims

- The languages of the world have evolved out of the necessity for communication among the speakers.

- Languages are different because the needs of communication are different in the various speech communities.

- Languages change according to the changes in the communication pattern of the time and place.

- Dialects, registers, styles and other language variations are due to the differences in the community and parameters of the speech community.

- Speech communities are heterogeneous; therefore, language variations are naturally expected.

- Everything about language is contingent, arbitrary and therefore everything can be changed, reconfigured, and rests in accordance with the changing needs of the society.

- Language autonomy is the source of all evils: grammar, standard and dialect, linguistic elitism, correctionalism, dialect marginalization, etc. are evils of language autonomy.

- The notions of grammar, standard and acceptability can be equalled with the political categories of the empire namely, universalism and hegemony.
2.1.9.2. The Communicative Theory: Problems

- It cannot account for the phenomenon of language(s). It fails to register the concepts of language and languages. Most theories of language as communication do not seem to accommodate the concept of language.

- It cannot challenge formal theory on any theoretical basis. As a naïve theory of language it is simple and therefore has an innate appeal to simple people.

- It is incapable of addressing the complexities of natural languages.

- The argument against formal theory as the cause of all social evils cannot be substantiated. Of course, hierarchy and social value get attached to language. Language varieties do vary cultural values. Nevertheless, they do not produce them. It is these values that produce and propagate the varieties.

- If one standard goes another will emerge; if grammar goes, language also goes. Therefore, there is no point in waging war against grammar and standards.

- In its zeal to dissolve language and dialectical boundaries, it also dissolves the concept of language, reducing it to no more than a simple referential representative system.

- Pavlovnism de-privileged the concept of mind, and communicative theory de-privileged the concept of language.

- It is not radical as it claims to be; on the contrary, it turns out to be most conservative and oppressive.

- It does not permit free thinking and it negates inner language.
Since 1950s, Chomsky has challenged the previous assumptions about language structure and language learning. He argues that language is creative, not memorized and rule governed, not based on habit. Universal phenomena of human mind underlie all languages.

The Chomskyan revolution brought about a paradigm shift in the notions concerning language and language acquisition in the sense that 'there was an important change of perspective from the study of behaviour and its products (such as texts), to the inner mechanism that enter thought and action.' The approach is 'mentalistic' as it is concerned with mental aspects of the world. The central claim made by Chomsky is that the human child is genetically endowed with a Language Acquisition Device (LAD), subsequently labelled as Universal Grammar (UG) and that what is conceived as language acquisition is the unfolding of this innate system.

The Chomskyan Revolution has given rise to two approaches to teaching languages namely, skill-based models and cognitive models. Skill-based models address the External (E) language and is focusing on the performance of the learners. The traditional structural approaches and the recently developed communicative approaches are essentially skill-based models. On the other hand, cognitive models focus on the competence of the learner rather than his performance. Consequently, the focus is shifted to Internalized I-language from E-language.

When cognitive psychology came into being displacing behaviourist psychology, language teaching methodology that had been erected on the foundations of structuralism and behaviourism started collapsing down. Contributions of cognitive psychology yielded the cognitive constructivist models as conceived by Piaget and his followers and the social constructivist models proposed by psychologists such as Vygotsky, and Bruner. The
Cognitive Revolution has had its impact on language pedagogy in general. As a result, as Ellis (1985) points out, at least three different views have emerged with regard to language teaching. These are:

i. The behaviourist view

ii. The mentalist view, and

iii. The interactionist view

These views differ on the role of input in language acquisition. Behaviourists ignore the internal processing that takes place inside the learner because they reject the idea of mind as an object for enquiry. Behaviourist models of learning emphasize the possibility of shaping language acquisition by manipulating the input to provide appropriate stimuli. Acquisition is then controlled by external factors. Mentalist theories consider input as only a trigger that sets off internal language processing (Cook, 1989). A common assertion of mentalist theories is that the input is intermediate.

The third type of theory is the interactionist one. Its common assumption is that input does have a determining function in language acquisition. Two different theories have developed under this label. The first one is the cognitive interactionist view, which considers acquisition the product of linguistic environment and internal mechanisms of the learner. But as far as the second interactionist theory is concerned, verbal interaction is of crucial importance for language learning.

Mentalists continue UG-based researches to examine various claims that have been floated by linguists working in the Chomskyan paradigm. A major issue that is being addressed is whether UG is available fully, partially or not at all to the second language learner. While this being the position, let us examine the status of English teaching in Kerala.
2.2. HISTORY OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN INDIA

English has become an integral part of Indian life thanks to the historical legacy. Now English plays a vital role even in the life of a common man. Two hundred years of its contact has brought about such a status. English was first introduced with British rule. It was materialised by the granting of 1813 charter with the strenuous effort of Charles Grant. But the language policy of British India was the after effect of Lord William Bentinck Macaulay’s Education Minutes of 1835. The same status was maintained till 1950 when the constitution of India proclaimed that after 1965, Hindi would be the official language. But due to the strong provocation from the southern state. The parliament passed Official Language Amendment bill-1967 making English as associate official language of India. The successive Education commissions in India underlined the importance of English Education in India. The University Education Commission stressed the need of continuing English for federal business until regional languages are promoted adequately. The Secondary Education commission recommended that English should be kept as a compulsory subject at the secondary stage. The Kothari Commission report put forth a very comprehensive suggestion. It advised to extend the ‘three language formula’ devised by the central Advisory board of education in 1956 to the University level.

However, due to the socio-political reasons English language holds an unchallengeable position in the Indian mindset. Therefore English is a compulsory subject in the school and colleges of all the states of the country. Besides, English continues to be the medium of instruction in the Universities and National level educational institutions. In the next section we will briefly present the perspective of the various Education Commissions in our country.
2.2.1. Education Commissions and their Perspective of English Language Teaching

A lot of discussions and debates came up at various points of time with regard to the importance of English in the educational scenario of India since our Independence. The position of English in the School and College curriculum has been a burning issue since then. All the education commissions in the post-independence period have put forth their recommendations regarding the approach towards language teaching and learning. The fact that these recommendations have not been taken into consideration seriously while formulating policies both by the central and state governments, really unfolds the history of education in our country.

First of all, let us have a bird’s eyeview on the recommendations of University Education Commissions with regard to language learning. The commission led by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan observes.

> English however, must continue to be studied. It is a language, which is rich in literature- humanistic, scientific and technical. If under sentimental urges we should give up English we would not ourselves off from the living stream of ever growing knowledge. […] English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world, and we will act unwisely if we allow ourselves to be enveloped in the fold of dark curtain of ignorance (Report of Higher Education Commissions, 1955).

Therefore, the commission recommended that English should continue in Universities and high schools. In its on words, “We recommend that English be studied in high schools and in the universities in order that we may keep in touch with the living stream of ever-growing knowledge” (Report of the University Education Commission, 1955).
This was an endorsement for the continuance of English in our school and universities so as to get approved by the state and central governments. At the same time the commission recommended “that for the medium of instruction for higher education, English be replaced as early as practicable by an Indian language.” (University Education Commission, 1955).

The commission also recommended “that the pupils at higher secondary and university stages be made conversant with three languages, the regional language, the Federal Language and English. The higher education should be imparted through the instrumentality of the regional language with the option to use the Federal language as the medium of instruction either for some subjects or for all subjects.

It is obvious that this practical recommendation paved the way for adopting the medium of instruction in primary level also to regional language wherever it was different. Furthermore, it laid the foundation in formulating a language policy for the schools and university curriculum. The Secondary Education Commission also put its thought very much on the purpose of language study and the place of English in secondary school curriculum. Admiring the opinions of eminent educationists and scientists, the commission expressed its view pertaining to the place of English; “What was most urgently needed was that our youth acquire knowledge from all sources and contribute their share to its expansion and development. In the attainment of this objective, study of English was bound to play an important part”. (Secondary Education Commission) The commission was of the view that medium of instruction should be in mother tongue and English should be compulsorily taught in schools. With regard to the methodology too the commission presented its observation:

In the case of other languages—whether English or classical or modern Indian languages—the approach must be definitely practical. The students should be
able to read them with comprehension and ease, speak them correctly so as to make themselves understood and express simple ideas and give easy descriptions in writing. The emphasis must, therefore be on reading and speech throughout and the students should not be tied down to prescribed textbooks.

As the Secondary Education Commission re-emphasised the importance of teaching English at the school level. It is worth examining the observation of National Education Commission 1966. The commission analysed the problems concerning the implementation of three language-formula proposed by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1956 which was approved by the Chief Ministers conference in 1961, at length and proposed "workable three language formula". One of the guiding principles among others is that, "English will continue to enjoy a high status so long as it remains the principal medium of education at the university stage, and the language of administration at the centre and many of the states". The National Education Commission(1966) states:

"We therefore, recommend a modified or graduated three language to include"

1. The mother tongue, or the regional language.

2. The official language of the Union or the associate official language of the Union so long as it exists and

3. A modern Indian or foreign language not covered under (1) and (2) and other then used as the medium of instruction.

Furthermore, the commission recommended that only one language should be studied at the lower primary stage (that is classes I to IV) compulsorily, the mother tongue or the regional language.
It is to be noted that the commission was not categorical about the commencement of teaching English in the higher primary stage (Class V). As English will for a long time continue to be read as ‘library language’ in the field of higher education a strong foundation in the language will have to be laid at the schools stage. [...] We have recommended that its teaching may begin in class V, but we realize that for many pupils, particularly in the rural areas, the study will not commence before class VIII. The fact that English will be for the overwhelming majority of pupils only a second or third language makes it all the more necessary to ensure the adoption of effective modern methods of teaching the language by teachers, who have been specially trained for the purpose.

In this connection we would like to refer to a recent report to the Ministry of Education on the study of English, by a group of specialists in the subject (Study of English in India. 1964). The group has supported the teaching of English on the basis of the structural approach, which is now being used increasingly in different parts of India, and has suggested a detailed syllabus for the study of the language from Class V to class XII both at ordinary and advanced levels.

As far as the aspirations of the people of India in the 1960s was concerned the commission adopted a pragmatic approach towards languages. Especially for English, the commission was very much particular about the methodology. Therefore it recommended the structural approach which was very ambitious in those times. Moreover, the commission expressed its strong disagreement towards beginning English before class V in certain States. “[...] The policy recently adopted by several States for introducing the study of English in class III is educationally unsound. We agree with this view.”
However, it is to infer that the National Education Commission was very much concerned at all levels over the quality of teaching English. Kerala State came to the forefront in implementing the three language formula. But it never affected positively the classroom process of language learning because the change effected was at the administrative levels and not on the methodology. Then came the much acclaimed National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986. The policy focused on rejuvenating the entire educational process in the country taking into account of the deterioration of its quality. Reiterating a series of measures to enhance the quality of the learning achievement of students at all levels of education, the NPE set apart a number of strategies to make learning joyful and effective. Curiously enough, there was no shift in the perspective on language teaching in the country including that of English, from the recommendations of Kothari Commission.

NPE observed that there happened a surprising quality deterioration in the learning and teaching process of English. This is manifested through the pitiable performance of children in their productive skills. Teaching English by translating texts in mother tongue is the main reason for this defect. This can be overcome by giving a lot of practice by way of giving activities in the four skills. This was the objective of the Massive teacher training programme — to enhance the quality of English learning and teaching in our schools as envisaged by NPE-1986.

Surprisingly, there has been no inquiry so far on whether the language teaching process is appropriate for the children’s natural language acquisition process, from any quarters. Nor has there been any probe on why really the performance of students who have undergone several years of English teaching and learning does not come anywhere near the expected learning outcome. It is quite dejecting to all those concerned. This obviously points towards an inertia that has been prevailing in our country in the field of educational
research and practices over the last forty years. As the Higher Education Commission rightly predicts, English has emerged as a Universal language. In spite of all the strenuous efforts by the State and Central governments to spread and elevate Hindi to our national language, the role of English becomes increasingly important in every walk of life. It has a decisive role right from the layman's day-to-day activities to the highest activities of legislature and judiciary. Apparently, English is a feather on the cap of those who are proficient in it. On the contrary, those who do not possess the same are destined to be alienated from the corridors of 'power'. Therefore, equipping a child to use English proficiently amounts to empowering him to participate in national and international activities. That this political and social dimensions have not been taken into account in the formulation of the perspectives of teaching English in our country, is very much bewildering to everyone. This makes it all the more important to teach English to children.

2.3. HISTORY OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN KERALA

English education was deep-rooted in Kerala since the first half of nineteenth century. In 1917, Her Majesty Rani Parvathi Bhai issued a proclamation that education is the responsibility of the state. This was a turning point in the educational history of Kerala. The adoption of KER in 1959 paved the way for Universal Education in Kerala. During the colonial period, medium of instruction in most of the schools was English especially in schools started by Missionaries.

Historically, Keralites migrated to different parts of the country in search of employment. Obviously a minority went abroad also. English education proved itself to be helpful to them to a great extent. This created a belief that English proficiency is inevitable
forgoing outside Kerala though the fact is that this only a minority go abroad seeking jobs. Therefore, English has been a mandatory subject in school education for years.

Teaching of English starts in standard IV in all the government schools, government aided schools and recognised unaided schools, where the medium of instruction is mother tongue or the regional language. At the same time, there are a few schools among them where the medium of instruction is English. In addition to this, there are a number of unaided unrecognized schools where too English is the medium of instruction. Thus English is a compulsory subject in the school curriculum. In the mainstream, English is introduced in class III whereas the other second language, Hindi is taught from class V.

2.4. PEOPLE'S CRAZE FOR ENGLISH

English has a wide spread prestigious status in our society. It has a crucial role in education right from the primary level. At the college level English remains as the medium of instruction. Besides, for professional courses entrance examinations are in English. Proficiency in English is inevitable to get through entrance examinations either in the national level or the state level. Further more, mastery over English language has a decisive role in appearing for other national level tests for both higher studies and employment.

As the learning achievements of the children after the school education is pitiable poor, there is a belief that the minority, less than five percent coming out of the English medium schools often perform better in the above mentioned competitive examinations. This has been the condition over the last twenty-five years in our state. So the clever social class, who are vigilant to grab the educational opportunities for their sake show a craze to ensure that their wards are in the English medium schools. This paved the way for the mushrooming of the English medium in our state. Besides, it appears that sending children to the so-called
English medium schools is a symbol of social status. The Western styled school uniform and the imposed discipline of the children create an attraction towards English medium schools. The point of losing the credibility of the main stream education also makes matters worse. Children of these schools go to the school early in the morning and return late in the evening. This is due to the conveyance arrangement made by the school authorities with a view to fetching children from a very vast catchment area. This turns out to be very tortuous for children as they are forced to sacrifice all the occasions of their playtime and natural activities at home.

To makes matters worse, all the children with few exception are subjected to undergo tuition either at home or in the school. This makes the life of most English medium schools, particularly at rural areas miserable to children. This extreme sacrifice by the parents is with a view to provide better English Education for their wards. While taking into account of the price the children and parents pay, the learning outcome of children and parents pay, the learning outcome of children in English medium schools is not encouraging. However, instead of looking at the existing educational scenario to improve so as to cater to the demands of the social needs, the arguments always tend to find for alternatives, there by make one’s own position safer.

This is why the number of Unaided and unrecognised English medium schools is on the increase. On the contrary, for the common man, the education of his child is not the only first priority. He is bound to send his child in the nearest school. He does not have any other way out. Consequently, this majority does not have any alternative in the educational practice than opting these schools. So the minority in English medium schools claim that they hold upper hand, among the schools.
But the fact is different. Out of the 55 lakhs students in the school system, only less than 5% of the students are in English medium school. This is a minority comparing to the total number of students in the mainstream. However, an impression has been created in our state, by the media and opinion makers that everything is okay in English medium schools. But it may be noticed that a substantial difference is not visible with regard to learning achievement between the malayalam and English medium schools.

2.5. VISIONING THE SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE OF ENGLISH EDUCATION IN KERALA.

Everyone will agree that all the children coming out of our school system, should acquire proficiency in English language. The English literacy in our country is 3%. But more than 75% of the entire legislation takes place both at the national and state levels, either in English or with the help of English. In this context, attainment of proficiency in English is inevitable for the student for their better participation in the democratic polity in future. This is one of the ways to empower the coming generation, which is the ultimate goal of education. Besides, as the emergence of information technology and its influence in all the walks of life, is concerned the need of proficiency in English cannot be compromised. As education is human development process, equitable support should be ensured to each and very individual in the school system. Since English education is a hard nut to crack, it has to be addressed immediately. Unless, this end is accomplished, those pupils coming from the lower social and economic strata of the society will be the ultimate losers. So it is the very duty of the society to make sure that each and very child in our schools system is empowered by being acquired the proficiency to use English language in order to face the challenges an individual faces in his life. Similarly, the credibility of the school in the mainstream also has to regain. This could be brought about by the total quality enhancement of the learning
achievement of the students at all levels. Therefore, it is High time for rejuvenation of the teaching-learning process in the English classroom at all levels, right from the primary stage.

In this context, it is worth noticing what happens particularly in Std. IV and V. Children come to Std. V without getting sufficient learning experiences of English language. In Std. V. The time allotted for English is two period (40 minutes each) a week. In many cases, those period will not to be available owing to various reasons. Hence, teaching of English in class IV is almost a neglected activity. However, the programme of Std. V is prepared taking for granted that children come to Std. V after having mastered the language skill expected in Std. IV. Consequently, the classroom experience suggested in Std. V becomes over-demanding for the children. Eventually, they will not be able to cope with higher order learning tasks of English in Std. V. As a result of this, most of the children will lag behind. Gradually, the interest of the children to learn English get diminished. However, the present position of English in Std. IV is to be changed. Therefore, rethinking is necessary whether to start English either in Std. IV or V. This is the reason why the researcher proposes to make an acquisition programme for Std. V considering that in class V only the English teaching really begins.

2.6. METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

As already seen, ever since the cognitive revolution a lot of changes have been taking place in the field of language teaching throughout the world. But these changes do not seem to be reflecting in the language teaching scenario of our own country. By and large, language teaching in our schools is heavily dependent on behaviourist assumptions. Let us see what has taken place in the field of second language teaching in our educational institutions during the past three decades.
The structural approach was very much popular in 1960s and 70s. Though it generated much expectation among ELT practitioners in the initial stages, it was soon realized that its stress was on accuracy rather than fluency. Naturally, the output in terms of fluency was not at all appreciable. In order to overcome this limitation, the communicative approach was developed. In this approach, more attention was paid to communication. Eventually, the fluency of learners improved but accuracy was lagging behind. As an attempt to blend fluency with accuracy, the Eclectic approach was proposed by some quarters. Advocates of this approach insist on teaching structures in a communicative framework. Even this hybrid approach has failed to yield desirable language output from the learners. Why this has happened will be investigated at a later point.

Whether the ELT package that has been given to teachers make use of the structural approach, the communicative approach, or the eclectic approach what really takes place in the classroom is more or less the same. The teacher reads out passages and poems from the prescribed textbook, gives explanations in the mother tongue and dictates answers to the comprehension questions given at the end of each lesson. Translating everything to the mother tongue is a common practice widely acceptable to most teachers and students. All what the learner has to do is to learn as much as possible by heart and reproduce them in the examination.

The entire exercises in the classroom revolve around evaluation, which focuses on the formal aspects of English and the content part of the textbook. Since what is needed is rote memory of the learner evaluation does not provide any scope for generating language freely and spontaneously. This being the case, methodological changes are not reflected in the examination. Consequently, neither teachers nor students expect any methodological changes in the classroom practice also.
In the year 1977, the primary education scenario witnessed a historical event. With the interventions of District Primary Education Programme, the primary curriculum was revised making it child-centred and activity-oriented. As part of this the Second Language Acquisition Programme (SLAP) conceived by Dr. Anandan was launched in standard IV of 60 selected schools in 1999 and 1200 schools in 2000. Being an acquisition model built within the framework of cognitive interactionist approach, SLAP is the first of its kind in the Indian context. Initial studies show that children brought under SLAP can perform all the four skills far better than not only their peers in the main stream but also those in standards VI and VII. Though SLAP has great potential to be upscaled to the main stream this has not yet been materialized. We will examine the salient features of SLAP at a later point in this thesis.