CHAPTER I

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.0.0 Introduction

1.2.0 The Relevance of the Present Study

1.3.0 Statement of the Problem

1.3.1 Objectives of the Study

1.3.2 Reasons for Selecting Post - Degree Level

1.3.3 Criteria for Selecting the State of Karnataka.

1.3.4 Limitations of the Study

1.4.0 Procedures Followed to Collect and Tabulate the Data

1.4.1 The Total Sample

1.4.2 The Questionnaires

1.4.3 Tabulation of Data

1.5.0 A Brief Survey of Previous Studies

1.6.0 Organization of the Study
CHAPTER I
NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.0.0 Introduction

This study is an attempt to evolve a suitable proficiency course in English for graduates in the light of the roles and functions of English in the contemporary society of India in general and of Karnataka in particular.

The concept of education has changed in the last few decades. The modern education system, in order to become relevant, useful and purposeful, has to take into account the three great movements of the present era — the rapid growth of democratic ideals, the transformation of industrial life and the development of experimental science (P. Munroe, 1990). And preparing the students to face the challenges of the present progressive world with the necessary and adequate skills and abilities has become the main goal of education. But one has to admit that our educational programmes are losing sight of this primary goal. The conferences of recent times — national as well as international — have been expressing their deep concern over the disjunction between education and the world of work. That is to say that the education processes are becoming too abstract and devoid of work-skills and work-understanding and are “bookish”, divorced from the needs, interests and the problems of real life and create a gulf between the world of work and the world of learning. Raja Roy Singh, an educationist of our times, attacks the output of modern education in the following words:

"...the young people leave the school or any other institutions unequipped to meet the minimum requirement of work in their society."

The 1985 Report entitled “Challenges of Education -- a Policy Perspective” which reviewed and appraised the existing conditions of the Higher Education in India, held the same view:

"...the courses offered by the universities have not been recognized to meet the demands of the times; their relevance and utility are constantly questioned; the credibility of education system is eroded miserably."
The Planning Commission of Government of India (1992) too, has listed in the Eighth Five-Year Plan "out-dated curriculum" as one of the several weaknesses of Higher Education in India. It has further pleaded for

"... making higher education relevant to the context of changing socio-economic scenario."

It is because of this sad plight that the planners of education recommend that "external efficacy" (which refers to how well the system serves the students when they leave it to enter the world of employment and live in society) should be given prime importance in the agenda of educational problems of the developing countries (Bulletin of UNESCO, 1988). This clearly implies that the educational system should consult the agencies of employment and prepare a curriculum addressed to their needs so that its end-products would be aptly absorbed by the employment agencies. England and America serve as models in this respect where educational authorities work in co-operation with businessmen and industries and devise various courses including English courses to suit the man-power requirements. It naturally follows that even in our country there is a greater need to identify the English language needs of the personnel in various occupations and professions and the students preparing for them, so that suitable courses in English may be devised to meet actual needs.

It is in this context that the issues relating to the teaching of English should be considered. It is unrealistic to think that exposure to English language and literature alone will enable students to join the elite group in the country. A fair degree of proficiency in the use of present-day English, both spoken as well as written, is what is required for the modern Indian society. It implies the necessity of reorienting the structure-based courses and literature-oriented courses to allow for more natural language opportunities and to plan courses that are entirely communicative or functional. In fact, the very concept of language in modern times has expanded which covers both interactional as well as the grammatical aspects of using a language. It has also been realized that method/methods alone will not generate learning as misunderstood in the sixties and seventies and one method alone may not be applicable in all educational contexts (Janice Yelden, 1987). This is very true of the teaching of English in
India, which is said to be “the world’s largest democratic enterprise of its kind” (N. Krishnaswamy and T. Sriraman, 1994). And among other challenges, the learners pose the greatest challenge with a wide spectrum of varying kinds and degrees of competence in English as they are drawn from varied socio-economic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

S.K. Verma (1995) has shown another dimension to the teaching and learning of English in India. He has stressed the need to orient the English teaching programmes “to develop human resources”. He holds the view that the English curriculum should not merely focus on job-centred activities but on the general abilities — general competence, linguistic competence, pragmatic competence and managerial competence — which can enable the learners to handle not just one job but a variety of jobs in a variety of situations.

It is desirable that besides developing a functional knowledge of the target language, students should develop the ability to learn and improve their skills on their own, an ability which can be transferred to other spheres of learning and thus educate themselves throughout their adult life. Failing to do so would only mean not only wasting time and the potentiality of youth but destroying the very roots of future intellectual development in the country.

A retrospective view of the position and the role of English would certainly be apt at this juncture. In fact, the role of English in India has been a vital one. English has been with us and our society has grown and prospered with it. It has got absorbed into the Indian culture and has become relatively at home here. Over the years a sense of ownership has developed as more and more Indians use it to perform various functions in the Indian socio-cultural context. Whether we like it or not, it is now part and parcel of the lives of all the educated people in India. (It is estimated that English-literate rate is around 6.5% [about 25-30 million] in the country. The number of books and periodicals published in English is also enormous; according to an estimate made in 1989, 1/3 of all the published books and 1/5 of all periodicals in India are in English [N.Krishnaswamy,1994]). It is no wonder, then, that English language has become naturalized and thrives in the Indian environment. S.K.Verma (1992) has identified the following domains where English is found very useful in the contemporary Indian society;
i) At the national and international levels, English continues to serve as our ‘window on the world’ and our link with the outside world. It will continue to be a source language, providing access to the vast and growing knowledge in the fields of science, technology, medicine, social sciences, management, law and also humanities. Our scientists, technologists, engineers, doctors, economists, and other researchers must be able not only to have access to professional literature in English but also be able to contribute to it and to interact with fellow researchers in other parts of the world. This has become very important today because English is the main language of international communication.

ii) As an associate official language, as the official link between the Central Government and the Governments of the non-Hindi-speaking States, as the language favoured by all-India institutions, all-India seminars, workshops, conferences, the legal and banking systems, trade, commerce, and defense, English has important international functions.

iii) It is an important promoter of social mobility for ordinary people; it is also a promoter of geographical mobility. It has been playing an important role in bringing about national unity and integration.

iv) In certain States and certain disciplines English continues to be the main or associate medium of instruction and examination at the tertiary level.

v) Where the medium of instruction is some language other than English, our students and researchers find English useful as a ‘library language’ and a ‘language of wider communication’.

vi) At the individual level (the level of educated bilinguals), English continues to be ‘the language of opportunity’, ‘the language of development’, and ‘the language of upward socio-economic mobility’. Any individual seeking socio-economic advancement at the national level will find ability in English an asset. Jobs that require inter-state movements demand a fairly high level of competence in general and technical English.

Thus, English continues to enjoy the status of the associate official language, the associate international link language and the main international link language.
N. Krishnswamy and T. Shriraman (1994)\textsuperscript{10} have condensed all the above-mentioned functions into three and speak of them as “Three goals of teaching of English in contemporary India”. They are:

1) mobility (i.e., the \textit{utilitarian function} of English as the language of opportunity);

2) modernization (i.e., the \textit{interactive function} of English as the window on the world and as the instrument of change); and

3) the projection principle (i.e., the \textit{interactive function} of English as the international language to project our identity and values to promote better human understanding).

In order to realize these long-range goals, a sincere attempt has to be made to give the learners an effective mastery of the language. This can be done very well by a non-conventional approach which will look beyond the classroom, beyond the text-books and beyond the examinations, based on prescribed books. In fact ELT experts opine:

“Ideally speaking only skills and abilities are to be specified at the school-college level without any reference to the texts prescribed.”\textsuperscript{11}

In the light of the role and functions of English in the present Indian context, the following interrelated abilities are recommended for Indian learners of English:

i) the ability to \textbf{read} easily and with understanding books on English at a level which might be called “basic” (the details of what is meant by “basic” can be listed in terms of domain-determined communicative functions);

ii) the readiness to proceed to a more \textbf{advanced reading} stage that of reading unsimplified texts, particularly those bound up with personal studies and interests with the help of bilingual dictionaries;

iii) the ability to \textbf{understand a talk} in English on a subject of general experience and interest clearly spoken and restricted in terms of formal and functional properties;

iv) the ability to \textbf{write} comprehensively in English on familiar topics which lend themselves to expression within the range of those formal and functional properties with which they are familiar; and
v) the ability to **converse** in English on topics fully within the range both of the experience and interests and well within the range of their linguistic and socio-linguistic competence.\(^{12}\)

The discussion on the role of English, and the objectives of teaching English in a typical Indian multi-lingual setting lead us to the following implications:

1) The teaching of English in India cannot be set at one standard level of competence for all kinds of learners. It is important that we should be able to identify English requirements of various groups of students precisely and try to provide for each such group, the pattern of courses that will be relevant to the needs of the learners and help them reach different levels of skills in language performance. Otherwise, the teaching of English will cease to have any special and economic relevance and will be reduced to a ritual. In the light of the new trend the ultimate objective of all the activities should be to help learners acquire not only context-governed and syllabus-bound competence in handling English but to attain that level of competence which will enable them to use it with confidence. This also speaks of the need of organizing the teaching of English as second language keeping in view the new role and functions assigned to English today. The level of active command to be aimed at should be adequate both for those who wish to pursue higher education in English and for those who terminate their education at the end of the secondary or degree level and wish to enter upon a career. Thus, the specific objectives should be drawn up and provision be made for varying standards of achievements in English.

2) As the learners in the present set up are exposed to “syllabus-bound” or “textbook-based English”, *(Report of the Curriculum Development Centre)*\(^{12}\) they acquire ability to produce formal essays on literary topics but find themselves ill-equipped for using English for day-to-day transactional purposes. Their general proficiency is restricted since their experience of English has been confined to only a very small set of social domains, a very few role-relationships and a limited number of speech functions. Exposure to the students to a rich variety of linguistic and socio-cultural material with its focus on “what to say, when and how” is of paramount
in a second language learning. Here, special intensive courses/proficiency courses would come to their help to a greater extent. This is the reason for increasing of courses in spoken and written English around us by private agencies.

3) English courses should aim at helping the students to improve their opportunities of employment and thus aid the national effort for greater productivity. As the country needs an adequate supply of personnel for higher administrative and professional levels as well as middle-level of technical man-power, our English language teaching programmes have to tackle this problem successfully and strive to give students the required proficiency in English so that they would successfully complete their courses whether general or professional and fulfil the demands of the nation for trained personnel. These programmes should also be devised so as to help the students increase their employment opportunities at the different levels according to their individual abilities.

Keeping in view the implications drawn from the discussion on the goal of education and language, the functions of English language in particular and the objectives of teaching English in India, this study attempts to evolve a proficiency course in English for graduates in Karnataka. The intended course promises to be alive to the inevitable merits of “need-based”, “skill-oriented” curriculum and to adopt the “communicative approach” with the sole aim of preparing the students to face the challenges of the present world. This course may be viewed as a skillful blending of what is already known about language teaching and learning with the inevitable needs of the learners of the time -- their needs, wants, attitude, knowledge of the world, etc., -- which are essential requisites of an effective language course. Thus, this study may be considered as an attempt in making the teaching of English purposeful and meaningful.

1.2.0 The Relevance of the Present Study

The study undertaken has much bearing on the existing conditions. It can thus be enumerated in the following way:
The position of English has been very significant since the dawn of this century, more so in the Post-Independence era. On the one hand, the educationists of our times recommend the study of English language for our bright future. On the other hand, most of the political leaders seem to be in favour of gradually displacing English from the place of pride it enjoyed in the earlier decades of this century. The policies adopted by the state government and the universities in Karnataka appear to be unfavourable for the study of English language, both at the school and college level. A few instances can be stated to uphold the point. It is most shocking to note that a student undergoing the S.S.L.C course need not necessarily pass in English if he/she can pass in the other counter-part language offered and thus can become eligible for the next course. *(Circular of the Karnataka State Secondary Education Board, Bangalore A8, RFG 14: 94-95, dated 17.2.1995).*

Even at the Pre-University level, English is not made a compulsory subject. Students are given a wide choice of 13 languages (which includes English also), out of which a student can choose any two *(Regulation of Course Study, Scheme of Examinations and Syllabus for Two-years Pre-University Course; Part I languages, Department of Pre-University Education, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore, 1995)*. However, it is a glaring fact that every student desires to offer English as one of the subjects whether he is competent in English or not, whether he is from the urban or rural area, whether he has studied through English medium or regional medium. It merely highlights the craze for learning English. The infrastructure of the system prevalent in the colleges has also contributed a lot to this state of affairs; the various combinations of subjects provided to the students in most of the colleges invariably has English as one of the subjects which compels students to offer English. Such limited choice of combinations offered to the students is due to administrative restraints like provision of classrooms, staff, etc. It is also important to note that the marks obtained both at the PU level and at the Degree level are not taken into account for awarding classes. However, the students need to pass in English with 30/35 percentage of marks to become eligible for the next course.

Even in the midst of such discouraging policies, we cannot deny the importance of the study of English language for certain academic, social, scientific and commercial purposes. And everyone knows the adverse effect of totally banishing English from the Indian soil. In this regard, most of the ELT experts hold the view that this battle against English is merely a
political stunt rather than a linguistic problem. The present study examines this issue by collecting opinions from students, teachers and ELT experts through questionnaires. It also intends to arrive at the actual place and position that English enjoys in the last decade of the 20th century.

A cursory glance at the studies undertaken in the field of ELT in the near past reveals that there is a greater necessity for the introduction of proficiency courses in English at the tertiary level. In the light of this awareness, there is a growing trend of introducing proficiency and communicative courses in English substituting the conventional teaching of texts containing literary pieces. Some universities in the neighbouring States -- Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh -- have made a significant march in this direction by introducing communicative courses at the Under-Graduate level. Corridors to Communication, a language-oriented text prescribed for S.Y.B.Sc. compulsory English course for the degree students of the Poona University and Communication Skills in English, a course book introduced for first year degree students of the Osmania University, are two examples. The universities in Karnataka are yet to make attempts in this direction. The present study is expected to throw light on several issues connected with proficiency course in English -- the need, scope, nature of the course in the context of Karnataka. The course designed by the researcher may be experimented with on a limited sample either by governmental or by private agencies and can later be introduced extensively with adequate modifications.

In fact, the Draft Committee constituted for Development of Education during the Eighth Five-Year Plan has given wide scope for the participation and involvement of voluntary agencies and private sectors in imparting adequate education to the additional enrolment of graduates, which is estimated around 9 lakhs(Eighth Five-Year Plan, 1992). Thus, there is a lot of scope for even non-governmental agencies to run such courses without which “Education for all” would be impossible.

1.3.0 Statement of the Problem

The study intends to analyse the effectiveness and relevance of the existing degree courses in English in the light of the actual language needs of the students and further, based on
the findings (related to the English language needs of the Degree students and the evaluation of
the effectiveness and the relevance of the ELT programmes), the study intends to design an
appropriate course for the post-degree holders. Thus, its main objective is to design a
Proficiency Course in English for Graduates in Karnataka.

1.3.1 Objectives of the Study

Objective 1

To determine the extent to which the objectives of the existing ELT programmes are
realized by the Degree level students

The investigator intends to assess the attainments of the objectives set for students at the
graduate level. Here, the objectives stated in Syllabus Reform in English (1977) 17 by a panel
of ELT experts in India, would be taken as the frame of reference. The evaluation of the extent
of realization of the objectives will be done through the following methods:

a) Exhaustive study of the reports, research papers / articles, experiments conducted in
   the recent past;
b) Collecting opinions of the students by way of administering a Questionnaire and a
   Three-Point Rating Scale;
c) Collecting opinions of the teachers teaching at the Degree level by administering a
   Questionnaire; and
d) Collecting the opinions of the ELT Experts / Administrators of ELT Centres/
   Members of Boards of Studies by administering a Questionnaire.

Objective 2

To identify the English language needs of the degree students in the present context

Here, the needs of English language identified by the early investigators will be reviewed
and the needs of some selected professions will be treated as the needs of all the professions in
the State. The researcher hopes that the following investigations would help him in determining
the actual needs of the Degree students:
Objective 3

To design a proficiency course in English for Graduates in Karnataka

By ‘Proficiency’ is taken to mean “the degree of competence or the capacity in a given language demonstrated by an individual at a given point in time independent of a specific textbook, chapter in the book or pedagogical method”.

The proficiency course in English will be designed for graduates based on the weaker areas identified (Objective 1) and also on the actual needs determined (Objective 2). The steps suggested in “Needs Analysis of the Indian Learner of English” by Mohammed Aslam (Focus on English, Summer, 1996) --- a model for curriculum construction -- is taken as reference while developing the proficiency course.

1.3.2 Reasons for Selecting Post-Degree Level

The study intends to design a proficiency course in English at the post-degree level. It takes into account, not only the graduates who join post-graduate studies like M.A., M.Sc., M.Com, etc., but also those who enter the job-market or take up other vocations in life. In fact the available statistics reveal that approximately 10% of the degree holders undertake higher studies, while the rest leave the higher educational system after the first degree in pursuit of some vocation (P.S. Satsang, 1994). It may be noted here that the course is much concerned with students of General English / Basic English and not with those of English literature i.e., the Optional English courses.
The following are the reasons for selecting the post-degree level for the present study:

i) Graduation is the transitional stage preparing students
   a) to take up higher educational courses like M.A., M.Sc, M.Com., etc., or
   b) to undertake professional courses like B.Ed., B.P.Ed., M.B.A., M.C.A., B.Lib.,
      L.L.B., B.G.L., C.A. (for Science and Commerce graduates only), Market
      Management, Company Secretary, etc.

Though the actual needs for English of these categories of students are varied, it should be
possible to have a common course catering to the needs of these students broadly.

ii) The research studies / investigations have shown that the existing collegiate English teaching
    programmes do not adequately prepare students for the various jobs they are likely to take
    up. It is observed that out of the 10 major tasks identified in various vocations, an average
    graduate fails to perform even a few tasks. (A list of tasks expected of a graduate is given in
    Appendix I.) This has made employers devise their own system of assessment of the level
    of proficiency in English as they are more concerned in the output-performance, rather than
    in the university-certified claims to competence. It is here that the suggested course would
    come to their help by developing certain necessary skills of language demanded of them by
    the employer.

iii) Graduation is the minimum qualification to appear for Public Service Commission category
    I and II examinations both at the state and central level through which the candidates may
    seek category I executive posts like Assistant Commissioners, Treasury Officers, Deputy
    Superintendents of Police and category II posts like Tahasildars, Employment Officers,
    Labour Officers, etc. (More details regarding the categories of job and the expected
    proficiency in English are provided in Appendix II.) Most of the candidates appearing for
    such competitive examinations fail to perform well in English compulsory papers and
    thereby fail in the examinations as a whole, though they do well in optional subjects. The
    kind of English test set for them expects them to possess knowledge of grammar and a
    certain level of competence in expression and communication, which they fail to acquire
    during their 2 or 3 year degree courses. The proposed proficiency course will certainly
    come to their help in this regard to a greater extent. Hence, the proficiency course is
    addressed to the needs of the post-degree students.
1.3.3 Criteria for Selecting the State of Karnataka

The study has been restricted to the State of Karnataka, though most of the issues discussed here are relevant to most of the States in India. The following are the reasons for confining the study to Karnataka:

1) Karnataka is the home State of the researcher and so he is familiar with the state of affairs here -- the social conditions, the economic and cultural background and the educational system, etc. So there is personal motivation in undertaking this study.

2) The researcher has been a teacher of English at the college level for the past 20 years and is well-acquainted with the English language teaching programmes in the State during the past decade and a half. Besides this, his experience as a member of the team for preparation of II PUC textbook in Karnataka also has enabled him to keep abreast of the latest trends in ELT and the aims and objectives of teaching English at the plus-two stage, etc. Thus, his first-hand experience of the field helped him to undertake the work more confidently.

3) Karnataka enjoys a vital place in India with its special historical and geographical background. Though the State was reorganized on a linguistic basis in 1956, till today it is a multi-lingual State. Besides Kannada which is spoken by 65% of the population of the State, there are other major Indian languages like Telugu, Urdu, Marathi, Tamil and others, which together are spoken by nearly 35% of the total population of the State. It is true that in such a multi-lingual set-up, English has been enjoying an eminent position as a link language in all spheres of life. But this study would enlighten us more about the exact place assigned to English in the present times against a multi-lingual background.

4) Karnataka has made a tremendous advancement in trade and industry in recent years. Yet, the goal is not fully achieved merely due to the lack of efficient personnel trained professionally and technically. Since it is important to equip the aspirants of technical and professional jobs with adequate skills of communication and develop efficiency in English, a course of this kind may prove quite useful in a developing State like ours.
1.3.4 Limitations of the Study

The following are the major limitations:

1) In order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the degree students, their opinions were collected through a Questionnaire and a Three-Point Rating Scale. It was not possible to administer a proficiency test to assess empirically the areas in which they were confident /weak, etc. A study of this type, i.e., assessing the proficiency of students through proficiency test, specially designed for this purpose, could be another subject for research study.

2) Though there are quite a good number of sub-skills identified from four major skills (LSRW) by ELT experts, only those which are relevant and useful for the target group are chosen while designing the proficiency course in English.

3) Though ELT has grown rich with quite a good number of technical devices like Computer Aided Instruction (CAI), Communicative Language Learning (CLL), (Dutt.P.K,1990), the researcher has neither mentioned nor recommended any of the latest devices for the course as every institution/private agency/non-governmental agency cannot afford to possess such mechanical devices.

4) Only basic statistical computation has been done, useful for drawing inferences and conclusion.

5) Pre-test, post-test and try-out of the draft version of the proposed course could not be conducted (as it is usually done to assess the actual attainments of the students) due to time and other infrastructural constraints. However, the modifications suggested by the panel of experts were taken into consideration while preparing the final draft.

1.4.0 Procedures Followed to Collect and Tabulate the Data

The present study included-

i) an analysis of English courses---syllabi, textbooks and evaluation system at degree level--- of all the universities of the State of Karnataka; and

ii) a field work extending over a period of 2- 3 months with the help of following research tools:
(a) A Three-Point Rating Scale and a Questionnaire for the Final Year Degree Students in Karnataka;
(b) A Questionnaire for Teachers of English Teaching at the Degree Level; and
(c) A Questionnaire for Administrators of ELT Centres/ELT Experts/Members of Boards of Studies/Syllabus Designers.

The details are given in the subsequent chapters. Here, only a brief description of the field study is given.

1.4.1 The Total Sample

The total sample of the respondents to the three sets of questionnaires consisted of

i) 150 students drawn from various faculties (Arts, Sc., Com.), rural and urban areas, English and regional language mediums, government and semi-government institutions;

ii) 60 teachers of English belonging to different districts of Karnataka (Care was taken to collect the sample from teachers teaching in Arts, Science, Commerce colleges, from government and semi-government colleges located in both rural and urban colleges coming under the six universities of Karnataka.); and

iii) 13 ELT Experts/Administrators of ELT Centres/Members of the Board of Studies/Syllabus Designers from all over Karnataka.

1.4.2 Questionnaires

With a view to gather data regarding the extent of usefulness of the English language programmes at the undergraduate level and the need for a proficiency course in English at the post-degree level, the following tools were developed:

i) A Three-Point Rating Scale and a Questionnaire for the Final Year Degree Students in Karnataka;

ii) A Questionnaire for the English Teachers Teaching English at the College Level; and

iii) A Questionnaire for the Administrators of ELT Centres/ELT Experts/Members of Board of Studies/Syllabus Designers.
A brief description of each of the questionnaire is given below.

i) A Three-Point Rating Scale and a Questionnaire for the Final Year Degree Students in Karnataka

The Rating Scale consisted of 15 statements covering a wide spectrum of issues relating to the teaching of English at the college level—syllabi, textbooks, teaching methods, evaluation system, etc. The main thrust of the tool was to gather opinion about the usefulness of English teaching programmes offered at the school and college level in their day-to-day life. An attempt was made to assess how far they were confident in the expressive language skills—writing and speaking skills. Their opinion was also sought regarding lecture-method and its usefulness. An attempt was also made to understand their attitude towards the unconventional methods like question and answer method, group-study method and self-study method.

The questionnaire tagged to the Rating Scale intended to find out their opinion regarding the proposed proficiency course in English—duration, content of the course, and the methods they would prefer, etc.

ii) A Questionnaire for the College Teachers in the Selected Colleges in Karnataka

The Questionnaire designed for teachers of English at the college level consisted of 20 items seeking detailed information about their views on the objectives of teaching English to be emphasised at the college level at present, effectiveness of the textbooks, the teaching methods they employed and the advisability of changing them to suit the current needs, the need for enhancing professional competence of teachers through some training programmes, etc. The Questionnaire also attempted to find out their opinion about their students' proficiency in English and the need for an adequate proficiency course in English for the students at the post-degree level.
iii) A Questionnaire for the Administrators of ELT Centres / ELT Experts / Members of Board of Studies / Syllabus Designers

This Questionnaire consisted of 12 items seeking their views on the role and function of English in the modern Indian society, the priority of one language skill over the other, the effectiveness of the existing English teaching programmes at the collegiate level in realizing the desired goals, etc. The respondents were asked to give their opinions by way of indicating the options enlisted under each aspect --- prescription of syllabi, textbooks for each class in the degree course, the teaching methods employed by the teachers, the effectiveness of the evaluation, ways and means of enhancing teachers' professional competence, etc. Their opinion was also sought with regard to the impact of certain recent trends on the English teaching programmes in the spheres of syllabi / textbooks, teaching methods, evaluation, etc. Finally, it intended to elicit their opinion on the need for a supplementary course in the form of a proficiency course in English and its probable curriculum, duration, methodology, etc.

1.4.3 Tabulation of the Data

The Questionnaires designed for the field study contained the following types of questions;

a) questions with forced-choice response alternatives;

b) questions which required the subjects to rank certain items in order of their preference on the ranking scale by writing 1, 2, 3, against each statement; and

c) open-ended questions.

The raw scores were converted to percentages in the case of qualifying the responses of the respondents to those items on the Questionnaires, which had forced-choice alternatives. In order to quantify the responses of the subjects on the Three-Point Rating Scale, the following procedure was followed: each point on the scale, which the subject had to use in rating an item, was multiplied by the number of responses; and further the product value was divided by the total number of subjects responding to that particular item. Thus, the mean value for each item was obtained.
1.5.0 A Brief Survey of Previous Studies

A glance at the studies undertaken in ELT area certainly reveals that there are a number of studies dealing with the evaluation of ELT programmes at the degree level with greater emphasis on objectives, content, teaching, evaluation, teacher-training, etc. Some of the prominent ones are discussed in section 3.3.0. Here, only those researches/works coming out with the actual proficiency courses in English are discussed.

1.5.1 Communication Skills in English by K.J. Kumar et al. (1993)\textsuperscript{24} is a course book designed to give Indian learners of English extensive practice in brushing up their skills in communication in English. Twenty graded exercises in Reading Comprehension and in Note-Making have been drawn from the works of well-known writers (R.K.Narayan, E.M. Foster, Arun Shourie, S.Nehal Singh, Elvin Toffer and others) and from popular newspapers and periodicals (India Today, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, etc.). A deliberate attempt has been made to select passages that are of interest and relevance to young minds.

The work book includes many exercises in personal and official correspondence, the writing out of speeches, debates and dialogues, the use of common sentence patterns, and of words generally confused by the Indian students. A short chapter on ‘Using a Dictionary’ reveals to students the endless joys of dipping into dictionaries and allied reference books.

1.5.2 Sunny Tharappan's Communicative English — A Basic Course in Spoken and Written English (1995)\textsuperscript{25} is a work worth mentioning. Though this course was the dream of the author, many learned teachers from Karnantaka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have contributed to the making of this course. The author recommends a group of 20 well-motivated learners of more or less a homogeneous group in age and proficiency for the success of this course. Some of the features highlighting the course are given below:

* Twenty strategies which have been listed in the form of preambles may be used as guidelines to form the philosophy and attitudes of training in spoken English. For example, the following is the guideline stated under Strategy-2: While it is not necessary to emphasise the mistakes committed, there is a very great need to point out small
successes because they lead to big successes, which builds self-esteem (Strategy-2: page 32). These strategies have been gathered from the works of several researchers and thinkers. A critical look at them reveals that they are sound psychologically, philosophically and educationally.

The curriculum is provided in the form of a profile of skills. Twenty profiles of skills enlisted are well-graded and cover the whole range of skills in spoken and written English. They are given below as presented in the course book:

*Table 1.1*

**A Profile of Speaking Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No.</th>
<th>Name of the Skill</th>
<th>Sl No.</th>
<th>Name of the Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Increasing Vocabulary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Involving in Conversation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Grammatical correctness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Telling</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Explicating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Narrating</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Argumentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Comprehending</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Refuting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Moderating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Describing</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Platform speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Condensing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Interacting</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Civility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Paragraph writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: *Communicative English – A Basic Course in Spoken and Written English*)

Each of the above skills is further stated in clear terms.

For example: ‘Civility’, the 19th skill has the following sub-skills:

1) Counter answers
2) Reception language
3) Telephone words
4) Respecting through language
5) Enquiring through counters
6) Eating-place language
(Other details are found in Appendix III.)

* The course materials have been field-tested several times, in several combinations and results evaluated.
* There are different types of exercises that are listed in the course material. Some of them are games that are usually used by students in schools and colleges. Some others are in the form of activities to bring in a learning or to maintain the motivation levels of participants. Yet, few others are drills for repetition towards skill-development. While some exercises are printed paper-oriented, some others are visual aid-oriented. In like manner, the sequence of exercises in each session is also organized keeping in mind the need for variety in order to avoid boredom. The course gives ample scope for learners to consult each other and to learn from each other. Another vital point about the course is that it provides a lot of encouragement for the facilitators to design exercises, which would cater to the actual needs and requirements of a particular group in mind.
* For each session, there is one “beyond the class-room assignment” suggested in the course, which would encourage the learners to learn the language outside the class-room.
* Evaluation is done every now and then during the 90 hour course, which serves as a report about the growth of necessary skills.
* Though the researchers recommend a period of 90 hours spread over 45 days it is possible to have a course completed in about 23 days with two sessions a day, for four hours every day. It is also possible that the course could be conducted in merely 15 days, by holding 3 sessions together for six hours a day.

Thus, the course can be said to be a sincere attempt in producing a systematic material for teaching and learning of English in the most effective way in a short span of time. It is quite flexible and interesting and is alive to modern principles of teaching and learning of English language. However, a well-motivated learner and a resourceful teacher are a must for the success of this course.
1.5.3 There are special courses designed to develop specific skills; three of them are given below:

1) R.L. Eapen's study on *Towards Designing a Course in Functional Writing for Degree Classes* (Unpublished M.Litt. Dissertation, 1979)\(^{26}\) is a significant study in this direction.

2) Gurupdes Singh's *Designing Course in Advanced Writing for Graduate Students Preparing for a Master's Degree* (Unpublished M.Litt. Dissertation, 1985)\(^{27}\) is a more specific study as it addresses a specific group—post-graduate students preparing for the Master's Degree.

3) *Designing E.S.P. Materials for University Students* by Jesineuda de Vasconcelos Silva and Vera Santiago Araujo (1992)\(^{28}\) is another such course. Having realized the need and the importance of reading ability for university students (as they are required to read academic texts in English related to their special subjects), a group of university teachers from the Foreign Language Department of the State University of Ceara came forward to cater to the needs of learners. A course of two semesters of 60 hours each was designed with two distinct course materials. The first course is concerned with the presentation of reading strategies. For this, publications of general interest were chosen to help the students deal with different kinds of texts. The second course deals with specialized texts that relate to students' particular fields of interest. The first step was to select appropriate original texts from various sources: up-to-date magazines and newspapers, specialized magazines and journals and other sources. Then Exercises on reading strategies and language items for each text were designed. However, the course designers admit that they could not incorporate oral skills, though they are also of great importance. The researchers are convinced of the success of their work by clear evidence of their students' improved reading competence.

There are courses which focus either on one or two skills of the language. But the proposed proficiency course emphasises all the skills of the language.
1.6.0 Organization of the Study

The first chapter attempts to define the scope of the study and gives a brief description of its nature.

The second chapter presents a survey of the development of English education in India in general and in Karnataka in particular. Here an in-depth study of teaching English at the secondary school stage is dealt with.

The third chapter attempts to present a detailed study of teaching of English at the undergraduate level.

The fourth chapter presents an analysis of the existing English teaching programmes at the degree level in relation to the data collected from the teachers of English, members of board of studies, ELT experts and the final year degree students.

The fifth chapter presents a sample of proficiency course in English designed for graduates in the State of Karnataka.

The last chapter records the major findings of the study. Based on the findings of the study a few recommendations have been made. A few possible areas for further research are suggested at the end of this chapter.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


8) N. Krishnaswamy and T. Sriraman, op. cit., p.3.


11) Ibid., p.32.


