COMPREHENSION AND COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH : A PERSPECTIVE OF ITS PROBLEMS IN THE UNDERGRADUATE CLASSES

ANNE MARY K. MANAVALAN

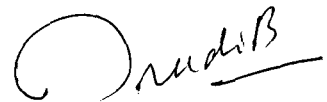*Thesis Submitted for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Teaching*

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled COMPREHENSION AND COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH: A PERSPECTIVE OF ITS PROBLEMS IN THE UNDERGRADUATE CLASSES submitted by Smt. Anne Mary K. Manavalan is a record of the bona fide research done by her for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Teaching under my guidance and supervision.

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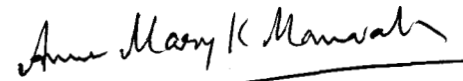
DECLARATION

I, Anne Mary K Manavalan, hereby declare that this dissertation has not been previously

published by me for the award of a Degree, Diploma, Title or Recognition.

Place : Calicut

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Anne Mary K. Manavalan

PREFACE

It is with a tinge of nostalgia that I look back to the year 1974, when I was a student aspiring for my M.A. degree in English Language and Literature. It was then that I was introduced to the connotation, 'the Teaching of English'. The Department of English in the University of Calicut, had just decided to introduce 'Teaching of English' as an optional paper for M.A. Until then, American literature had undisputed importance as an optional paper, and only a handful of students dared to welcome the new alternative. There was a little bit of hesitation on the side of the faculty also, perhaps because of the innovative nature of the paper. Eventually, Dr. C. T. Thomas and Dr. S.Velayudhan, the eminent professors at the Department of English, University of Calicut, decided to bear the brunt. I had decided to choose the untrodden path, though I knew little on the topic. In my wildest dreams I would have guessed that, if someday I became a teacher of English it would help me in my profession. I remember with gratitude Dr. C.T. Thomas and Dr. S. Velayudhan, who initiated me to the teaching of English.

It is only a coincidence that I decided to base my doctoral research upon this area. My experience as a teacher of English for more than twenty years is, perhaps, the force behind my choice. It was actually Dr. B. Sreedevi who removed all my hesitation and inhibition, and made me take the plunge.

It has been a pleasant experience working under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Sreedevi. I extend my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to her for bearing with me, and the way I did my work.

I am grateful to the University of Calicut for giving me an opportunity to take up this work. The kind support and co-operation extended by

Dr. N. Ramachandran Nair, the former Head of the Department of English, University of Calicut, was indeed encouraging. I also express my gratitude to Dr. Sankaran Raveendran, the Head of the Department of English, University of Calicut, and I remember with thanks the office and library staff of the Department for the co-operation extended by them.

I gratefully acknowledge the CIEFL library Hyderabad, the library of the Regional Institute of English, Bangalore, and Mohammed Koya Library of the Calicut University for providing me all necessary facilities, without which this work would have been impossible.

I thank all my colleagues, especially in the Department of English, St.Joseph's College, Irinjalakuda, for their invaluable support and encouragement. I have a special word of thanks to Rev. Sr. Vijaya, the Principal, and Mrs. Mary Antio, the Head of our Department, who has always been a friend, philosopher and guide to me.

I am particularly indebted to the U.G.C. for granting me Teacher Fellowship under FIP from 2-6-2001 to 31-3-2002.

I remember my late parents with prayerful gratitude, especially my mother, who has played an important role in shaping my career.

I also acknowledge the kind co-operation, inspiration and encouragement extended by my husband and children.

I wish to dedicate this work to all the teachers of English in India.

Place : Calicut

Date : 18 -12 - 2002

Anne Mary K. Manavalan

CONTENTS

Introduction

Introduction

What Prompted This Study

The focus on the falling standard of English in our country, since the nineteen-fifties gave rise to a lot of arguments and hair-splitting debates, with no effective expedient to correct the situation. The truth remains that the state of the teaching of English, the foundation of which was laid with the arrival of the British on the Indian soil and which was subjected to the vicissitudes of the changing political, sociological, and economical climates, is like that of a structure that needs an urgent reconstruction.

The apprehension over this state of affairs has been shared by educationists, statesmen and politicians, and as a teacher of English, it is the concern of the researcher to fathom deep into the quagmire and emerge with a brick or two, which may aid in going a long way in the massive task of renovation. The sinister and shadowy state of the teaching and learning of English in the undergraduate classes has become an ongoing story, and the thousands of answer papers that pass through the hands of the teachers every year give strong signals to the lack of comprehension and communication skills of the learners. They give the ominous message that a broad category of our students fail to comprehend the text, and if they comprehend at all, there is the dangerous incapability of communicating it in writing. The two equally

worrisome facts that they come to the U.G. classes with very poor proficiency in English, and that they are not much better off when they leave, can neither be obliterated nor ignored. The researcher's own experience and observation as a teacher of English, coupled with her interest in ELT has been, perhaps, the impulse behind the choice of this problem.

The participation in the Summer Institute, in April-May 1997, jointly organized by the University of Calicut, British Council and the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, opened a new horizon to the researcher inspiring her to study the problems related to ELT and the pedagogies of the current thinking on the subject. This Summer Institute, more or less, succeeded in convincing the participants that a motivated teacher, with some insight on methods and materials, can make ELT meaningful and fruitful. Even though the teachers in the present situation are cribbed, cabined and confined within a malevolent system, a motivated teacher can, by a charismatic campaign, significantly improve the teaching programme in the undergraduate classes.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to analyse and describe the factors which hinder the acquiring of comprehension and communication skills in the undergraduate classes. Since the present system focuses on the examination results, the teachers are mainly involved in aiding the students to facilitate this

end. Instead of availing of the hours to trigger off situations for exercising communication skills in the classroom, the teachers are engaged in explaining the text line by line, and creating conditions for the dictation of essays, and answers to the questions.

In the undergraduate classes there is hardly any attempt for promoting oral interaction or creative writing. From the learner's point of view the English language classes are seen only as a means of passing the examination in General English compulsory paper. In the attempt of fulfilling examination obligations the teachers fail to use methods for stimulating communicative activities.

The need of the millennium is a coherent framework of strategy for changing teaching methods, creating learning motivation and interest, and transforming the monotonous lecture classes into communicative activities, for developing the learner's skills. If we genuinely put our hearts and souls into it we can hopefully wait for a grand 'denouement' to the plot that began to take shape in the form of Macaulay's Minutes in 1835.

Methods Adopted for the Study

The study confined itself to

  a) The researcher's own experience and observation

  b) An analysis of the existing syllabus and question papers (U.G.)

  c) A survey (field work) which included separate questionnaires for the

teachers of English and the U.G. students in the colleges affiliated to the University of Calicut. The details of, and the justification for the questionnaire and field work are given in Chapter IV of the dissertation.

Hypothesis and Assumption

The present infrastructure of the English teaching programme in the undergraduate classes, where thrust is not given for the developing of comprehension and communication skills, is unsuitable for the present times. The methods involved are not fully in consonance with the need of the day, and several factors have conspired together for the present conceptual confusion; to mention a few factors, (1) the syllabus committee does not clearly spell out the course objectives which match learner needs; it only gives a list of the text books (2) the present system is too examination-oriented to teach language skills, with the result that the learners are concerned not in learning the language skills, but obtaining pass marks in the examination, (3) the teachers' aim is not to teach the language skills, but to pursue the task of 'completing the syllabus', and (4) the achievement level of the learners entering the U.G. classes echo the damaging state of English- teaching at the secondary level, which makes ELT in the U.G. classes move at a lower gear.

The researcher's assumption is that because of the factors mentioned above, no functional teaching of English takes place in the undergraduate classes. It may not be possible to evolve a fool-proof teaching programme, but

with minor changes and modifications in the present syllabus, methods of teaching and testing, a motivated teacher can gradually build up the momentum of the teaching programme in the undergraduate classes.

Theory of Language Teaching

At present, the tendency is to make every branch of knowledge or academic study, an independent discipline with its own norms, aims, theories and methodology. When we examine the evolution of different disciplines we find that the most modern disciplines originated as branches of older, related ones, but were able to build up identities of their own. Language Teaching has also developed into an autonomous discipline, with an independent theoretical core, though it is an extension of other disciplines, chiefly Linguistics, Psychology and Sociology, which can be considered to be the foundation on which language teaching is built up. Developments made in these fields, directly or indirectly reflect through trends in language teaching too. In fact, the various disciplines interact in quite intricate ways.

Language teaching can be viewed as a process of decision-making. Various decisions, taken at different levels by different people, have a bearing on teaching. The teacher in the classroom too, is a link in the decision, which has to be attuned to those made at the other levels in the system.

The Foundation of Language Methodology

Pedagogical   Student

Psychological   Teacher   Learner

Psycholinguistic   Teaching Materials   Content

Linguistic   Language Curriculum

Sociolinguistic   Language Policy

Sociological   Educational Policy   Context
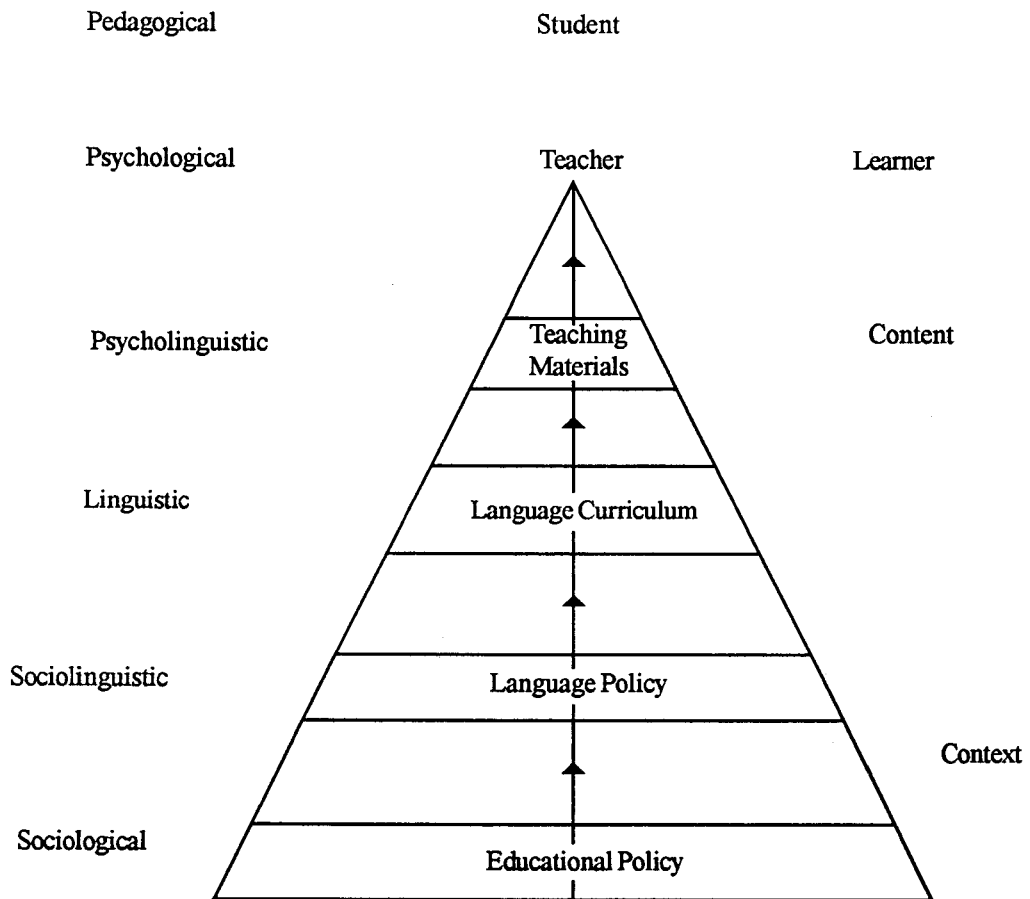
Fig. 1. The foundation of Language Methodology, The Foundation of Language Teaching Methodology (8). Summer Institute in English Language Teaching, 1977.

At the top of the pyramid is the teacher in the classroom, making very limited, exact and definite decisions, which have their correlatives in other decisions taken at more general levels.

The bottom of the pyramid represents the initial decisions which form

the basis for all the decisions at the subsequent levels. These decisions, involving Educational and Language policy, are taken at the political and administrative levels. Educational policy deals with the choice of educational objectives, and the general content of the education. The socio-economic needs and the socio-cultural values determine the choice of objectives. The objectives in teaching English must conform to the general philosophy of education, manifesting the same priorities and values.

The decisions at the next step relate to the Language Policy – which languages should be taught, and how much importance should be given to each. The priorities given for the learning of languages can be different; it can be a means for cultural acquisition, and intellectual discipline, or for satisfying the practical needs. It is worth recollecting the way in which the learning of the classical languages were looked upon at one time – they were learnt primarily for mental or intellectual discipline, which refined the powers of reasoning and judgement. In the learning of certain other languages it was the cultural aspect that was important, and hence the priority was for cultural enrichment, and not for the purpose of communicating through the language. And finally languages are taught and learnt entirely for communication of various kinds. Hence, language education is determined, more or less, by the social attitudes to language. The decision on the social roles and functions assigned to languages is particularly important in a multilingual society.

The next step on the ladder of the pyramid indicates the decision involved in drawing up the curriculum for the teaching of languages. The curriculum provides a complete lay out for the language teaching programme. A language curriculum has to transform the genral objectives of education into specific objectives for language teaching, while integrating the rationale of educational and language policies. These objectives have to be related to a certain content, and it is here that linguistics assume importance, by providing the terminology for stating the terms of the content of language teaching. The content of the language teaching is usually stated in terms of (a) the elements of language (i.e. words, structures, meanings etc), and (b) the language skills (being able to use the language for listening, speaking, reading and writing)

The curriculum also lists the teaching items, selected and graded, in view of certain principles. The total content of the curriculum has to be broken down into a number of units for teaching, which involves a liguistic analysis of the content.

Then comes the decisions that go into the preparation of teaching materials, which are the tools used by the teacher. The presentation of materials should involve the consideration of what will be more useful and easier to learn. This, in turn, involves the theory of learning, which is the domain of psycholinguistics. As the teacher is the mediator between the learner and the materials, the aspects of pedagogy, or 'teachability' should also

be considered, along with the aspect of 'learnability'. Finally it comes to the culmination, or peak, where the teacher is required to make the decision in the classrrom. In fact, the curriculum and the materials show him the way, but he has to hit upon his own suitable path.

The needs, attitudes and style of each learner are different from that of the other, and only the teacher can spot the needs and attitudes of the learners. The curriculum and the materials would have made certain assumptions about the learner, but they are only hypothetical. Motivation of the learner is perhaps the most important factor for the success of language learning, which to a great extent depends on the ability of the teacher to motivate. This can be achieved if the teacher makes the process of learning stimulating and meaningful, using the proper techniques.

The Necessity of Teaching a Language

A human society needs language for communication between its members, as well as for communication with other societies. Since languages make it possible for individuals to live in a society, language can be regarded as a social activity rather than a means of communication. Language not only brings human beings into relationship with each other, it also brings them into relationship with the external world.

People learn languages for different reasons – social, cultural, academic, scientific and commercial being some of them. It is easy to teach,

and to plan a course for a learner who knows exactly what is his /her purpose in learning the language. But it is not easy to produce a satisfactory course plan for the majority of learners who have no better aim than the thought that the knowledge of the language will be just useful.

Knowing a language means being able to read it, write it, speak it, and understand it when spoken. It is possible to learn to read, or to understand speech, without learning to write or to speak, but not vice versa. When a language is known, some parts of it will remain relatively passive. Some words are 'known' in the sense that they are often used for self expression, others are known in the sense that they are recognised and understood when come across in reading or listening. This distinction between active and passive vocabulary is the accomplishment of a good language user. If it is well chosen, an active vocabulary need not be very large to suffice for self expression on a wide range of subjects.

As a result of the work done by Lodge, Thorndike, Michael West and others, it is said that the learner of English needs a vocabulary of about two thousand general service words to be able to satisfy all his essential communication needs. This list will include all the structure words of English.

It is not enough just to know words, one must know how to use words to convey meanings. Different languages use different arrangements of words for expressing meaning. This is what we call the pattern or structure of language.

A pattern is made up of words, but in the pattern the words are put together in certain specific ways making use of certain devices, which are peculiar to each language. The learner has to be taught that the sentences are made up of constituents, and that their combination can be represented by different formulae like NP+VP+ADV. At least a minimum number of structures should be mastered by a non native speaker, which he would need to communicate adequately.

Language is the medium of literature and the "literary language" is different from the language of everyday life. Though literary language is primarily the language of literature, it becomes the accepted norm for written communication for any purpose. It exercises some degree of influence over the spoken language, and its correctness becomes the standard for all uses of the language, spoken or written.

Another aspect of language learning is that language cannot be divorced from situation. It is possible for a second language learner to use words and structures correctly, but use them in a wrong context. Appropriateness is as important as correctness. The learner should be able to understand the relationship between situation and language. A learner in our classroom has very little exposure to the language beyond that provided by his teacher.

Historical Development of English Language in India

After the famous battle of Plassey the East India Company became the

supreme political power in India, and the Directors in England, stopped giving economic aid to British Missionaries. Charles Grant, who favoured teaching of English, made a campaign for the spread of light and knowledge, and his efforts bore fruits when the Charter of 1813 was granted. In the Charter nothing was said about the agencies of education. It was 'Macaulay's minute' that paved the way for the study of English. Macaulay prophesied that English would become the language of commerce in the East in due course, and hence English became the medium of instruction, as a result of which, a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste and opinion developed.

After the first war of Indian Independence the people began to feel that English was a foreign language and was doing immense harm to the growth of the nation. This led to preaching the cause of Indian languages and their teaching in schools and colleges.

The political freedom of India brought about a different picture of English education, which has a dark side as well as a bright side. The dark side pointed out the need of a national language for a free country, and also the undesirable effect that the English education had on the minds of Indians, and the weakening of the social fabric of the Indian society. At the same time it was argued that the English language had brought easy access to the international thoughts and cultures. It brought the message of political democracy, it is the vehicle of scientific civilization and it is the symbol of contact with the

outside world. The conclusion of the controversy has been that the study of English is desirable, India being a country with a large number of regional languages. English education produces an integrated culture since Hindi is almost alien in the non Hindi speaking areas in the South. The central advisory board and Chief Minister's conference (1961) approved a three-language-formula, English and Hindi to be made the compulsory language besides the regional language.

When Lord Macaulay advocated the propagation of English in this country, he seemed to be concerned more with the culture represented by the language than with the use of language in communication. He failed to make a distinction between the way a society makes use of its first language, and the way it uses the additional languages that are adopted for reasons of convenience. The tendency was to think of English as the first language for its Indian learners. The approach to the learning and teaching of English was very nearly the same as that adopted in England.

The fact is that English in India is something more than a foreign language and something less than a second language. The strategy for learning a second language is different from that adopted for learning foreign languages. A second language has to be taught on an extensive scale, to large number of learners, whereas the foreign language need to be learnt and taught only on a limited scale. All the four skills are likely to be required in the second

language use. English continues to be the 'library language', and it has now acquired a status much above that. If we need a foreign language, English is the most convenient one for us.

English Language Teaching in Kerala at Cross Roads

A recent symposium[1] attended by eminent educationists and professors highlights the problem of English language teaching in our country. Though there has been much hue and cry on this issue through the decades, this symposium delves deep into the problem, from different angles.

The words of Roy M. (24) fall heavily like a sword, when she says that the proficiency in English can be achieved only through the proficiency in the mother-tongue. It is a sad state that a student who passes out of school after learning English for ten or twelve years, is proficient neither in English nor in Malayalam. The first requisite for attaining proficiency in the second language is a deep-rooted knowledge of the mother-tongue and genuine interest in its literature and culture. The awareness of the language, literature and culture of the mother-tongue strengthens one's self confidence. It is this lack of self confidence that hinders the communicative proficiency of Indians in English. The same idea was shared by leading speakers at the 31st Annual Conference of

1. "What is the defect with our English learning?" <u>Bhashaposhini</u>, Oct. 1999

the English Language Teachers Association of India (ELTAI). Raja Ram

Mehrotra thinks that

> It is funny that our children are made to sing total stangers like
>
> Jack and Jill or Humpty Dumpty whom they never see around nor
>
> are likely to meet in the years to come.... Another nursery
>
> rhyme tells them about a pussy cat who goes to visit the queen,
>
> even before they heard of Chennai.... By teaching these nursery
>
> rhymes, we are imposing an alien ethos in our young ones and
>
> obstructing the natural growth of their personality (Mehrotra 3).

When our students come out with university degrees, they would have

learned English for about ten years – five years in the school and five years in

the college. How proficient are they in the language, after learning it for ten

years? Are they able to communicate in English– speak English, write English,

read and listen to English – with the desired effectiveness? R . Viswanathan

(16) thinks that it is high time we changed the methods of teaching English.

Highlighting the defects of the present method, he says, from the primary class

to the degree level, we give too much of emphasis to the teaching of grammar.

In the school, we teach the noun, adjective and adverb with definitions,

examples and exercises, and repeat the same in the college too, ignoring the

other aspects of the language, like vocabulary, and communication skills. He

suggests ways of strengthening the vocabulary, and speaking skills of the

learners by creating certain 'live situations in the classroom, or in the playground'.

Fall in the Standard of English - Inevitable in the Present Classroom Situation

The present college classroom is a cross-section of a heterogeneous community of students. The general standard of English of a student from a Malayalam medium school is low, whereas a student from the English medium school in the town is good at English. The low proficiency of the rural school children is a vulnerable point which very often sparks a debate. But general English classes are now more often adorned by students educated in the public schools and central schools in India and abroad. The result is, the teacher of English in the college classroom is confronted with a wide spectrum of abilities in English.

Unimaginably large classes with a wide range of abilities, comprising samples of different cultures and different strata of society, with varying degrees of exposure to English, pose problems to the teacher. The main occupation of the teacher appears to be to cover the syllabus within the allotted time and the concern of the student is to learn by-rote the answers to reproduce them in the answer papers. The indication is that in such a situation there is not much chance for the student to learn the language or for the teacher to teach the language.

A series of factors, like the selection of text books, the examination method, lack of clear objectives, the poor quality of teachers and the inability to develop a new approach suited to the changed times, provide multiple jolts to the teaching programme. Students who are not able to understand the basic structure of a sentence or write a paragraph without glaring mistakes, are expected to learn texts of great lyrical beauty from Shakespeare, Shelly, Frost and Whitman. We have to admit that things are not exactly falling in place and that the students fail to acquire language skills in this conceptual confusion.

It is worthwhile to remember that when even half a century after independence India continues to be plagued by a colonial hangover, the policies, priorities and programmes in the context of English teaching in many other countries are functionally oriented. A survey in Paris has revealed that 75% of the boys and girls were in favour of improving their command of English language rather than learning about British or American culture, including literature. Even in China the teaching of English is embedded in Chinese contexts and geared to the local needs. Most of the teaching materials are based on life and thought in China. A major break through in decolonising English teaching may be achieved by giving a place of prominence to Indian literature in English translation. Furthermore, non-literary Indian writing in English, including the writings of Indian journalists, philosophers, political thinkers and social reformers, whose works are in no way less significant, can also be included.

Importance of Learning English in the Present Milieu

Even though there is little doubt about the intent or intensity of the effort behind Macaulay's minutes to manoeuvre "an English India", and a "class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, opinions, in morals and in intellect", the emergence of English as the global language has redefined the impact of the English language in the present times. Through a psychological approach the British had conditioned the mindset of the Indians to equip them with a kind of glasses to view the world. It was nothing other than the glasses of the English language. Any idea, or thought, or knowledge, worth considering, had to come through the vehicle of the English language. David Crystal's 'English as a global language' is a graphic illustration of the fact that not only the 'children of Macaulay' in the British colonies "haunted by Macaulay's ghost",[2] but the whole world has now come under the magic spell of English.

According to Crystal a language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role in every country.

> To achieve such a status a language has to be taken up by other
> countries around the world. They must decide to give it a special

---

2. Le Figaro, <u>Haunted by Macaulay's Ghost</u>, Hindustan Times, 08.11.1998

place within their communities, even though they may have few

(or no) mother-tongue speakers (Crystal 3).

This occurs in two ways. Firstly a language can be made the official

language of a country to be used as a medium of communication in such

departments as the governments, the law courts, the media and the educational

system. Such a language is described as a 'second language', because it

functions as a 'complement' to a person's mother-tongue, or 'first language'.

English has the role of such an official language in over seventy countries

including India. Secondly, a language can be given a priority in a country's

foreign language teaching, even though this language has no official status.

English is now the language most widely taught as a foreign language in over

100 countries including China and Russia.

There are several ways in which a language can be official – it may be

the sole official language of a country, or it may share the status with other

languages, or it may take a second place to other languages while still

performing certain official roles. Many countries formally acknowledge a

language's status in their constitution (eg. India).

In India, the conflict between the supporters of English, Hindi and

regional languages led to a 'three language formula'. English has now the status

of an 'associate' official language, with Hindi as the official language, and it

continues to be used within the legal system, government administration,

higher education, the media, business and tourism. In the Dravidian speaking areas of the South, it is widely preferred to Hindi as a 'lingua franca'.

English language has diffused deeply into the international domains of political – cultural life, business, communication, entertainment, the media and education. The convenience of having a 'lingua franca' to serve global relations and needs has come to be appreciated by millions. Many domains are totally dependent on it, especially the computer software industry.

The linguist Braj Kachru has suggested that we think of the spread of English around the world as three concentric circles, representing different ways in which the language has been acquired and is eventually used.

> The inner circle refers to the traditional bases of English, where it is the primary language; it includes the USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia and New Zealand

> The outer or extended circle involves the earlier phases of the spread of English in non native settings, where the language has become part of a country's chief institutions and plays an important 'second language' role in a multi-lingual setting: it includes Singapore, India, Malawi and over fifty other territories.

> The expanding circle involves those nations which recognize the importance of English as an international

language though they don't have a history of colonization by members of the inner circle, nor have they given English any special administrative status. It includes China, Japan, Greece, Poland and a steadily increasing number of other states. In these areas English is taught as a foreign language' (53 - 54).

Expanding circle

Outer circle

Inner circle

e.g. India, Singapore
150 - 300 million

e.g. China, Russia
100 - 1,000 million
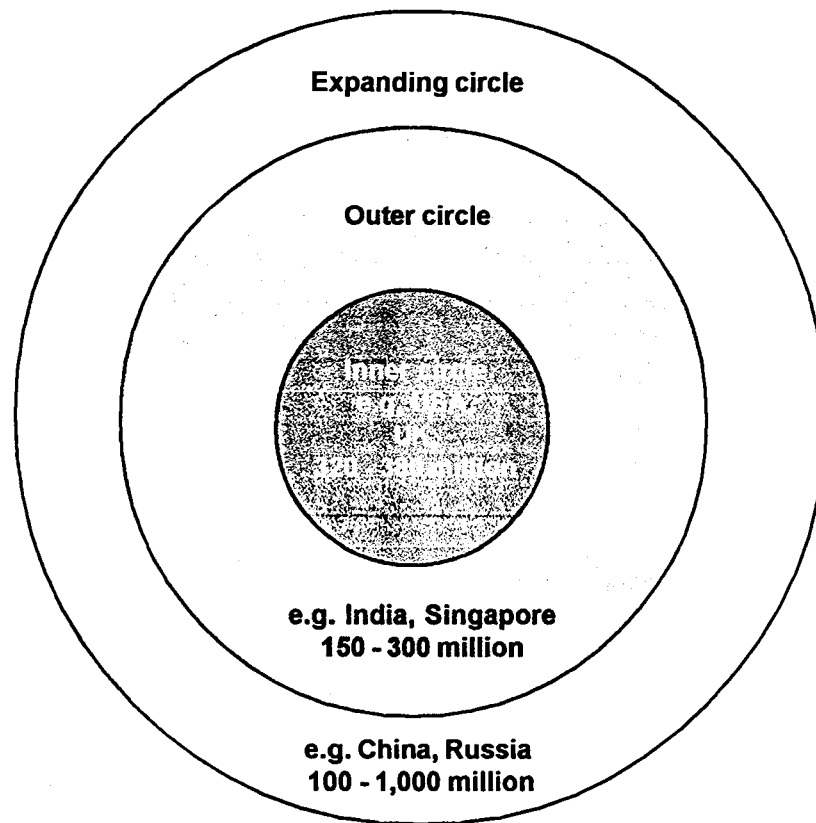
Fig. 2. The Three Circles of English. David Crystal. English as Global Language . Cambridge University Press, 1997. 54.

The English language has been an important medium of the press for nearly 400 years. A visit to any University Library shows that in any country most academic journals with an international readership are published in English. The end of the nineteenth century saw a dramatic increase in the use of advertisements in publications, and the official language of international advertising bodies, such as the European Association of Advertising Agencies, is invariably English. Also, English was the first language to be transmitted by a radio when the US physicist Reginald A. Fessenden broadcast music, poetry, and a short talk from Brant Rock, Massachusetts, USA, on Christmas Eve 1906. A casual pass through the wave length of a radio receiver shows that no other language rules the air waves. The English language dominates the movie world and there is a strong English language presence in most film festivals too.

People travel abroad for many reasons, varying from routine business trips to holidays, from pilgrimage to sports competitions. English is used as an auxiliary language in many tourist spots of the world, and credit card facilities are most noticeably in English. The communicative demands of the travellers abroad are worthily met with the use of a lingua franca.

One of the most important reasons why so many nations have in recent years made English an official language, is always educational in the broadest sense. English is the medium of a great deal of the world's knowledge,

especially in such areas as science and technology. In 1975, a South African writer Harry Mashabela put it like this:

> Learning and using English will not only give us the much needed unifying chord but will also land us into the exciting world of ideas and also make it possible for us to share the experiences of our own brothers in the world (*qtd. in* Crystal 101).

It is now thought that a person is more likely to be in touch with the latest thinking and research in a subject by learning English than by learning any other language. A study of the use of English in scientific periodicals in 1981 showed that 85% of papers in Biology and Physics were being written in English at that time, whereas medical papers were 73%, and papers in Mathematics and Chemistry were 69% and 67% respectively. In 1995 it was seen that 90% of the 1500 papers listed in the journal *Linguistics Abstract* were in English. In computer science the proportion is even higher. Since 1960s English has become the normal medium of instruction in higher education in many countries. About 80% of the world's electronically stored information is currently in English.

English is the chief lingua franca of the internet. In April 1996 the *New York Times* carried an article by Michael Specter headed 'World, Wide, Web : 3 English words', in which the role of English was highlighted:

> To study molecular genetics, all you need to get into the Harvard

University Library or the medical Library at Sweden's

Karolinska Institute, is a phone line and a computer.

And, it turns out, a solid command of the English

language. Because whether you are a French intellectual pursuing

the cutting edge of international film theory, a Japanese

Paleobotanist curious about a newly discovered set of primordial

fossils, or an American teenager concerned about Magic

Johnson's jump shot, the internet and World Wide Web really

only work as great unifiers if you speak English. Specter

concludes: if you want to take advantage of the internet there is

only one way to do it: Learn English which has more than ever

become America's greatest and most effective export (*qtd. in*

Crystal 107).

Need for Communication Skills in the Background of the

Increased Demand for TOEFL

Recently, a steady increase is seen in job opportunities and schemes for

higher education abroad, and hence the Indian students show remarkable

interest in getting a score in the TOEFL (Test Of English as a Foreign

Language). The goal of the TOEFL is to objectively measure the foreign

student's English proficiency. Many American colleges and Universities, as

well as a large number of institutions and agencies, ask for official score

reports. Lakhs of Indian students apply for the TOEFL score every year.

The examination is divided into three parts which individually test different language skills. The test comprises three sections: listening comprehension, structure and written expression, and vocabulary and reading comprehension. It is essential that a thorough change has to be effected in the teaching of English and learning of English in the U.G. classes, so that it will help them in the various competitive examinations and tests like the TOEFL.

Importance of English in the U.G. Classes

The U.G. stage forms an important educational bridge between the school stage and the higher stages of education. It is here that the student has to make the transition from the kind of learning to which he/she was exposed at school, to the quite different kind of learning that will be expected of him/her at the higher level.

The realities of the competitive world come crashing down upon our youngsters immediately after attaining a Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree in the form of competitive examinations, interviews, group discussions, debates etc. Then, they awaken to the truth that mastery of the English language is the key factor that cements their confidence for commendable performance. We are witnessing the magic spell of English as an 'Open Sesame' to enter the Indian Civil Services, management studies in the leading business schools and national and multi national companies. In theory we may continue the hostile

pronouncements against English to favour the regional languages, but as the cliché goes, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. We can never close our eyes to the smart, intelligent, bright Malayalee boys and girls who are not credited with what they deserve just because of their instability in the English language. This study aims at putting across the compelling message of the need for restructuring the teaching of English in the under graduate classes.

History of English Language Teaching

Chapter 1

History of English Language Teaching

The Early Years

The weakening of the dominance of Latin and French and the emergence of the Vernacular due to a series of political and social changes gradually led England to be a monolingual nation. This, in its wake, initiated the teaching of modern Vernacular languages at the end of the middle ages. This transition brought about such an influential change in the status of the native tongue that it was now necessary for the children to construe their Latin lessons in English instead of French, which hitherto had been an open sesame to the classical languages.

This trend was strengthened at the end of the 14th century by the contributions of Chaucer, who traditionally represents the waxing mood of English self confidence. The earliest extant Manual for the teaching of French, written before the end of Richard IInd's reign and a number of similar manuals which appeared during the 15th and early 16th century, were the fore runners of the language teaching text books of the Tudor period. Even the usurpation of the throne from Richard II by the House of Lancaster in 1939 illustrated the break from the past. The order dethroning Richard was read in English, and Henry IV used English in claiming the throne and in his acceptance speech.

This tradition was carried on by his son Henry V. By the end of the 15th century even the statutes of the State were written in English, and the affairs of the state handled through the royal secretariat were conducted in the Vernacular. To the Tudors, English was the language of the nation, spoken by all, from the king himself downwards. Knowledge of French became a sign of prestige and was considered an accomplishment for anyone aspiring high positions. Knowledge of Latin was considered as a sign of properly educated man or woman. Going to school meant learning Latin grammar and in fact, Latin was the only language with a grammar. French was on the way to acquire one, but English had to wait until the beginning of the next century before any serious attempt was made for a proper scholarly description of the language.

In the absence of a grammar, the early language teaching material relied mainly on texts and the dialogue form. The use of dialogues was a long established tradition in the teaching of spoken Latin in the Middle-Ages. The Latin text, with a translation in Anglo-Saxon, consists of questions and answers relating to topics of everyday life. The importance of commerce in the early stages of modern language teaching is emphasized so much so that the first manual of French dialogues named <u>maniere de language</u> was obviously written for merchants and traders.

The first textbooks designed solely to teach English appeared in the late 16th century after the arrival of large numbers of French Huguenot refugees in

the 1570s and 1580s. Double manuals in the <u>maniere</u> tradition aiming to teach English to French speakers, as well as the other way round, started to appear at the end of the 15th century. The customers of these manuals may have included merchants using French as a <u>lingua franca</u> as well as native French speakers. It is also likely that they realized the truth that knowledge of your client's mother tongue will work wonders in business.

The first of these double manuals was a short book of dialogues and other texts prepared by William Caxton in 1483. Caxton's assistant, in his printing press, produced another double-manual on similar lines called <u>A Lytell treatyse for to learne Englisshe and Frensshe</u> (1498). The text is laid out in alternating lines of English and French.

There were other signs of growing interest in learning English in the early 16th century. English began to be included along with more widely known languages in the Polyglot dictionaries and phrase books, which were a device for acquiring 'survival knowledge' of foreign languages in Renaissance times. The earliest listed is a seven-language dictionary of 1540. It was followed by many others. Double-manuals originating in the continent are perhaps a better guide to the demand for English than those produced in England. An early example is by a Frenchman, who can claim to be the first teacher of English as a foreign language. Meurier's double-manual was called <u>A Treatise for to learn to speak French and English</u>, published in 1553. The last example of early

handbooks for the teaching of English to foreigners before the advent of the

Huguenot refugees was a small manual called <u>A very profitable Book To learn</u>

<u>the manner of Reading, Writing and Speaking English and Spanish</u> (1554). The

development of English language teaching after these humble beginnings was

determined by the political, religious events of late sixteenth century.

Refugee Language Teachers in Elizabethan London

From about 1560 onwards, as catholic reaction to the Reformation,

Counter Reformation power started in the Low Countries, especially in

Flanders. Many young and enterprising Flemings arrived in large numbers in

friendly neighboring countries including England, as they chose exile to

submission. They were later joined by their French co-religionists, to whom

Queen Elizabeth made welcome for the skills and conscientious attitudes they

brought with them. The St.Barthlomeu Massacre in Paris in 1572 caused still

another flow of Protestants from France to the countries of the reformed

church.

The French Huguenot and other protestant refugees from Flanders, Italy

and even Spain were mainly craftsmen, though some had a more intellectual

middle class background, among them teachers also. Jacques Bellot, Claudius

Holyband and John Florio are the three refugee teachers who represent a

cross-section of the language teaching community of the time.

A striking feature of these refugee teachers is that they were native

speakers of the languages they taught, and continued the traditional bilingual method of the earlier manuals. They were able to see their own language with the eyes of those attempting to learn it and felt the need for reliable linguistic descriptions, from which models, examples and explanations can be drawn. In the sixteenth century there were substantial descriptions of French including Palsgrave's 'Lisclairecessement de la langue francoyse' (1530), but there was no comparable study of English, and this accounts for the inadequacy of the manuals of Bellot and Florio and the absence of native speaking teachers in English.

Even though most of the refugee craftsmen could survive without a detailed knowledge of spoken English, it would have been difficult to maintain the status of a skilled craftsman without some ability to handle the mother language. For wives and members of the family, ability to speak in English would have been more essential than men, in situations such as shopping and getting about the city, and in social contexts as well. Two small English manuals that Jacques Bellot wrote for the French-speaking refugees in the 1580s concentrated on these needs.

Bellot's <u>School Master</u> starts with an account of the English alphabet and pronunciation, necessary information for those who had picked the language up informally and needed help with reading and writing. The book also contained the discussion of difficult words and homophones with a few odd

grammar points added. Bellot cannot be blamed for the inadequacy of these grammar notes since English had not produced anything substantial. Though Bellot's English manuals are not as thorough as many contemporary French textbooks, they were of practical benefit to their customers.

Claudius Holyband's two famous books The French Schoolmaster and The French Littleton are both teaching manuals, which make great use of dialogue work. Holyband's dialogues are well known to social historians of the period for the details of everyday life they portray. These dialogues are long sequences of scenes and events that follow one another in quick succession, self-contained episodes which not only have an artistic impact, but also serve a more prosaic pedagogical purpose. Each episode contains enough materials for one lesson. The text was read aloud and repeated until the pupils had a thorough grasp of the pronunciation and could produce the sentences fluently. The children also practised the text in writing, following the double translation method. In teaching grammar, Holyband used what was later called an 'inductive' approach, starting from the text and consulting the rules only when the pupils were familiar with the new material. Holyband who spent thirty years of his life in England had established high standards for the teaching of languages in England, and his published works survived for many years into the next century.

The work of John Florio (1553 – 1625) shows language teaching in a

rather different light. Though he was an Italian by birth, having had an English mother he was a bilingual speaker of English and Italian. All Florio's work as a language teacher was as a private tutor to important aristocratic patrons, and the textbooks he wrote for them suited their interests and tastes. His two principal double - manuals, <u>First Fruits</u> and <u>Second Fruits</u>, written in 1578 and 1591 respectively, consists of Italian and English dialogues, dealing with the topics of artistic and intellectual interest. His intellectual and literary talents of the highest order found full expression in his famous translation of Montaigne's essays (1603).

In the early 1590s the publishing activities of the refugee teachers reached their climax, and the resentment of the native born teachers showed itself in the publication of an extraordinary manual called the <u>Ortho-epia Gallica</u> by John Eliot, in 1593. The local feeling at what was becoming a foreign monopoly in the language teaching business, became evident. Eliot's attack seemed to have a destructive effect also. Florio himself, the main target in Eliot's attack never wrote another language manual, and textbooks by other refugee teachers also dried up. Eliot's assumption that native textbook writers were being discriminated, proved groundless as no native authors came forward to fill the place of the foreigners. After the departure of the refugees, the foreign language teaching seems to have gone into a decline in the early seventeenth century.

Inspite of the attempts made by Holyband and his fellow refugees, the teaching of modern English remained at a low level. The main concern of the schools was the teaching of Latin, and until 18th century the classical curriculum was dominant. Young children arrived at the grammar school at about the age of eight and were forced with a dose of severe Latin grammar rules. The source of these rules was the best-selling language-teaching textbook A Short Introduction of Grammar generally edited by William Lily and known as Lily's Grammar. It continued without a serious rival until the middle of the 18th century and was still in occasional use in the 19th century. For over 250 years 'Lily' and language teaching was synonymous. Lily's book begins with a short introduction to the 'Parts of Speech' written in English followed by a description of Latin syntax written entirely in Latin.

It is against this background of rote-learning that the reform movements of 16th and 17th century language have to be seen. Though the various movements adopted different philosophies and theories at different times, a common concern for text rather than for rule was evident among them all. There were two schools of thought on the role and function of language studies in late 16th and early 17th century education. The first represented the humanist tradition established earlier in the century by Erasmus and Vives and reiterated in Roger Ascham's influential book The School Master (1570). The other was a more puritanical philosophy set out at some length in Francis Bacon's

Advancement of Learning (1605), which was elaborately expressed in the work

of Jan Amos Comenius. The 'anti-grammar' trend in language teaching

methodology came to its conclusion in the work of an extraordinary writer

called Joseph Webbe who designed a language text book format in the 1620s.

While Ascham had made the learning of grammar subservient to the study of

original texts, Webbe dispensed with grammar all together. Webbe viewed that

grammars were bound to be inadequate as descriptions and their study merely

'shackled' the learner's progress. The proper starting point for language

learning, in his view, was the exercise of communication skills, which would

lead to knowledge of the grammar through use.

Webbe's achievement was considerable, but it was isolated from the

context of educational thought and philosophy that surrounded it. Meanwhile,

the Baconian tradition overrode him and found its fullest expression in the

works of comenius. Bacon and the Puritan movement disapproved of the

literacy interests of humanists like Ascham. They thought that 'learning should

be directed onwards towards the perceptible world of the senses and

experiences, not inwards and their logical or stylistic properties'. Comenius

was a genius, whose two major works are Janua Linguarum Resarata (1631),

and Great Didactic (1657). His Orbis Sensualuim Pictus, the most imaginative

language-teaching textbook of the century, was published in 1658. However, it

is doubtful whether his methodical ideas exerted much influence until they

were rediscovered in the 19th century. The Janua and the Orbis Pictus did survive and were widely used. Comenius wanted a system of education in which the mother tongue would play the central role and foreign language would be learnt as and when they were needed for practical purposes. He believed that foreign vernacular languages should be taught as a means of communication with the people of neighbouring countries, and that the classical languages, which were still required for certain academic and professional purposes, should not claim more than their fair share. According to him, content should override form in the learning process. Comenius believed in class teaching with the children grouped round him.

It is difficult to assess the contribution Comenius made to the concern of language teaching. His contemporary influence was powerful, and his two major textbooks the Janua and the Orbis Pictus continued to be reprinted for a century or more after his death. But neither of them stimulated other writers to emulate his techniques and methods. It is noteworthy that Comenius's Philosophy of learning presents an abiding challenge to the teacher of languages: how can the teacher come to terms with the fact that language is not the object of learning but the outcome, the product of interplay between the teacher and the great common world.

Guy Miege and Second Huguenot Exile

After Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the flow of exiles

was greater than that was experienced hundred years earlier. After the Restoration of 1660, French enjoyed a prestige both as a social accomplishment and as an essential element in the training of court officials and diplomats. The case of French was supported by Lord Clarendon, the Lord Chancellor. The result was a demand for native speaking teachers of French, some of whom also turned their attention to the teaching of English as a foreign language to speakers of French. Among the teachers who contributed to helping the new refugees with learning English were Paul Festeau, a native of Blois on the river Loire, and a swiss called Guy Miege whose <u>Nouvelle Method pour Apprendre I Anglois</u> (New method of Learning English) (1685) raised the standard of teaching of English as a Foreign Language. Meige Came to England shortly after the Restoration in 1661. His writing career started in lexicography and he published three dictionaries of French and English between 1677 and 1684. With the arrival of large numbers of refugees after 1685, which coincided with the Publication of <u>Nouwell Method</u>, he became more closely associated with the teaching of English. <u>Nouwell Method</u> brings together a Grammar, a compact Dictionary and a dialogue manual. His Grammar Section consists of a description of English Orthography and Pronunciation as well as a detailed study of the basic paradigms and word forms in the language. He considered English an easy language to learn once the student has mastered the complexities of the sound and spelling systems. In

his view there were three main difficulties, first was a small set of troublesome letters, 'th' as in 'think', 'ch' as in 'Church' and the soft 'g' in Ginger' and 'Judge', the second was the vowels and diphthong system, and the third, difficulty of knowing where to place the stress in individual words. He also had a long vocabulary list, more like a dictionary which is followed by a collection of everyday dialogues.

Miege's teaching method followed a firm footing in the basics of pronunciation, spelling and grammar followed by practice and language study using the dialogues and phrases. He disapproved of learning a language without grammar rules and he compared such a learning to a building without a foundation. After Miege, there were a few textbooks for English as a Foreign language written and published in England. It is one of the curious features of the subject that native speaking authors of course books for English as a foreign language were almost unknown before the late 19th century.

The Spread of English Language Teaching in Europe (18th Century)

The teaching of English as a foreign language waned in Britain during the eighteenth century than in the seventeenth. But there was no slackening of interest in learning English abroad. It grew slowly, spreading out from Britain to the countries immediately bordering the channel: France, The Netherlands, Denmark and Germany, and then to the Mediterranean and Baltic countries and later to Russia and Serampore in Bengal.

The teaching of English continued strongly in Netherlands throughout the 17th century, reflecting the closeness between the two nations. A number of books, for the purpose, were published in Amsterdam from 1646 to 1705. France was the only other European country besides Netherlands with a history of English language teaching before 1600. The 17th century textbooks such as Festeau's <u>Nouvelle Grammaire Angloise</u> of 1672 and Miege's <u>Nouvelle Method</u> of 1685 were both reissued in the form of double-grammars. Many learners of English acquired the language through the medium of French. Most important works in English were translated into French and gained a wider audience. For some people this was an inadequate way of studying English philosophy and literature and they started to learn the language so that they could read it at first-hand. The members of the French intelligentsia had a fascination for things English and it prompted a healthy trade in French translation of English books printed in Netherlands.

Towards the end of the century, a real break through for the English language occurred in Germany, where an obsession grew up around the works of English Literature, particularly Shakespeare. Interest in learning the English Language quickened and it even began to earn a place for itself in the school at the end of the century as a result of the German fascination for the lyricism and romanticism of Shakespeare, and other English dramatists. There was a strong interest among German textbook writers in English phonology and

prosody. A large number of works devoted to stress, rhythm and Grammar appeared in large numbers from about 1780 onwards. The same trend was found in Denmark, Italy, Portugal and Spain. The principal role of English in Russia was in naval affairs and the earliest books for teaching the language were written for the cadets at the Naval Academy. It is interesting to note a book on English language teaching published not in Europe, but in India, published in Serampore in 1797, and printed by the author John Miller himself. The Tutor is possibly the earliest example of a book written to teach English in what would today be called the third world.

Many reformers believed that the English spelling system was the stumbling block to the spread of literacy in England and to the learning of English as a foreign language. The Roman alphabet inherited from Latin did not match the sound system of English. The desire to reform the orthography also prompted the description of speech and its practical application to problems of everyday life. Most of the leading linguistic scholars in English between 1550 and 1700 were accomplished phoneticians, as well as grammarians. Their work was motivated by the desire to improve linguistic activities such as the spelling reform, and the teaching of English both as a mother tongue and as a foreign language. Among the early contributors to this tradition were Sir Thomas Smith (1513 – 1611), and John Hart (1501 – 1574). Orthographical reform continued as an important objective for linguistic scholarship well into the 17th

century. As the century progressed, the principal centre of interest shifted from orthography to the description and teaching of grammar. The leading grammarians of the period, like John Wallis (1616 – 1703), and Christopher Cooper (died 1698) were also skilled phoneticians. In the 18th century there was considerable enthusiasm for instruction in the arts of polite conversation, public-speaking and elocution. But the interest in spoken English made little impact on the basic education system. One reason for this was that the Renaissance had inherited a framework of linguistic description from the Middle Ages which divided grammar into four components: Orthography, Etymology, Syntax and Prosody.

Traditional grammars have been criticised for the neglect of speech, for the use of arbitrary 'perspective' judgments on what was correct in grammar, and also for being Latin-based. Some grammarians (Ben Jonson, for instance) did little more than find English equivalents for Latin categories, but others (including John Wallis and Robert Lowth) were consciously aware of the need to devise descriptions of English that did not just imitate the grammars of classical languages. These faults were virtues in the eyes of the customers for whom the grammar were intended. There were four different groups of customers for grammars and dictionary of English in the period to 1800: foreign students of the language, school pupils, private scholars, and a growing number of socially and professionally ambitious learners. The majority of

foreign students of English were academics and scholars who wished to acquire a reading knowledge of the language.

When we trace the development of English language teaching between the 16th and 17th centuries we cannot ignore the name of John Hart. He was an innovator of the reform of English spelling. The opening of the unreasonable writing of our English tongue, written in 1551, an orthography containing the due order and reason, how to write or paint the image of mans voice, most like to the life or nature (1569), and A method of comfortable beginning for all unlearned, whereby they may be taught to read English in a very short time, with pleasure, (1570) are his important works. Hart's policy on spelling was very moderate. He devised a five new letter shapes and resuscitated others which had been allowed to lapse, the two letters representing the voiced and unvoiced "th" sounds, for example. Harts teaching material is laid out in eight short steps. First he introduces the five vowels and five selected consonants, chosen because they are easy to sound out. Step 2 introduces the remaining consonants, each with a picture and keyword. Next there are two practice tables. Step 4 introduces the vowel digraphs on a five-by-five table. There is more revision and practice (step 5) before going on to the syllables and exercises contrasting long and short vowels, and the important voiced/ voiceless distinction. At the end of the book there are some phonic practice pattern, which carefully exemplify the sounds in different environments.

Unfortunately, Hart's reformed spelling system was not adopted. The future lay

with a new orthography, but with a new consistent version of the traditional

one. The main credit for this has to go to Richard Mulcaster, the most famous

and influential pedagogue of his day. His two major works are <u>Positions for the</u>

<u>Training up of Children</u> (1581) and <u>The First Part of the Elementarie</u> (1582).

<u>The First Part of the Elementarie</u> (1582), outlines Mulcaster's five branched

system of primary education, which comprised reading, writing, drawing,

singing and playing. Mulcaster was a serious and idealistic man who believed

deeply in his mission to create for England an English education rooted in the

use of English language. He called for three great undertakings to prepare the

language for its role in the education of the future: a grammar, a dictionary, and

a consistent orthography. Mulcaster made a lengthy word list which he called a

'General Talk'. It does not contain definitions since its principal purpose was

to provide a check-list of regular spellings following his system of rules and

convention. This table and the principles on which it was based were

Mulcaster's Chielf contribution to the history of practical English teaching.

Mulcaster's intention was not to provide a new, phonetically consistent

spelling system, but a stable one derived from tradition, or custom, modified in

the light of two further principles: 'reason' and 'sound'. 'Reason' should

ensure consistency and regularity, and 'sound' implied a predictable

relationship between sounds and spellings, though not necessarily on the 'one

symbol, one sound' principle of John Hart. The outcome should be a publicly acceptable compromise between perfection and practicability.

The two influential grammars of the first half of the 17th century were Ben Jonson's 'English Grammar' of 1640 and John Wallis's <u>Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae</u> of 1653. In the early 17th century, there were two rival interpretations of genral grammatical theory, and Jonson made use of both of them in his 'Grammar', which resulted in a number of inconsistancies. The first was the traditional theory derived from Aristotle through the Roman grammarians. This theory was represented in post-renaissance England by <u>Lily's Grammar</u>, which every educated person knew by heart from school. The rival theory originated in the work of a French scholar Pierre de la Ramee, in the mid-16th century. The Ramist belief in 'reason' rather than 'authority' appealed to the young intellectuals of late Elizabethan and Jacobean times, and inspired Jonson to attempt an application of the theory to the description of English. The Lilyan tradition was, however, too strong and the Jonson Grammar suffers from the mixture of two conflicting approaches. Part I of <u>The English Grammar</u> is concerned with Etymology, and Part II with Syntax. This two-part Ramist structure is one of the many differences between the ancient and modern approaches. John Wallis devoted more than half his book to pronunciation and its complex relationship to the orthography. Wallis's high reputation ensured a wide circulation of his <u>Grammatica</u>. He is one of the few

authorities consistently quoted in the 18th century.

In the late 17th century, there was considerable interest in the construction of a universal language. The destruction of Latin as the international 'Lingua Franca' due to the protestant revolution, and other reasons, would have made the idea of a universal language philosophically attractive. The Royal Society commissioned one of its members, John Wilkins, to draw up a scheme for further consideration and possible implementation. Wilkins' s report, called <u>An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language</u> was presented to the society in 1668. It was a detailed analysis of the Semantic categories, or 'notions' as Wilkins called them, along with the written symbols which were to realize these categories in his new universal language. But Wilkins's scheme was not taken up by the merchants, traders, and missionaries as he had hoped. However, it had a rather limited influence on the grammar of Christopher Cooper. Wilkins's ideas did not sink altogether into obscurity, they eventually re-emerged in the 19th century in the famous <u>Thesaurus</u> of Peter Mark Roget (1779 – 1869). Roget had almost essentially studied Wilkins's 'Essay' as he was secretary to the Royal Society. However, he did not acknowledge this directly. The 'Thesaurus' was an enormous success.

The Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660 was a decisive event in the history of English education and English language teaching. The

Cromwellian commonwealth of the previous decade had removed the control of education from the Anglican church, thereby challenging the supremacy of the traditional Latin curriculum and promoting of literacy in the mother tongue. The restoration re established the old order but failed to kill the reforming zeal of the non conformist dissenters. The principal contribution of the dissenting tradition was its commitment to a curriculum stressing the teaching of natural science, mathematics and practical skills like accounting, surveying and navigation. This implied the replacement of Latin as the basic educational dicipline by English.

The 18th century was on the whole a time of relative calm after the religious and constitutional disturbances of the 17th century. Social ambition and commercial enterprise began to take the place of controversy and religious disputation, and the modern curriculum of the English schools provided an excellent preparation for this. Letter writing became more important and a polished style expressed in correctly spelt grammatical sentences became a sought after accomplishment. By 1700 the Mulcastrican dream of a vernacular system of education was on the way to realization, but English was still unequipped for fulfilling such ambitions. Joseph Aickins, in the preface to his 1693 English grammar expressed the feeling of national linguistic pride, and desire for improvement and to augment and standardize the language. Neither Aickins' own <u>Grammar</u> nor many grammars that were published over the next

seventy years attained the status he desired. The Standard Grammar which approached in the form of Lowth's Short Introduction in 1762 was what the literate public recognized as what they had been looking for: clear, unambiguous guidance on what was good English and what was not.

A committee had been set up in 1664 by the Royal Society to improve the English tongue comprising influential supporters as John Dryden and John Evelyn. Jonathan Swift, in a letter to the Earl of Oxford in 1712, called A proposal for correcting, improving and ascertaining the English tongue suggested the forming of an academy for ascertaining and fixing the language forever. This proposal was immediately attacked by the opposition party in the Parliament. The Whigs regarded this as a kind of Tory Plot and the Whig historian John Oldmixon sarcastically said that it will be vain to pretend to ascertain language. In spite of his reservations about the Academy, Oldmixon joined in the general demand for an authoritative work of reference.

The dictionaries of Johnson, Walker and Webster are worth mentioning in the march of the language towards the formation of Standard English. The basic desire of Johnson's work was published in his Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language (1747). He summed up his idea of the perfect English dictionary by which the pronunciation of the languages may be fixed and the purity of the language preserved, focussing attention on the golden age of Elizabethan English. What captured Johnson's imagination was the way in

which English was used by the great authors. Though Johnson did not 'fix' the language, he provided a fixed point of reference against which future change could be set and assessed. He established a model for dictionary making, that was emulated and extended by later writers like Webster and the compilers of the great <u>Oxford English Dictionary</u> at the end of the following century. The shortcomings of the introductory grammar in Johnson's dictionary were rectified in Lowth's <u>Short Introduction</u> a few years later. And Johnson's failure to take an interest in phonetics was compensated in the work of his ardent admirer John Walker in his <u>Critical Pronouncing Dictionary</u>, published in 1791. This contains a wealth of information on the pronunciation of standard English as well as advice from Londoners, Irishmen and Scotsmen on how to attain a standard English accent. It is ironic that the attempts to fix the English language 'forever' should have coincided with the secession of the American colonies and the establishment of an independent English speaking nation which would seek to develop an alternative standard suited to its own purposes. <u>Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language</u>, in 1828, was published in the belief that the American people should have their own national dictionary of English. He retained the spelling changes which had found popular favour and dropped, or compromised on those which had not. For example, he listed both 'theatre' and 'theater' but gave no alternative for 'center'.

The grammars of Lowth, Murray, and Cobbett are worth mentioning in the context of tracing the evolution of the language. Robert Lowth's main aim in the publication of <u>A Short Introduction to English Grammar,</u> was similar to that of other 18th century grammarians: to provide a standard work of English grammar, and guide the learner to express himself 'with propriety'. A novel feature of Lowth's design was his use of footnotes. The advantage of the footnote device is that it creates a two-level course in a single book with the main text as the elementary material and footnotes as the more advanced commentary. Lowth's <u>Short Introduction</u> was, on one hand, the culmination of the 18th century search for a reliable guide to the structure of the Standard English, and on the other hand it established an authority for the next generation of grammars.

Murray and Cobbett, in particular, represent the transition from the 18th century with its passion for linguistic propriety and elegance to the more vigorous tradition of popular grammars of Victorian times. Both of them based their work on Lowth and aimed to bring the advantages of correct English to a broader audience. Lindley Murray (1745 – 1826) established two new principles in the design of pedagogical grammars. The first was a system of grading with the reference to different classes of learners. He took Lowth's device of distinguishing between the main text and the footnotes; secondly, he pioneered the technique of providing practice excercises for classroom use.

Like the exercises of the so-called 'grammar–translation method' in foreign language teaching, Murray's were based on sentences which illustrated the basic points in his textbook. The fact that we associate 'doing grammar' so closely with 'doing exercises' is more or less the result of Murray's influence on the teaching of English. The next of Lowth's disciples, William Cobbett published his <u>A Grammar of the English Language</u> in a series of letters in 1819. The book was intended both for the use of schools, and young persons in general, and more especially for the use of soldiers, sailors, apprentices and ploughboys.

There are three major threads in the development of language teaching in the 19th century that twine together in the controversies. The first is the integration of foreign language teaching into a modernized secondary school curriculum. In 1800 very few schools taught foreign languages except as optional extras to the classical languages. But in 1900 most secondary schools had incorporated one or more of the major European languages into their curriculum. The second strand is the expansion of the market for utilitarian language learning related to practical needs and interests. It occurred from about the middle of the 19th century as the European nations came into closer and more frequent commercial contact with each other and with countries throughout the world. Inspite of the lack of interest shown by the schools and universities towards the cause, the utilitarian market existed and was growing.

The evidence for it was the success of writers like Ahn and Ollendorff. Their books flowed on to the market in all the leading European languages. The third strand in the development was that throughout the century there were individuals with new ideas on how languages could be taught more efficiently and easily. There were French writers like Jacotot, Marcel, and Gouin, and there was a very interesting English man called Prendergast whose ideas fore shadow many of the notions later developed in the 20th century by men like Palmer and West. Even though none of them received widespread support in their own time, it has to be remembered that when the Reform Movement actually got under way in the 1880's it was not wholly without precedent.

The Grammar – Translation Method

It began in Germany, or more actually, Prussia, at the end of the eighteenth century. The origins of the method do not lie in an attempt to teach languages by grammar and translation. The original motivation was reformist. The original scholastic approach among individual learners in the eighteenth century had been to acquire a reading knowledge of foreign languages by studying a grammar and applying this knowledge to the interpretation of texts with the use of a dictionary. Scholastic methods of this type were not suitable to school pupils. The grammar-translation method was an attempt to adapt these traditions to the requirements of schools. It preserved the basic framework of grammar and translation as these were already familiar both to

teachers and pupils from their classical studies. The main aim was to make language learning easier. The traditional texts were replaced by exemplicatory sentences. The twentieth century structuralist approach was also founded on the authority of the sentence and the two methodologies have much in common.

The earliest grammar-translation course for the teaching of English was written in 1793 by Johan Christian Fick (1793 – 1821) and published in Erlangan in South Germany. It contained exercises of various kinds, typically sentences for translation into and out of the foreign language. The grammar translation sentences afforded opportunities for practice work and also exemplified the grammar in a more concentrated and clearer way than texts could do. Grammar-translation textbooks were graded, and presented new grammar points one by one in an organized sequence. This was also taken over by the modern structuralists. Although the grammar–translation method started out as a simple approach to language learning for young children, it was distorted by the rivalry between the classicists and the modern language rivals.

The industrialization of the second half of the nineteenth century created a new class of language learner, one that had not followed an academic 'grammar school' education. A new approach was needed which suit their particular circumstances, and consequently the 'direct methods', which required no knowledge of grammar.

The Reform Movement

The late nineteenth century Reform Movement is unique in language teaching history. For a period of about twenty years many of the leading phoneticians of the time co-operated towards a shared educational aim and attracted teachers and others to the field. From 1882 onwards publications began to appear, first in the form of pamphlets and articles, and later, more subtracted works like sweet's 'Practical Study of Languages (1899). Professional associations and societies were formed, notably the International Phonetic Association (IPA), and there were new journals and periodicals, of which the best known was the IPA's Le Maitre Phonetique, first published under that title in 1889.

The movement was remarkable as an example of international and interdisciplinary co-operation in which phoneticians took as much interest in the classroom as the teachers did in the new science of phonetics. Three out of the four principal phoneticians - Victor in Germany, Passy in France, and Jesperson in Denmark – began their careers as school teachers, though they went to other works later. The fourth, Henry sweet, whose teaching was limited to individual students, was respected as the intellectual leader of the movement.

On the teaching side, the main figure was Klinghardt, a teacher from Silesia, who followed up a review of Sweet's 1884 paper On the Practical

Study of L111anguages with a carefully documented study of a years work with the new methods which helped to increase the confidence of teachers.

The Reform Movement began suddenly with the publication of Victor's pamphet Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren (Language teaching must start afresh) in 1882. Its impact on teaching at the time, and its later influence, make it one of the most significant documents in recent language teaching history. However the absence of a published English translation hindered the widespread popularity of its content. In an attempt to remove this hindrance, a translation (made in collaboration with David Abercrombie and Beat Buchmann) has been included as an appendix to this book. In 1886 Victor acknowledged his authorship of Der Sprachunterricht, and a Quousque Tandem Society was formed in Scandinavia, borrowing the famous pseudonym of Victor. In the same year Passy set up the Phonetic Teachers Association. Jesperpson became one of its first members. The collaborative tradition of the Reform Movement was continued, as a result of which a number of pamphlets and a series of articles were published. Journals also played an important role, publishing articles, reviews, conference reports, and so on. The movement continued to expand and at the turn of the century, reached its climax with the appearance of two works, which provide a statement of its aims, principles and practical classroom methods. The first was Sweet's classic The Practical Study of Languages, published in 1899. It was followed by Jesperson's How to Teach

a Foreign Language, published in 1904. Victor contributed to the movement by holding a series of summer schools and starting a language teaching institute in his home town of Marburg. Daniel Jones was one of his summer students, who later took up a years study under Passy in Paris.

The Reform Movement was founded on three basic principles: the primacy of speech, the centrality of the connected text as the kernel of the teaching–learning process, and the absolute priority of an oral methodology in the classroom. Victor also dealt with the issue of overwork in the schools and the consequent ill health and mental stress. He was convinced that, if teachers adopted better methods based on the spoken language, the children would learn the language more effectively and could do away with the written homework and 'overwork'. Part I of Victor's Der Sprachunterricht, discusses the linguistic nonsense that had become an epidemic in the classroom through the neglect of speech. If speech was taught at all, it was badly done by teachers whose own pronunciation was inadequate. Partly as a result of the emphasis on writing, much of the grammatical information in the textbooks of the time was misleading. To writers like Victor and Sweet, it was essential that the learner's pronunciation should be correct before moving on to texts, and that these texts should be printed in a scientifically accurate system, not in the fairly traditional orthography. The principle of connected text was accepted and the use of translation was discouraged. The issue went deeper and raised

significant questions concerning the philosophy of language learning. From an educational point of view, connected texts on worthwhile topics were clearly preferable to the pointless sentences of traditional text books.

The last major principle of the Reform Movement was the importance of oral method in the class room, especially in the early stages of learning. The teacher was expected to speak foreign language as the normal means of class room communication.

The next reform milestone was the decision by Klinghardt to try out the new ideas using Sweets' <u>Elementar buch des gesprochenen Englische</u> (1885). The experiment began in the spring of 1887 and continued until the March of the following year. The work was divided into two semesters, and the pupils were 14 year old boys, all beginners in English, though they had done French for three years. He began his course with a two and a half week introduction to English pronunciation, including a listening and speech exercise, during which he began to introduce the non-phonetic notation. Klinghardt's instincts as a teacher told him that it was time to move on to the texts, and he began the first one in the third week of the course. The pronunciation was of central importance, so the class listened while the teacher read the sentence aloud a couple of times and repeated it until they could say it fluently. They also copied it down in the new notation. The meaning was glossed with an interlinear translation, and when it was thoroughly familiar, the new grammar

point was discussed and taught.

Though Sweets's sentences contained a large number of potential grammar points only one was selected for teaching purposes.

After the first month, Klinghardt began to teach the children how to ask and answer comprehension questions on the texts and also how to extend them to topics in their own lives and experiences. Klinghardt made the transaction to traditional orthography at the beginning of the second semester. The class was introduced to writing for the first time: copying, writing answers to questions and so on. By the end of the first year they had made good progress in their knowledge of the language, but the really remarkable difference was the confidence with which they used the spoken language.

The Reform Movement offered language something it could hardly refuse – a scientific approach. The leaders of the movement were concerned with the educational implications of the appalling teaching methods of the time, and phonetics offered both a scientific foundation for their reformist zeal and practical technique for bringing about the improvements in the class room that they were looking for. The Reform of language teaching was a moral issue for all the members of the reform movement, but in particular for Paul Passy, a devout Christian and a dedicated teacher. During his early years as a teacher Passy devised a private phonetic alphabet, and impressed by its usefulness in the classroom drew together a small group of other like-minded

language teachers to discuss how such ideas could be expanded for the general good. The group called themselves the 'Phonetic Teachers Association'. Jesperson, Victor and Sweet joined the association in 1886, only a few months after its formation. They published a joined journal called <u>The Phonetic Teacher</u>, and in 1897 the association took its final title, the International Phonetic Association (IPA).

Henry Sweet proved his pursuit of excellence with the publication of a paper on old English by the prestigious philosophical society, in his first year at Oxford in 1869. He later became President of the society, and was closely involved in the early history of <u>Oxford English Dictionary</u>. Sweet's greatest contribution to the development and reform of language teaching grew out of a paper with almost the same title, delivered to the philosophical society on the occasion of the presidential address by James Murray, the first editor of the <u>Oxford English Dictionary</u>, in May 1884.

Sweet's overall aim in <u>The Practical Study of Languages</u> was to devise a rationally progressive method of practical language study. It included the teaching and learning of foreign languages in schools and was also intended as a comprehensive general view of the whole field. The first section deals with the teaching of phonetics and its practical application in pronunciation teaching and the use of transcription. The next part deals with the methodological principles and practices covering the five major areas of practical language

learning: grammar, vocabulary, the study of text, translation and conversation. The book closes with a series of essays on specific topics such as the study of a foreign literature, the learning of classical languages and the investigation of unwritten languages.

It is well known that Sweet is the starting point for Shaw's Henry Higgins in <u>Pygmalion</u>. There were two passions in Sweet's life: Phonetics and England. Sweet was uncompromising in that all study of language must be based on 'Phonetics'.

At the heart of Sweet's approach was the partnership between Linguistics and Psychology that he had announced at the close of his 1884 paper. Sweet adopted the theory of psychology which was dominant at the end of the 19th Century, namely 'associationism'. Following the associationist principle meant that the learner's central task was to form and maintain correct associations both between linguistic elements within the language, and between these elements and the outside world. Fluency in the spoken language implied the establishment of well-practised associations along the stream of speech in the production of intelligible utterances. Only a connected, coherent text allowed the learner to form and strengthen the correct association, and only after it had been thoroughly studied and assimilated, the teacher should draw generalizations, grammar points and vocabulary items out of it.

Sweet's system of grading was based on a functional typology of texts,

starting from descriptive ones, moving to narrative, and finally, dialogues. Descriptions fulfilled his four criteria for good teaching texts: they were direct, clear, simple, and familiar. Sweet drew his methodology in a graded curriculum consisting of five stages. First, there was the 'mechanical stage' during which the learner concentrated on acquiring a good pronunciation and becoming familiar with phonetic transcription. During the second stage, 'grammatical stage', the learner began to work on the texts, gradually building up his knowledge of the grammar and acquiring a basic vocabulary. The third, 'idiomatic stage' dealt almost exclusively with the learner's lexical development. This completed the basic course, while stages four and five, 'literary stage' and 'archaic stage' were university level studies devoted to literature and philology. In modern eyes, Sweet's curriculum seems excessively linguistic. Sweet's work established an applied linguistic tradition in language teaching which has continued uninterruptedly to the present day.

Natural Methods of Language Teaching from Montaigne to Berlitz

The communication language teaching methods which have attracted a great deal of interest recently had appealed to the imagination of teachers for a very long time, and were revived about one and a half centuries ago by the native speaking immigrant teachers in America. These ideas have been known by a variety of names: natural Methods, Conversation Method, Direct Method, Communication Approach, and so on.

The class room technique associated with them have also changed from time to time, but the underlying philosophy has remained constant. Learning how to speak a new language is not a process which can be organized in a step-by-step manner following graded syllabus. It is an intuitive process for which human beings have a natural capacity that can be awakened, provided only that the proper conditions exist. There are three such conditions, some one to talk to, something to talk about, and a desire to understand and make yourself understood. 'Interaction' is the basis of natural foreign language acquisition. The early example of natural foreign language teaching is the story of Michael de Montaigne in the 16th century. His father, in order to bring him up as a native speaker of Latin, put him under an inviolable rule that none should utter in his presence anything but Latin words.

Natural language learning was common place before 1800 because of the preference of having children educated at home. The application of 'natural methods' to the teaching of larger groups presents different problems. J.S.Blackie, a nineteenth century Scots professor of Latin and Greek, included the account of an early 16th century 'direct method' lesson in an article he wrote for the <u>Foreign Quarterly Review</u> in 1845. Blackie's four points sum up everything that has been said about natural or direct methods of language teaching. Teach the spoken language first, relate the words of the new language directly to their referents in their outside world, practice, and work as hard as

possible to gain and keep the learner's interest. Having pointed out where existing methods fall down on each of the four points, Blackie outlines his eighteen-step syllabus for a well-ordered system of language study.

The modern tradition of natural approaches originated in the work and example of a teacher of genius, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827). For many people the famous 'object lessons' represented the Pestalozzian 'method' which was not what he had in mind, but it was at least a concrete idea that could be used. They provided a workable system for elementary classes (this is a book It is red. It is on the table etc.), but it was difficult to know what to do once the objects failed to provide sufficiently complex stimuli for linguistic activities. Claude Marcel (1793–1876) was attracted to the notion, but considered it suitable only for younger pupils, and the Direct Method gradually comes to end around the intermediate level. One of the most valuable contributions of modern communicative methodology has been to provide a framework for the development of more advanced linguistic activities, to pickup where the direct method leaves off.

In South Germany, a school teacher called Gottlieb Heness applied the object lesson technique to the teaching of standard German to his dialect speaking pupils. His success encouraged him to think of broadening the method to the teaching of German as a foreign language. He set up a language school of his own. For commercial reasons he needed to offer French as well

as German and looked around for a native-speaking Frenchman to join him in the venture. He found an extraordinary man called Lambert Sauveur, who had immigrated to the United States some time in the late 1860s. He ran a French course along Heness's lines for faculty members at Yale. Sauveur and Heness moved to Boston in 1869 and opened a school of modern languages in the city. It prospered, and five years later they described their ideas and experiences in two related publications, one by Sauveur for French and the other an adaptation for German by Heness. It is Sauveur's work, <u>An Introduction to the Teaching of Living Languages Without Grammar or Dictionary</u> (1874) that has survived. Sauveur's 'Introduction' was originally intended as a kind of 'Teacher's manual' to accompany his 'course book', <u>Causeries avec mes eleves</u> (1874). 'Causeries' was not what we would now understand by a textbook. It consists of a series of idealized conversations such as might have taken place in Sauveur's classroom during the course of a lesson. Sauveur's students did not start the book until they had spent at least a month entirely on intensive oral work in class. Sauveur was a gifted and immensely enthusiastic language teacher, utterly committed to his vocation.

The Sauveur–Heness School of Modern languages caused a great deal of interest, locally at first and then nationally. Within a decade or so, the Natural Method, as the Sauveur approach was known, had become the most seriously considered new development in language teaching in America.

'Natural Method' had started well and attracted professional interest and support. What they needed now was a vehicle, which would bring them to the customers. The ordinary schools would never have adopted 'Natural Methods'. The teachers would not have known what to do, and the parents would not have been able to compromise with the loss of prestige that 'ordinary conversation' implied. Natural method required schools of their own and someone who could feel the need of the moment. Immigrants were pouring into the United States, but they were the ordinary people. Like the Huguenots in the 16th century England, they needed to survive in their new environment and to cope with the problems of everyday life in a new language. The moment found the man in the person of Maximilian Berlitz, an immigrant. Without Sauveur, the direct method would not have happened when it did; without Berlitz, very few people would have benefited from it.

During the next thirty years, Berlitz built up a network of language schools, first in America and then back in Europe. His textbooks provided a framework that all Berlitz schools followed. He began with French and German (both in 1882), and English as a foreign language followed shortly afterwards. Berlitz was not an academic methodologist, but he was an excellent systematizer of basic language teaching materials organized on direct method lines'. The teacher's directions are very clear and straight-forward: no translation under any circumstances, a strong emphasis on oral work, avoidance

of grammatical explanation until late in the course, and the maximum use of question-and-answer techniques.

The best account of the Berlitz approach and the important role it played in the late 19th century adult education is contained in an article written by Pakscher for <u>Englische studies</u> (1895). Pakscher was the director of the Dresden School. The Berlitz English course was in two parts: each subdivided into two sections. The opening section of part I began with the objects in the class room. The second section of part I introduced simple texts, which were continued along with everyday dialogues, in part II. Most of the class work consisted of question-and-answer activities in a foreign language. Compared with Sauveur's initiative style, the Berlitz Method was simple, systematic, and ordered.

The Teaching of English as a Foreign or Second Language since 1900

During the first half of the 20th century, the teaching of English emerged as an autonomous profession. In due course, further distinct specializations came up, notably the teaching of English as a second language. The foundation for this autonomy rested on the two reforming traditions inherited from the previous century; the applied linguistic approach of the Reform Movement and the monolingual methodology of the direct method. The force behind it was the work of Harold Palmer, in the Department of Phonetics at University College, London, between 1915 and 1922.

During the nineteenth century there was an assumption that English should be taught in Colonial Schools in the same way as in the mother country. There was no provision for language work specially designed to help the non-native learner, and school grammars like those of J.C.Nesfield, which were meant for British youngsters to get through Oxford and Cambridge Local Examination, were exported in large numbers to the Colonies. By the twenties an idea emerged that English was a second language, though it was not until the fifties that the modern distinction between English as a 'foreign' and a 'second' language became wide spread.

The use of a monolingual approach to language teaching was so distinct that it set apart ELT from foreign language teaching in Britain. There was a general consensus that translation should be avoided as far as possible, but that it was helpful from time to time.

It was only after 1960, with the sudden growth of EFL and ESL activity in Britain, that a sense of unity and confidence began to merge in English language teaching. There are four phases of professional development since 1900; a foundation phase, a research and development phase, a phase of consolidation and a final phase in which there has been variation, and adaptation to rapid changes of circumstance.

The first steps towards the new profession was taken in 1906 when Daniel Jones persuaded the University of London to permit him to give a

series of public lectures on the phonetics of French. The success of these lectures led to further courses for local school teachers and others, with an additional one in phonetics of English. Courses specifically for overseas students of English started next, and in 1910, the programme was expanded to include spoken English grammar. This was the course Harold Palmer was invited to take over in 1915. Daniel Jones published the series of works which became indispensable source-books for every English language teacher. The Pronunciation of English (1909), The English Pronouncing Dictionary (1917), and the Outline of English Phonetics (1918) are some of them. In 1917, Palmer published The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages. Palmer had started his career at London University with a series of lectures to local school teachers on language teaching methodology, the content of which formed the basis for the 'scientific study'.

Broadly speaking the twenties were a decade of research, the thirties of development. Palmer spent seven years in Japan working towards two objectives. The first was the realization of principles of the Oral Method. He devised various types of oral drills and exercises which he tried with the help of his daughter Dorothee and published through the Institute for Research in English Teaching (IRET) of which he was the Director. At the same time, Palmer was working on his vocabulary research. Vocabulary research was also the principal objective of Michael West who was working in Bengal, in India.

West carried out the most extensive study of English language needs, the results of which were published in a lengthy report, <u>Bilingualism, with special reference to Bengal,</u> in 1926. Palmer and West worked together to produce the so-called <u>Carnegie Report</u> on vocabulary selection in 1936, thereafter, there was a rush of publications.

Though palmer and West dominated the inter-war period, there were others whose work, while less profilic, was important. The first was a teacher and textbook writer called Lawrence Faucett, whose career followed a similar pattern to Palmer's. Faucett, taught English as a foreign language in a number of countries overseas, in particular, China. He collaborated with Itsu Mabi on a study of word-frequency counts for English which was published in Tokyo in 1932 under the title <u>A study of English Word-Values</u>. At the same time, in the late twenties, he developed the first large-scale direct-method course for English as a foreign language, which was published by Oxford University Press as <u>The Oxford English Course</u> (1933). It established a pattern which was widely copied later.

On his return from overseas, Faucett joined the staff of the Institute of Education at London University and, in 1932 he started the first training course for teachers of English as a foreign language. The institute played an important role three years later by hosting the London meeting of the Carnegie Conference, Faucett himself being one of the principal contributors, along

with West, Palmer, and Thorndike. Then came C.E.Esckersley (1893 – 1967) who came into English as a foreign language part time evening class teacher at the associated Polytechnic Institute. He began his publishing career with a literary anthology (England and the English, 1932) and a grammar (A Concise English Grammar for Foreign Students, 1933). His reputation rests on the course he began in the late 30's Essential English for Foreign Students. His success encouraged him to leave school teaching in 1943 and devote himself full-time to material writing.

Eckersley was engaged in the teaching of English to foreign residents in Britain, or visiting the country temporarily. His classes were in the main multilingual groups of European adults who needed English for a variety of utilitarian purposes. His students provided Eckersley with the situation round which Essential English was constructed. In the thirties, the political developments brought a growing stream of refugees from countries in central Europe. A large number of them were well-educated, literate adults who need the practical spoken language of everyday life in England which was not reflected in the simple reading materials of the new method or in the vocabulary research that underlay them. The vocabulary of Essential English included everyday items. Essential English in various editions stood the test of time and remained one of the leading EFL courses for around thirty years. There is a striking similarity between authors like Eckersley and the refugee

textbook writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Both were attempting to help learners in similar unfortunate circumstances.

Another example of a writer whose research in the twenties developed and continued in the following decade was C.K. Ogden whose principal publication in the field, Basic English, appeared in 1930. By the time war broke out in 1939, the first steps towards a professional organization in English as a Foreign language had been taken. The establishment of the 'British Committee' for relations with other countries, renamed the British Council the following year, was of great significance.

The existence of the council and its network of British Institutes and other centres played an important role in re-establishing a sense of purpose and direction after 1945.

One of the achievements of the British council was the publication of a professional journal. The first issue appeared in October 1946 under the title English language Teaching, a periodical devoted to the teaching of English as a foreign language. The journal became a quarterly from volume VI (1951) onwards and in 1961 the responsibility for publications was shared with Oxford University Press. Since 1972 it has been published under the slightly different title of English Language Teaching Journal (ELTJ). Even though the postwar years was a difficult period for the British council, its future was assured by the intervention of the government. The council was able to play a

more active role, including the provision of advanced training. It assisted in the setting up of a school of Applied Linguistics at the university of Edinburgh under the directorship of J.C. Catford, and with the close involvement of David Abercrombie of the Department of Phonetics. The Edinburgh example was followed at Leeds University, and many other universities followed suit in the late sixties.

The innovative initiative in the teaching of English passed to the United States, in particular to Fries's English Language Institute at Michigan University. The impact of American thinking was not felt in Britain till the late fifties. In the meantime West published his General Service List of English Words in 1953, based on the Carnegie project. Palmer died in 1949, but his tradition was carried on by Hornby with a number of publications, including the famous Advanced Learner's Dictionary.

In Britain, signs of change started to appear, which would hit the profession in the sixties. There was, for example, the notion that adult learners with specific purposes in learning English would benefit from courses written specially for them. The special purpose idea itself was familiar enough from the many Commercial English manuals that had been a feature of the language teaching scene since the Nineteenth century. Now the principle was to be taken further into technical English and other specializations. Mackin and Weinberger's course for Spanish speaking doctors was an early example.

Though the emphasis was on the linguistic characteristics of medical texts rather than the use of language for professional purposes, which is the current focus in English for specific purposes, a start has been made.

The advancement of technology also brought changes in the teaching techniques. The gramaphone had played a role in language teaching for sometime. The arrival of long playing records in the early fifties solved some of the problems. With the coming of the tape recorders in the mid-fifties any extensive use of recording in class became practical. The language laboratory itself did not arrive in Britain till the next decade, but the pioneer work had been carried out in America long before that. By 1949, Kiddle had developed a laboratory at Michigan in which six students could work together, each using two machines, one for listening and the other for personal recording. By the end of the decade laboratories were sufficiently common in America for Edward M. Stack to publish his immensely influential manual on the subject, The language Laboratory and Modern Language Teaching (1960), and three years later A.S. Hayes prepared a technical report for the United States Government called Language Laboratory Facilities (1963).

A start had also been made in other areas of communication technology. 'English by Radio', for instance, had been set up during the war with the short five-minute lessons that began transmission in 1943. It expanded into an important service in the years that followed. Of the audio-visual system only

film offered anything substantial, but it was expensive and there were practical difficulties in arranging for its use in schools. The real breakthrough in language teaching technology came from France with the development of the audio-visual courses, which used the tape recorder and the film strip in a system that required a minimum of classroom description. In the sixties, then appeared a phase of controversy when the Palmerian tradition was faced with a theoretical challenge. The absence in Britain, of professional associations and the journals other than ELT meant that new ideas in linguistics, applied linguistics, the psychology of learning, and so on, were relatively unknown outside specialist circles. American developments were reported in the Michigan based journal Language Learning, but its circulation was limited, and they were largely ignored in ELT. The sudden unloading in the sixties of advanced training in applied linguistics, such as pattern practice, the structural syllabus, the language laboratory, and programmed learning, all pioneered in America in the fifties created excitement in Britain.

Far-reaching changes affecting the relationship between Britain and the rest of the world began to gather force from the late fifties onwards, bringing a radical shift in priorities for English language teaching. Of the greatest importance was the transformation of English from the language of imperial power and administration to a new role which was more localized and more pervasive. Each newly independent nation was to work out for itself a status

which the former colonial language would be given in the new nation. The basic contrast between learning English as a foreign language for external communication and as a second language for specialized internal functions became sharper. The crucial decision was whether to retain English as the medium of secondary and higher education: some countries such as Nigeria maintained an English-medium policy for reasons of national unity, while others such as Malaysia, pursued a national language policy.

Another outcome of the post-colonial change in the third world was the emigration of a substantial number of people to Britain, attracted by opportunities. An important step was taken in 1966 with the decision to set up materials development project at the university of Leeds Institute of Education to design a programme of English for immigrant, primary school children. The resulting materials, called 'scope' pioneered new ideas in the integration of language teaching with the purposes of educational development and became the forerunners of many activity-based techniques.

Such projects set the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) along a path which was quite distinct from that of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). By the late seventies TESL had formed a National Association for the Teaching of ESL to adults (NATESLA 1978).

As Ogden and others had recognized forty years earlier, English was the lingua franca of modern science and technology. The redefinition of English in

the common wealth, and the expansion of English as a world auxiliary language required a more precise definition of those aspects of English language education. But in 1970, English was also the language of transnational commerce, finance and practical communication, generally. With the assistance of sponsoring bodies such as the British council, high-level training was made possible for both commonwealth and non-commonwealth students to gain specialist qualification. There was a marked increase in students for whom specialized courses of English were required which would relate to their particular need. This led to the rapid development in the seventies of English for special, more recently, specific purposes (ESP).

ESP in the modern sense could be said to have begun in 1969 with the publication of a conference report called Languages for Special Purposes. Mackin's book for doctors', A modern course in Business English (1963/66), by Howatt, Webb, and Knight, Close's The English We use for Science (1965), the BBC's project The Scientist Speaks (1967) and Ewer and Latorre's course in Basic Scientific English (1968), are all significant contributions.

The communicative philosophy of the seventies encouraged different approaches to ESP. One was the stress on the communicative activities and skills. This approach concentrated on the importance of training useful communicative strategies for reading, listening to lectures etc. Although ESP has been largely a British initiative, there has also been interesting work in

America, notably by Trimple and Selenker in the occupational purposes field.

English Language Teaching Methods in India

No proper document is available which makes a detailed survey of ELT methods in schools and colleges in India during this century. An idea of the general situation can be attained from certain sources like government reports, popular texts on the teaching of English in use in training colleges, and the personal experience of those who went to school in twenties and thirties.

The methods most popularly used in Indian schools at the beginning of the century was The Grammar Translation method. The teaching of formal grammar was emphasized during this period. Memorising the rules of grammar through drilling and translating a passage given in the students' mother tongue into English, and vice versa, was very common.

Another important method of teaching English in Indian Schools was the Direct Method. The first book advocating the use of this method in India was P.C.Wrenn's (1913) The Direct Teaching of English in Indian Schools. Otto Jesperson (1956), H. Palmer (1964), and M.S.H. Thomson and H.G.Wyatt (1960) popularized the direct method in training colleges. The direct method was accepted at the official level also. Some of the characteristics of this methods were oral work, complete exclusion of the use of the students' mother tongue, the sentence as a unit of speech and inductive teaching of grammar. The exclusion of the mother tongue was looked upon by the teachers

as the most useful technique. The successful implementation of this technique required competent teachers, those who had themselves good command of written and spoken English. The direct method brought about the weakening of the teaching of formal grammar. It encouraged speaking skill but other skills like reading and writing did not receive the desired attention.

During the years 1920–1940 a great deal of work was done in America and Europe in the field of vocabulary selection. Lists ranging from Thorndike's Teachers Word Book (1921) to the Carnagie Interim Report on Vocabulary Selection (1930) were compiled. In the field of reading, Michel West published his Bilinguilism in 1926; and the Experiments and Studies in Modern Language Teaching by Coleman and Fife was published in 1934. Both these publications emphasized the importance of reading. Michel West also published his New Method Readers based on his ideas on vocabulary selection and the importance he gave to the systematic teaching of reading. The period was marked by innovative work in the fields of vocabulary selection and reading.

In the 1930s the methods of Michael West and H. Palmer were steadily gaining progress. The second world war and the independence of India, naturally checked the pace of progress of English teaching.

The development in the field of foreign languages teaching that took place during the forties in the USA and UK had far reaching influence on ELT

in India in the following decades. In America during the Second World War the first widespread application of structural linguistics to foreign language teaching was made in the Army Specialised Training programme (ASTP). The ASTP provided intensive courses in various languages, emphasizing the ability to speak the language and understand it when spoken by native speakers.

At the University of Michigan Charles Fries developed his Oral Approach. The underlying principles of this approach are clearly enumerated in his book Teaching And Learning English As a Foreign Language (1945). Apart from the emphasis on oral use of the language, the approach also developed the idea that the structure of the mother tongue and English should be compared to determine the points where they differed. These differences, which can be called the mother tongue interference, were considered to be the chief source of difficulty in learning a second language.

I.A. Richards and C.M. Gibson came out with The Graded Direct Method during the same period. According to I.A. Richards language teaching method was an arrangement of graded sentence-situation units forming an organic sequence in which each step was defined as one in which it was used. In Britain, at the Institute of Education, University of London, a methodology similar to Richards graded-Direct Method was developed in the late forties. The methodology laid emphasis on the selection and grading of structures and formed specific criteria for grading. It encouraged oral drilling of graded

structural items within a limited vocabulary.

After Michael West left India, there has not been any systematic thinking in the field of English-language teaching in the country during the next two decades. Until the mid-forties most of the principles associated with the various movements had made little impact on the ELT situation in the country. Until then, courses and examination remained unaffected by the principles and practices associated with the pioneering work of Jesperson, Palmer, West and their successors. It is surprising that Michael West with his Bilingualism and New method Readers failed to have any impact on either the construction of 'Readers' or the methods of vocabulary teaching. Officially the Direct Method was advocated, but everywhere, except in English medium schools, Grammar – Translation was the method practised.

In 1950s, however, as a result of the changed position of English in the country, the need was felt for the improvement of materials and methods of teaching English at all levels. As a recognition of this need, the Central Institute of English at Hyderabad and other English language teaching institutes were established to train teachers and produce modern teaching materials.

The structural approach to the teaching of English received wide acceptance, upheld the principles of structural grading, vocabulary control, oral situational presentation, and repeated practice for establishment. Through

rigorous control it led to systematic organization of language materials. This period has been the most eventful in the history of ELT in India. New syllabuses and new instructional materials, organization of systematic in-service training and the setting up of English language institutes were all introduced during this period.

The seventies brought new challenges to the ELT methodologists. The changed context and the consequent reassessment of objectives and syllabus reforms demanded fresh and realistic thinking on the choice of a method.

The efficiency of a method depends upon factors, which vary from place to place and situation to situation. The challenge today is to give consideration to priorities and to base new strategies in the realities of the situation. Emphasis has to be given to the achievement of various skills depending on the objectives to be achieved.

Note: The historical information was invariably cited in A.P.R. Howatt

Comprehension and Communication

Chapter 2

Comprehension and Communication

Comprehension as Defined in Bloom's Taxonomy

According to Bloom, probably the largest general class of intellectual abilities and skills emphasized in schools and colleges are those which involve comprehension.

> When students are confronted with a communication, they are expected to know what is being communicated and to be able to make some use of the material embodied on paper. For instance, we commonly expect comprehension of a physics demonstration, a geologic formation viewed on a field trip, a building illustrating a particular architectural feature, a musical work played by an orchestra. And, of course, we speak of comprehension of the above phenomena when presented in verbal, pictorial, or symbolic form on paper (Bloom 89).

Although the term 'comprehension' has been often associated with reading, it is put to a broader sense by which it is related to a greater variety of communication than that included by written materials. It means, the use of the term is more limited than usual, since comprehension is not meant to be a

complete understanding or the full grasp of the idea.

> Here we are using the term "comprehension" to include those
>
> objectives, behaviours or responses which represent an
>
> understanding of the literal message contained in a
>
> communication. In reaching such understanding, the student may
>
> change the communication in his mind in his overt responses to
>
> some parallel form more meaningful to him. There may also be
>
> responses which represent simple extensions beyond what is
>
> given in the communication itself (89).

Bloom considers three types of comprehension behaviour. Translation,

Interpretation and Extrapolation. Translation means that an individual can put a

communication "into other language, into other terms, or into other form of

communication" (Bloom 89). It often involves the giving of meaning to the

various parts of a communication, taken in isolation, even if such meanings

may sometimes be determined by the context in which they appear.

Interpretation deals with communication as a "configuration of ideas

whose comprehension may require a reordering of the ideas into a new

configuration in the mind of the individual" (Bloom 90). This also consists of

considering the comparative importance of the ideas, their interrelationships,

and their relevance to generalizations implied or described in the original

communication. We find manifestations of interpretation behaviour in the

inferences, generalizations, or summarizations produced by the individual. It differs from analysis, application, or evaluation.

The third type of behaviour under comprehension is extrapolation. It includes the making of estimates or predictions based on understanding of the trends, tendencies, or conditions described in the communication. It may also involve the making of inferences with respect to implications, consequences, corollaries and effects which are in accordance with the conditions described in the communication (89).

Translation comprises (1) translation from one level of abstraction to another (2) translation from symbolic form to another form, or vice-versa, and (3) translation from one verbal form to another. The first is the ability "to translate a problem given in technical or abstract phraseology into concrete or less abstract phraseology – state the problem in your own words". It is also the ability to translate a long part of a communication into "briefer or more abstract terms", and it is also the "ability to translate an abstraction, such as some general principle, by giving an illustration or sample."

The second is the "ability to translate relationships expressed in symbolic form, including illustrations, maps, tables, diagrams, graphs, and mathematical and other formulas, to verbal form and vice versa." It also includes the ability to translate the given geometric concepts into visual or

spatial terms". The ability to prepare graphical representations of physical phenomena or of observed or recorded data, the ability to read musical scores and the ability to read an architectural plan also come under this.

The third is the ability "to translate non-literal statements (metaphor, symbolism, irony, exaggeration) to ordinary English". It also includes the ability to comprehend the significance of the particular words of a poem in the light of their context, and also the ability to translate (with or without a dictionary) foreign language prose or poetry into good English.

The essential behaviour in interpretation is that when given a communication the student can identify and comprehend the major ideas which are included in it as well as understand their interrelations. This requires a good sense of judgement and caution to avoid reading into the document one's own ideas and interpretations.

> Accurate extrapolation requires that the reader be able to
>> translate as well as interpret the document, and in addition, must be able to extend the trends or tendencies beyond the given data and findings of the document .... Extrapolation requires that the reader be well aware of the limits within which the communication is posed as well as the possible limits within which it can be extended. The reader must recognize that an extrapolation can only be an inference which has some degree of

probability – certainty with respect to extrapolation is rare (96).

Extrapolation includes:

The ability to deal with the conclusions of a work in terms of the immediate inference from the explicit statements.

The ability to draw conclusion and state them effectively.

Skill in predicting continuation of trends.

Skill in interpolation where there are gaps of data.

The ability to estimate or predict consequences of courses of action described in a communication.

The ability to be sensitive to factors which may render prediction inaccurate.

The ability to distinguish consequences which are only relatively probable from those for which there is a high degree of probability.

The ability to differentiate value judgements from predictions of consequences (96).

Comprehension and Communication:

What the Researcher Means by the Terms

The term 'comprehension', as envisaged by the researcher in this work, comprises the language skills of listening and reading. Listening becomes a skill when the learners are able to listen with understanding; so also, reading

with understanding is different from reading without receiving the effects of this reception skill. The term 'communication' involves the two productive skills, speaking and writing. In other words, it entails the learners' ability to express what they wish to express through writing and speech. Hence 'Comprehension and Communication' as termed in this work, relate to the four major language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Comprehension in the U.G. classes

Comprehension should be the first step to language learning in the class room because reading and listening without comprehension is a useless activity. Good comprehension involves clear understanding of the material used for reading, and it includes proficiency of associating written symbols with the thoughts hidden behind them. Better comprehension takes place when the reader has overcome the difficulties of a vocabulary of unfamiliar words, grammatical structures, concepts and ideas, and precisely this is what does not happen in the undergraduate classes today. Comprehension deficiency is regarded as a matter of concern by the teachers of English because the communication activities of most of the students today exhibit a severe dearth of language skills. They lack comprehension of the subject, either the matter or the manner, or both. If ever they comprehend anything they are not able to express it in writing as they are deficient in the communication skills. Therefore, it is essential to place greater emphasis on the understanding of

what they read, and the communication of what they understand.

If a student is able to comprehend a passage in English by himself, we rate his comprehending ability as good, and his sense of target language as adequate to assist him in comprehending the documents given in the target language. What happens in the U.G. classroom today is not an attempt to improve the comprehension skills. Because of one constraint or other, the teacher, instead of becoming a facilitator of comprehension competence, serves as a crutch for comprehension. Once the crutch is removed the learner is unable to comprehend on his own.

The present system of the teachers providing in capsule form, the content of the text book, and the students memorizing the text as given by the teacher, is a hindrance to developing the comprehension competence. The learning of the target language in a more fruitful way can be promoted only if this system is changed and the learners are made to comprehend the text on their own, the teacher aiding them in the process and instilling the confidence to reinforce the language use. In the present system the language does not register itself naturally in the learner's mind because the text book is not used to learn the language, but only as a means to pass the examination. Paraphrasing and translation cannot produce much learning. The texts have to be used to create some interaction in the classroom, the reader has to visualize an experience of his own while dealing with a particular text.

Skills Involved in Comprehension

Eddie C. Kennedy (320) has convincingly grouped the skills involving comprehension under five headings:

1. Understanding word meaning

2. Locating facts and information

3. Retaining and relating facts and information

4. Understanding and interpreting concepts

5. Organizing and expressing ideas

Understanding word meaning

A knowledge of the meaning of words is basic to comprehending any material. Our students who do not have a sufficient ground for using oral language are at a loss to understand the reading materials provided, because there is a direct relationship between familiarity with oral language and comprehension of reading material. Hence, in the context of our U.G. classes the background for comprehension has to be laid with vocabulary development. One page of prose, poetry, drama or novel in the prescribed text books display a variety of words – nouns, verbs, articles, prepositions and a number of structures, which, if properly taught and learnt can improve the vocabulary and grammar of the students. But the rote-learning for the examination takes the teachers and students in a different direction.

The most important basis of understanding and interpreting is the knowledge of the literal meaning of words. Therefore, for improving comprehension it is essential to develop an awareness for word meanings and their use. The students come across a number of new words in their texts everyday, but an attempt is not made to retain the words in the reportoire of vocabulary. They are neither aware of the importance of a sound vocabulary in comprehension, nor do the teachers emphasize the relevance of words as carriers of meaning.

Locating facts and ideas

The subsequent progress in comprehension depends on the pupils' ability to locate factual information and content contained in the text. Instruction with planning, and supervision with practice are necessary for the development of this competence. Developing the skills of understanding will take place only if the learners follow directions and complete the individual assignment. Often, this does not happen in the classroom. Teaching and learning 'comprehension' is not taken seriously by the teachers or learners, and lack of attention when directions are given is very common. Supportive instruction from the teacher in the first few assignments will provide much help.

Retaining and relating facts and information

Isolated facts and ideas convey meaning only when they are correlated,

and there should be a co-relation with the experience background also. The co-relation of facts and ideas is often taken for granted as the business of the teacher, and the students may or may not listen to the teacher at his will. Since the examination system does not demand much of this mental activity the students are complacent as long as they get 'ready made essays and answers' to the questions.

Understanding and interpreting information

The comprehension may still be incomplete unless the retained information and facts are understood and interpreted in the right perspective. Without proper understanding and interpretation, facts and information cannot be practically applied to situations and needs. Faulty understanding and wrong interpretation of facts and information may even be harmful to future learning.

Organizing and expressing ideas

It is important that facts and information in any discipline like Science, History, Mathematics or Philosophy are arranged in proper order. Lack of success in expressing facts and information arrests the process of understanding and retention. Hence the two abilities of organizing and expressing ideas are also involved in the basic abilities in comprehension.

Reading Comprehension

Relevance of reading comprehension

As early as 1956, the Official Language Commission stressed the need

for the teaching of English mainly as a 'language of comprehension ....

> as to develop in the students learning it a faculty for
> comprehending writings in the English language, more especially
> those relating to the subject-matter of their specialized fields of
> study (Official Language Commission 75).

The Kunzru Committee appointed by the U.G.C. (1957) repeated the same view by saying that "for the majority, the primary aim of learning English may be the ability to read and comprehend" (2). Again, the Working Group appointed by the U.G.C. (1961) stressed the importance of developing reading efficiency in students. "Students must get into the habit of reading journals.... Every student doing anything more than the most elementary type of work must continue to depend for a long time on journals published in English" (UGC Working Group Report 15).

Both the English Review Committee (1965), appointed by the U.G.C., and the Study Group (1967), appointed by the Ministry of Education rebound to the familiar theme of learning English primarily as a language of comprehension. The former very clearly says:

> The pupil must learn the language well enough to be able to read
> books in English in his subjects of study. Even if he does not
> specialize to any very high degree, he will find it necessary to
> read books, journals etc, on his subjects in English. Further, he

should be able to read non-specialized, non-academic books in English, because even now no Indian language is in a position to replace English as India's 'window on the world' (English Review Committee 7).

The various committees' assessment of the situation has been in force for some time, and what is expected of the majority of our pupils is to learn the language well enough to be able to read books in English. More than two score years have passed since these important pronouncements have been made by the committees, yet the U.G. students do away with the texts and go to the guides. Very little reading takes place in the classroom because the students are not given chances to read, it is the teacher who does the reading. Skills can be acquired only through practice, which the teachers cannot do for the pupils. They have got to do it for themselves, which means that the good teacher of language, should spend a great deal of his time listening, reading and not talking. Practice is vital, which means that the teacher must give his pupils as much opportunity for the correct practice of language skills and as little opportunity as possible to make mistakes.

A good reader

Many specific abilities have been listed by reading experts as conducive to development in reading – "physical and mental health, sight and hearing, intelligence, home and background experience, desire to read, interest in

reading, purposes for reading, reading skills and so on." (Narayanaswamy 10).
Though it is a frighteningly long list which makes one wonder whether anything
worthwhile could be done under classroom conditions, it does not mean that
training in reading at the college class room is unprofitable. The teacher is the
key agent in the promotion of reading skills and reading habits.

Before World War I, a student passed the test as a good reader if he
could read aloud with due attention to the pronunciation and articulation of the
words and to the modulation of his voice. It was G.L. Farnham who made a
notable exception to this, making a convincing appeal for 'eye-reading' as he
called it:

> The object in teaching should be to make every pupil an eye-
> reader – to give him the ability to look directly through the
> written expression to the meaning, or to at once detect the
> unknown elements that prevent the accomplishment of this
> object …(qtd. in Diack 81).

Farnham's vital point was to "change the function of the eye – not to
look upon the printed characters as objects to be recognized for their own
sake". The reader should get at the thought straight from the printed page.
Edward Fry holds a similar view. According to him, the reader should go as
directly as possible to the author's idea. "He should not be a proof-reader and
worry about spelling, he should not be a radio announcer and worry about

pronunciation, he should be a mind-reader and try to determine quickly and efficiently what the author had in mind" (Fry 41).

Fry's emphasis is on 'thought-getting' (Fry 41) in the process of reading. Charles C. Fries, the linguist and the linguistically oriented teacher, on the other hand, maintain that the shortest route to a reading knowledge is to learn the spoken language first. Harold Palmer is equally emphatic on the subject. To learn, however, the written form of the language before having learnt to assimilate the spoken form is unnatural and contrary to all our linguistic instincts (Palmer 16).

The spoken and written forms are two distinct, though interrelated modes of communication, each with its own distinctive features and functions. In certain situations of second-language teaching it may not be possible to teach all the four language skills equally well. An efficient reader is one who reads fast and comprehends well. The speed depends on the degree of difficulty presented by the material and the purpose for which it is read.

Conventional approaches to the teaching of reading seem to ignore the fact that we read for different purposes and that different kinds of skills are involved according to the reading task and types of reading. Though reading is not a new concept for the U.G. students many of them are not aware of the different purposes and types of reading. Teachers of English should be convinced of the importance of reading and should convince the students of it,

so that active co operation may be expected from them. There is no comprehensive definition for reading, but it is mainly a decoding process. The encoder (or writer) encodes the message while the decoder (the reader) decodes it and understands it. Decoding becomes meaningful only if it is followed by comprehension.

A reader can understand a text only when he makes reading an active process, making use of his mental faculties involving his/her knowledge of the writing system (graphemes), knowledge of the language (morphology, syntax and semantics), ability to interpret, the knowledge and experience of the world around, a reason for reading, and a reading style suitable for it.

What we read can be basically classified into two categories – reading for pleasure or for information. When we read for the former purpose, pleasure takes over the primary importance and the information we get in the process, is only secondary. But when we read for information, we want to get some information which is essential for our day-to-day planning.

Different Kinds of Reading

We read in different ways depending on the purpose for which we are reading a text:

a)   Skimming

Skimming is looking for the main ideas in the text, or looking over a text to get a general superficial idea of the content. This type of reading turns

out to be useful when we go to a book exhibition, when we try to find out what the book is about before we decide to buy it.

b)   Scanning

Scanning is looking quickly through the text searching for a specific piece of information. We use the technique of scanning when we look up the meaning of a particular word, or when we look up a telephone directory for a particular number.

c)   Extensive reading

When we aim at a global understanding of the content in a piece of writing we read rapidly, and then we employ the technique of extensive reading. Usually this is the type of reading that is used when the purpose of reading is for pleasure, for example, the reading of a novel.

d)   Intensive reading

When we read shorter texts, like a research paper, for extracting specific information we read slowly and intensively, which can be termed as intensive reading.

Silent Reading, Reading Speed Vs Reading Comprehension

The concept of reading skill acquires meaning, relevance and significance only when the learner is trained in Silent Reading, and Reading Speed Vs Reading Comprehension, besides the different types of reading.

Most of our day to day reading is done silently. When we read an article or an advertisement we are engaged in the process of deriving meaning from the text. We can derive meaning more efficiently by concentrating on meaning alone which is possible only in the case of silent reading. When we read aloud, our concentration is divided between reading and speaking. This makes reading much more difficult, resulting in problems of comprehension. As we have to train our learners in real-life reading, silent reading, which is a natural activity and which aids comprehension, has to be given priority.

A good reader is one who can vary his/her speed depending on the purpose of reading. He/she might read a novel at 400 words per minute but when it comes to reading a legal contract he/she could slow his/her rate to 80 words per minute. A less able reader tends to read all the texts slowly. He/she lacks the flexibility required to handle different kinds of reading materials for different purposes.

The speed of reading, therefore, should depend on the purpose for which we read and the level of comprehension we are aiming at.

Speed	Purpose	Good Reader
Slow	Study reading, used when material is difficult and/or high comprehension is required	200 – 300 words per minute (wpm) 80 – 90% comprehension
Average	used for everyday reading of magazines, newspapers etc.	250-500 wpm – 70% comprehension
Fast	skimming, used when highest speed is required; comprehension is intentionally lower	800+ wpm – 50% comprehension

(Richards, Platt and Weber 239)

Classroom Approaches to Reading

The most visible symptom of the deep-seated crisis in the language classroom is the lack of student involvement, and too much of teacher-centred activity. In the U.G. class the learners are seldom made aware of the different purposes of reading and the different types of reading. The teacher does all the reading in the classroom. We know that reading skills, like any other skills, can be acquired only when they are practised. It is the learners who have to practise, and the teacher has to give them practice.

The aim of a teacher in a reading class should be to enable the students to read unfamiliar texts on their own, at an appropriate speed and with reasonable comprehension. The learners will be willing to practise only if they are motivated to acquire these skills. Hence, motivation is very important in second language teaching. The teachers should make the learners feel the need

to learn English by making them aware of the importance of English in their day-to-do lives. Teaching of the reading skills becomes easy with a motivated group of learners.

The teachers of English in the U.G. classes have to remember that the 'learners should be taught to read'. During the composition hours, usually, the teacher just gives a passage, and asks to read the passage, and answer the questions that follow it. The truth that most of the learners need help, is often forgotten.

A reading class can be divided into three phases:

1) Pre-reading

2) While-reading

3) Post-reading (Kumar 49).

It is during the first phase that the teacher aims at arousing the learner's interest in the subject of the text. The teacher removes the hurdles in their path during this phase, and also tries to remove other textual difficulties like unfamiliar vocabulary. During the 'while-reading' stage the teacher can ask them to quickly go through the text and answer one or two guiding questions such as. "What is the theme of the passage?" The guiding questions aim at global comprehension, and give the learners an overview of the passage. After the learners answer the guiding questions, they should be made to read the passage again and answer questions which help them in detailed understanding.

The questions should help the learners in

- understanding explicitly stated information,

- inferring facts from given information, and

- forming their own views (reacting critically) on the

  subject (Kumar 50).

After reading, the learners either reflect upon what they have read or they relate the text to their background knowledge, interests or views. The teacher has to decide what type of post-reading activities s/he would like to give the learners. Depending on the nature of the text, the teacher can ask them

(1)   to think of a similar situation to that presented in the text

(2)   to say whether they agree with the view of the text.

(3)   To suggest solutions to the problem raised in the text

(4)   To transcode the information in the text (drawings and

        diagrams based on the text)   (Kumar 50)

Relevance of Reading Skill in the L_2 situation

English, as a second language, performs a very important role in India, and it is generally thought that the most important language skill for the Indian learner, is that of reading. Though the use of English may have become optional in colleges, state government official correspondences, and state service exams, it has assumed importance as a library language and as the 'window to the world'. Education in India is being partially imparted through the regional

medium, but learners find English inevitable to consult journals, encyclopedias and the materials containing information on the inventions and research findings in different fields. For this, they need to have a good reading skill, and the appropriate skill for the purpose.

Various Views on Reading

Reading is thinking under the stimulus of the printed page (Webster 30).

Reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game (Webster 19).

Reading comprehension is understanding a written text. Understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible (Grellet 3).

Gray (1967, in Webetsr 1982: 19) thinks that when we read something we understand at three levels: first is the purely literal responding to the graphic signals only, with little depth of understanding; at the second level the reader recognizes the author's meaning, and the third level is where the reader's own personal experiences and judgements influence his response to the text. The three levels are summed up as "reading the lines, reading between the lines and reading beyond the lines" (*qtd. in* Kumar 42).

It may be difficult to arrive at a comprehensive definition of reading,.

but it can be said that it is mainly a decoding process. The encoder encodes the message while the decoder decodes it and understands it.

```
┌─────────────┐        ┌───────────┐        ┌─────────────┐
│ encoder or  │ ────►  │  message  │  ◄──── │ decoder or  │
│   writer    │        │           │        │   reader    │
└─────────────┘        └───────────┘        └─────────────┘
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The encoder encodes the message and decoder decodes it, but the decoding is not much value if it is not followed by comprehension.

Reading can be described as a process of 'sight-sound-sense': it consists, essentially, on the decoding of a written (or printed) symbols on a page and attaching of meanings to them. Once the mechanics of reading have been mastered, it becomes a process of thinking under the stimulus of the printed page (Gosh and Das 1).

The Two Aspects of Reading

The first aspect is concerned with the mechanics of reading, and the second with the mental abilities. The mechanics involve the ability to recognize the written symbols which constitute the words and group of words, and the ability to decode these symbols at a fast rate, for which the reader needs (a) a sight-recognition vocabulary, (b) phonics, and (c) the skills of word analysis and structural analysis, and (d) the ability to read by sense- groups rather than individual words. (a) is the acquaintance with the visual symbols of

words, so that he/she is not interrupted by the occurrence of these words in a passage. (b) relates to the competence to relate the symbols to sounds, (c) is the knowledge of the morphology and syntax of the language, to understand the meanings of new words and groups of words. (for example, the readers' familiarity with the rules of word-formation, using prefixes or suffixes, should enable him to get the meaning of many new words), and (d) involves the ability to decode 'group of words' without much effort.

Unless trained properly in the mechanics of reading, the learners may tend to develop certain defects, which are:

1) the habit of 'pointing' at the words with a finger or pencil

2) habit of moving the head from side to side, instead of using 'eye movement'

3) uttering the words audibly, using lip movement

4) pronouncing the words mentally but not audibly

5) recognizing only one word per eye-fixation

6) regression, or backward eye-movement along a line

The fact that a number of text books are prescribed in the U.G. class simply implies the idea that developing the reading skills is one of the major priorities of the syllabus makers. Since it is not specifically mentioned, and also because the examination-system demands so, the teachers and students

refuse to read between the lines. The primary activity of a reading lesson should be 'learners reading texts'. What happens in the U.G. class room today is just the reverse, the teacher reads while the students are passive listeners. The job of the student now is not reading the text, not reading or writing answers to the comprehension questions, not discussing the content of the text, but just listening to the teacher. This is not to say that the teacher should not read at all, but it is a question of balance. The teacher has to be aware of the two different aspects of reading, which will make him bear in mind the importance of developing the mechanics of reading and the mental abilities. A part of the teachers' function in teaching to read is to help his students overcome the defects of reading. The students can be urged to increase their eye and memory spans simply by being pushed to read faster. Whenever the students are given a reading passage, they should be given a time limit, and should also be trained to do their private reading to a time limit.

The Mental Skills Involved in Reading

When we read a text, a number of skills are involved, the skills concerned with the location, identification, re-organization, interpretation, and evaluation of the points of information, and these skills comprise the skills of comprehension.

The comprehension of a given text involves a) global comprehension b) local comprehension c) referential comprehension d) reorganization of

information e) the ability to draw inferences from stated facts, f) prediction, and g) evaluative comprehension

Global comprehension is the ability to understand the over-all organization of a text- the theme, topics, sub-topics, the logical and orderly relationships between them, and the connection between thematic organization and paragraph structure, whereas local comprehension is the ability to locate and identify individual points of information or facts and drawing information from them. Referential comprehension is the ability to recover factual information from the text by referring to the different parts of the text. If the information happens to be scattered over the entire text, the reader has to refer to the different parts of the text, and connect one piece of information to another. Reading also requires the ability to retrieve the information which may not have been conveniently presented by the writer, and rearrange and reorganize it in a form which may be more convenient and easier to remember. This skill probably involves the classification of information, and a process of selection and summarising. Next is the inferential comprehension, which is the ability to draw inferences from stated facts, and simply the 'information gaps' on the basis of what has not been explicitly stated. In fact, this requires reasoning abilities of a higher degree than those involved in factual comprehension.

'Prediction' is the ability to predict, on the basis of something that has

been read, what is likely to follow in the text. The skill that follows 'prediction' is the ability to judge accuracy, acceptability and value of the statements, made by the author of the text; to respond to traits of personality, attitudes, bias etc revealed by the author, on the basis of textual evidence; to discriminate between what is 'stated' and what is 'implied', between fact and opinion etc. This is what is meant by evaluative comprehension.

Even though a gradation of the skills of comprehension has been identified, it should be recognized that the kind or degree of comprehension involved in any reading depends on the kind of 'matter', contained in the text, and the 'purpose of reading'.

Teaching Comprehension

Judith W. Irwin and Isabel Baker (1989) sums up the attributes of good 'comprehension' in a nutshell:

> Good readers understand individual sentences by dividing them
> into phrases and selecting what is important. They may also need
> to interpret figurative language. They tie sentences together with
> pronouns, conjunctive concepts, and inferences of assumed
> information. They understand the whole by finding the main
> ideas and summarizing. They use the author's organizational
> pattern to do this. They elaborate on the material through
> prediction, mental images, integration with their previous

knowledge, and critical and creative thinking. They expect the text to make sense, and when it doesn't they do something about it. Finally they adjust their strategies to the type of text, their own background, and the purpose of the task (Irwin and Baker 5).

An experienced teacher should know that all of the processes interact with each other, and the failure in one affects all the others. For example, a student who does not understand the individual sentences cannot be asked to find the main idea, and one who does not know to work out in detail is not likely to remember the details. Only one who is able to make connective inferences is likely to see the organization pattern. Students can choose to use one process to help themselves in another.

Basic Comprehension Processes

- **Understanding sentences**
  - Chunking of phrases
  - Selecting important details
  - Interpreting Figurative Language
- **Tying sentences together**
  - Understanding Connectives
  - Understanding Anaphora
  - Inferring Assumed Information
- **Understanding the whole**
  - Finding the main idea
  - Summarising
  - Using the organisation
- **Elaborating**
  - Using prior knowledge
  - Predicting
  - Imaging
  - Reading critically
  - Reading creatively
  - Responding Effectively
- **Using flexible strategies**
  - Monitoring comprehension
  - Using study skills
  - Adjusting to Purpose and Task

Fig.3 Basic Comprehension Processes in Irwin and Baker

Promoting Active Reading Comprehension Strategies.

A Resource Book for Teachers 5 . 1989.

Prentice Hall Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey

We know that different students comprehend differently. Sometimes

they may know to use all the processes, but lack the decoding skill, prior

knowledge, or motivation to understand the passage. Different texts pose

different problems, and different situations result in different grades of

performance. More important than all these processes is that the readers must take an active approach to these processes.

Whenever teachers engage themselves in teaching comprehension they must be aware that every "act of comprehension is affected by the who, what, why, when, and where of the situation". (Irwin and Baker7). The 'who' is the reader, 'what' is the text, and 'why', 'when' and 'where' are the other aspects of the situation. Since each reader is different, and has a different set of background experiences, each comprehends a little differently. The background knowledge and experiences, motivation and interest affect comprehension most directly. Students from different cultural backgrounds often find that they want the background knowledge assumed by the author. This difficulty exhibited by some minority students can be overcome, by building up the background before asking them to read, and by looking for reading materials that do not assume unsuitable background knowledge.

Another key factor in the process of comprehension is motivation. Students read and understand difficult texts when they are really interested. Processes of active inference and elaboration become much more likely when they are motivated. Asking students to read when they have no motivation and interest will result in the insufficient generation of comprehension process. Motivation, in this context, is defined as the "desire to complete a specific reading activity or the desire to read in general."(Irwin and Baker 57)

Researchers have shown that students are able to comprehend materials at a higher readability level when they are truly motivated to comprehend. Other than genuine interest, there are other factors also that influence motivation.

Dulin (63) has suggested that motivation to read a text can be seen in terms of an equation:

Motivation = expected reward / expected effort. Just as students are motivated by the expectation of a reward, they can also be disheartened if the effort looks too great. So, motivation can be increased either by increasing the reward or by decreasing the effort. A teacher trying to teach comprehension has to give his students a motivating purpose. Before asking them to read the given text, the teacher has to prepare a situation to instil interest in the students.

A sample Procedure for Increasing Motivation

Increasing Expected Reward

Provide regular praise

Provide interesting activities

Write fair tests

Provide high-success tasks

Involve students in a purpose setting

Involve students in questioning

Use meaningful reading tasks

Decreasing Expected Effort

Provide background information

Give a specific purpose

Preview the assignment

Preview vocabulary

Discuss reading strategies and skills

Divide a long chapter into shorter assignments (Adapted from J.W. Irwin, Teaching Reading Comprehension Processes 58, Eaglewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice Hall, 1986)

In the background of the above theory, the researcher observes the dearth of motivation and effort in the U.G. classes.

General Suggestions for Motivating on Specific Assignments

Before giving a reading assignment to the students the teachers have to think about the means to motivate them, and also how not to make reading a punishment. Special care has to be taken as to not choose materials at a higher readability level than what the students can manage. All reading assignments must be relevant, meaningful, and useful, giving the students an interesting purpose for reading. Whenever possible, reading materials can be used that are related to the students' interests and they can be shown that the material might be useful in the future. The teachers should be able to show that they are also interested in the material.

A motivated and committed teacher can improve the students' attitude towards reading. The teacher can make plans that the students and the teacher read the same book before a particular date and fix a day for discussing it together, sharing one another's enjoyment and views about the characters and plot. The local newspaper can be made a material for reading, and in our context the editorial of 'the Hindu' will make ideal reading material. The International Reading Association (IRA) has published an excellent source of strategies – Teaching Reading Skills through the Newspaper by Arnold B. Cheyney (1984). To inspire the students guest speakers can be invited to give testimonials on how reading has benefited them in various ways. We can establish the importance of reading in the classroom from the first day of the class. A 'library' can be put up in every class by asking the students to bring spare copies of story books, back issues of leading journals and magazines, and a caption can be put up, "Welcome! Choose a book and read whenever you get time". The best way to encourage reading is to be a model, always having a book on your table and reading while the students do their assignment.

Conclusion

Stressing the study of English for purpose of comprehension in the PUC class, V.K. Gokak recommended the study of one non-detailed text in the form of a book of one-act plays or short stories or a short unabridged novel, with simplified or abridged novels provided for supplementary reading. The

English Review Committee too, stressed the improvement of passive vocabulary and reading ability of the PUC student, by stressing the following study material: i) passages of modern English prose simplified in vocabulary; ii) a book of short stories or plays or a short novel – again in simplified language – to be used as supplementary reading material; and iii) adaptation of interesting stories written in controlled vocabulary of 3,000 words to be read under supervision during one tutorial period.

Even though the present U.G. syllabus does not clearly specify the objective of improving the reading ability, the prescription of Prose, Drama, Novel and Poetry texts puts across the message more compelling than that of merely passing the examination. Unfortunately the greatest proportion of the classroom time is devoted to the teaching of the text, rather than teaching to read. Teachers tend to think that their role is to interpret the text in the class room, and gradually the students come to expect this of the teacher, and feel cheated if every line of the text has not been taught in the class. This tradition is, in fact, being perpetuated in the U.G. classes, that we often tend to forget the fact that the essence of language teaching consists in being able to provide the language activity which leads to language learning. A kind of lesson which involves the teacher doing a lot of talking is not likely to be a good language lesson. Therefore, the 'lecture' has to be practically ruled out as a mode of language teaching.

The principal focus of the 'language campaign' should be to make the teachers and learners share a common vision and a common purpose. We should come back to the real, or rather the primary objective in using a printed text, which is to provide practice in the skills of reading. And since a student can learn to read only through the activity of reading, it follows that the teacher must give him opportunities to read the text. Reading is a neglected aspect of English teaching in our schools and colleges. We have to equip the U.G. students to acquire all the basic skills, and to achieve moderate speed and the required degree of comprehension. Independent reading for comprehension is what the U.G. teaching programme should primarily be concerned with. The aim should be to prepare the student to do such general reading as is necessary in his day-to-day life, and such intensive reading as may be necessary for professional purposes. The most important measure which can improve the situation is ensuring that the various requirements of reading are reflected in the final examination.

Listening Comprehension

Statement of the Problem

Listening comprehension is as important as the other three skills in the teaching and learning of English as a second language at the college level, yet it is the most neglected skill in the classroom. It is likely that students might have difficulties in listening abilities as in reading, writing and speaking in a

foreign language. It is taken for granted, by both teachers and syllabus framers that the learners automatically acquire the skill without any special training, as they are always exposed to it. Testing is given in reading and writing, and sometimes in speaking too, but rarely in the skill of listening.

In Higher Education, learners are very often exposed to lectures, seminars, debates, speeches, discussions, paper presentation, and case analysis, and hence it stands to reason that the importance of listening skills cannot be dismissed or ignored in the undergraduate classes.

What is Listening Comprehension?

The term listening comprehension is referred to as being able to communicate by getting information and grasping the essential message presented in the language sample. This skill in listening is assessed by determining the extent to which spoken language is correctly comprehended.

Listening is an active process which can be illustrated as Input → Processing → Output. By input, we mean the words spoken and by output the listener's response. The listener processes the input before coming out with his/her output. The input could be processed in two ways, either by 'bottom up processing', or 'top-down processing'.

In 'bottom up processing', the listener depends solely on the incoming input for the meaning of the message. The input is received and analysed into words; words into phrases, phrases

into clauses; and the clauses into a whole sentence. In bottom up processing, listeners use their lexical and grammatical competence in the language for getting the intended meaning of the message. In the top down processing listeners rely on their background knowledge for understanding the message. So, input is not the only source of meaning. Listeners through their knowledge of the world make guesses of the intended meaning of the message and approach the input to confirm them and fill out the specific details (Kumar 7).

In other words, listening comprehension involves grasping the main content of the message, internalising the essential idea of the content along with recognition and proper differentiation between the main and subordinate ideas, and the ability to analyse the language sample.

Good listeners know when to use which type of processing and when to use both types of processing. And the choice usually depends on the listeners' purposes of listening, their familiarity with the topic and their background knowledge.

Types of Listening

Adrain Doff (199) refers to the following two types of listening:

1. Casual Listening:

Many times we listen to someone or something without any

particular purpose. At such times, we often do not listen to them with much concentration, unless we hear something which interests us. This type of listening is often found in social contexts when we interact with others.

2. Focussed Listening

It is 'intensive listening' for information or for transacting business. The listener is attentive and concentrates on what the speaker is saying (*qtd. in* Kumar 10).

Blocks to Listening Comprehension

There may be various reasons that may be responsible for unsuccessful listening. Listening does not take place when a listener 'does not listen to something properly'. It also happens when he/she may have listened to it properly but may not have comprehended the message because of the difficult words or the sentence pattern used. Again, it may happen when he/she may have heard the speaker but may not have listened because of the pre-occupation with something else. It is also possible that listening may not take place when the listener does not succeed in interpreting the message because of lack of previous knowledge.

Ignorance about the importance of listening sometimes comes in the way of teaching /learning. A teacher has to convince the learners of the importance of learning. It could be done by arousing their curiosity, by

appealing to their imagination, or by creating information gaps in their minds.

Relevant Listening Comprehension Exercises

Anne Farid (309) observes that an ESL teacher asked to prepare listening comprehension material daily, and, in addition, requested to maintain a high standard of relevance and contemporaneity, would probably throw up his hands in despair. Farid's suggestion is that a teacher with access to radio and a tape-recorder can, with ease, work up listening comprehension exercises for the mature student at the intermediate or advanced level.

The first step in the preparation of such material is for the teacher to record from five to ten minutes of news in English. As he tapes the news, he jots down from three to six comprehension questions suitable to the level of his students. With practice one would be able to do this almost automatically, but at the beginning it must be worked out carefully keeping the following principles in mind:

(1)   The questions should be short and clear. They should be framed within the limits of the structures the class knows.

(2)   The questions should call for short answers, either one word or a short phrase. At some point the answers will be evaluated, and the shorter they are the easier the evaluation process is.

(3)   The questions should require the student to comprehend the taped material in order to answer correctly. In other words, the teacher

should not ask a question which a student could answer through knowledge gained from reading his own native language newspaper.

(4)   The questions must be spaced so that, for example, a student will not miss the answer to the fourth question because it took him so long to write down the answer to the third that he missed the appropriate part of the tape.

The second step of the activity takes place in the classroom. The students are asked to listen carefully as the tape is played for the first time. Then the teacher presents the comprehension questions to the class. A student can write the questions on the board as they are dictated to him by the teacher, or the teacher may write the questions on the board himself.

After the students have heard the news and have heard and read questions about the news the tape is played for the second time while the students listen for and write down the answers. Several ways can be used to make a check of the answers: students can check each others work or their own work. The answers can be read out by the teacher or the students can be called on to read out the answers. The answers can be written on the board by the teacher or a student. If most students have answered all questions correctly the teacher will end the activity here. However, if many students have missed the same item or the same several items, it

may be a good idea to replay the segment which contains the answer (Farid 310).

The teacher will find that using this kind of material brings gradual improvement in listening comprehension. As Wilga Rivers says:

> .... listening comprehension can provide one of the most enjoyable activities associated with the language programme and one which the student continues to enjoy after he has left the classroom (Rivers,*Teaching* 157).

Conclusion

It is found that the U.G. students in our colleges do not possess adequate abilities in listening comprehension because the syllabus makers and teachers do not give importance to the formal or functional teaching of listening skills. Proficiency in listening comprehension is the student ability to use a language effectively in different situations, to express oneself, to understand discourse and to participate in real life communication. An important proficiency test that the Indian students have to face is the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign language). Listening comprehension forms a part of the test. The test includes listening to and comprehending short lectures ranging between five to eight minutes followed by questions as well as dialogues, about which students are asked content questions.

Another requirement of the listening comprehension for the Indian

student is in the field of Medical Transcription, where listening comprehension is of primary importance. In the background of the changed needs and situations of the students in the context of globalization, development of listening comprehension skills in the U.G. classes acquires greater importance.

Communication

The term explained

Communication can take different forms. It can be spoken, written, or non-verbal as when we follow a traffic signal. Encyclopaedia Britanicca states that the term 'communication' has several different and equally acceptable meanings, but no better English word has been found to denote a process both interactive and purposeful.

Communication derives from the Latin Communicare, "to make common, to share, to impart, to transmit". In this article the interpretation of making common or sharing of something between two or among several persons or groups of people is preferred. This definition stresses the interaction that distinguishes communications from other messages, and stresses the effects of a message. Only by the appreciable effects of, or reaction to a message can a communication be distinguished from a message that is both understood and rejected (Encyclopedia Britanicca 203).

The American Peoples Encyclopedia (1963) defines communication as "the sharing of thoughts, ideas or knowledge by two or more people. It includes the devices, processes, and institutions by which individuals and groups exchange all kinds of information" (971). "Someone who is communicating is able to talk to people easily" (Collins 148).

In Widdowson's (*Teaching* 67, 68, 73) opinion communicative abilities are "those skills which are defined with reference to the manner and mode in which the system is realized in use ... Communicative abilities embrace linguistic skills but not the reverse. Essentially they are ways of creating or recreating discourse in different modes."

K. Johnson and K. Morrow (2) say that Communicative Competence is, "the ability to know the right thing to say at the right time". According to J. Munby (26), "Communicative Competence includes the ability to use linguistic forms to perform communicative acts and to understand the communicative function of sentences and their relationships to other sentences."

Defining Communicative Competence, Vijaya Kohli (287) says, "Communicative Competence is linguistic competence plus an understanding of the appropriate use of language in its various contexts. In D. Hymes' (15) view, Communicative Competence is developed by learning the rules of use of language."

Referring to Chomsky's view of communicative competence, Wilga Rivers (*Communicating* 14) writes, "To Chomsky, competence was internalized knowledge of the system of syntactic and phonological rules of the language that the ideal speaker – hearer possesses in the native language; and performance was language in use by the individual." Clarifying the concept, D. L. Freeman (131) says, "Communicative competence involves being able to use the language appropriate to a given social context."

A.K. Paliwal suggests, from the various definitions we can conclude that Communicative Competence is

    (i)   effective use of language in social contexts;

    (ii)   the ability to use the language appropriate to a given social context;

    (iii)   the ability to produce sentences for communicative effect;

    (iv)   the ability to be appropriate, to know the right thing at the right time;

    (v)   a kind of knowledge which is different from linguistic competence;

    (vi)   the internalized knowledge of the system of syntactic and phonological rules of the language that the speakers-listeners, or/ readers-writers possess;

(vii)   linguistic competence plus an understanding of the

appropriate use of language in its various contexts; and

(viii)   the ability to say or write something which is

grammatical, appropriate, fluent, formally possible,

feasible and socially and contextually acceptable"

(Paliwal 10).

What the Researcher means by Communication in English

What the researcher means by the term is the 'working knowledge' of

the English language which enables the students to speak or write something

that is grammatically appropriate and contextually acceptable, with a

reasonable degree of fluency. Even though the role of language for purposes of

communication has always been emphasized, English language teaching in our

schools and colleges tend to concentrate on formal rather than functional

aspects. The teaching and learning of the language skills for the purpose of

communication has not been the objective of the teaching of English. A

graduate, or even a post graduate, who has specialized in English language and

literature, is not always able to express ideas in correct, idiomatic English.

They are at a loss when they have to write an application for a job, when they

have to put across their ideas at an interview, when they have to make enquiries

at an office, or when they have to communicate with a co-passenger on the

train.

Knowing the principles involved in putting words and sentences together correctly is only part of what we mean by knowing a language. It has to be supplemented by the knowledge to compose sentences in the process of communication. But the ability to compose correct sentences is not the only ability we need to communicate.

Communication takes place only when we make use of sentences to perform a variety of different acts of social nature. We communicate by using sentences "to make statements of different kinds, to describe, to record, to classify and so on, or to ask questions, make requests, give orders" (Widdowson *Teaching* 118).

The aims of language teaching are generally explained in terms of four skills, speaking and writing, the active or productive skills, and listening and reading, the passive or receptive skills. One skill cannot be performed without another; it is not possible to speak in a conversation if you do not listen, and you cannot get into writing without reading. An act of communication through speaking occurs as a part of a dialogue. What is said depends on an understanding of what has been said by the other. The listener in a conversation is in a similar position to a reader of a text.

The purpose of teaching the language is to enable the students to interact freely with others, to understand what others wish to communicate, and to be able to convey to others what they wish to communicate. Unless you

comprehend what is said by the other person, you cannot communicate through speech. This is one of the problems of an Indian speaker of English when he comes in the midst of native speakers. This could happen when he makes a visit to a foreign country or when he has to attend a conference, or when he has to go abroad for purposes of higher studies. His difficulty may be that he cannot make himself understood, or that he cannot understand what is being said to him. His success, participation and enjoyment are affected by his inability to comprehend the spoken language. Teaching the comprehension of the spoken language is also, therefore, important.

English is of concern to us mainly for its value in communication. The main objective in teaching English, therefore, should be to enable learners to master the skills of language. But it is not enough to have the skills alone. What is communicated through the skills, is the language that is used. The skills are of no use without the language to accompany them. A person can be said to know a language, if he knows the words, or lexical items of that language, the structures or pattern, and the words or structures that are appropriate to various situations of language use.

Importance of teaching Communication to Indian Students

English teaching has been called upon to provide students with the basic ability to use the language, to receive, and (to a lesser degree) to convey information associated with their specialist

studies. This is particularly so in the developing countries where essential textbook material is not available in the vernacular languages (Allen and Widdowson 122).

Speaking and Writing

As suggested earlier, by the term communication, the researcher strictly means the use of the skills of speaking and writing in order to convey one's ideas.

The speaking skill is developed from the first contact with the language. We listen to 'speakers' of various kinds in our day to day life, but we remember some discourses and forget others. It may be because some can speak better than the others. It seems the art of speaking has to be either acquired naturally, or developed through practice and perseverance.

Rivers distinguishes between the *skill–getting* stage, and the *skill–using* stage in the process of the development of language learning, which she describes with the help of a diagram.
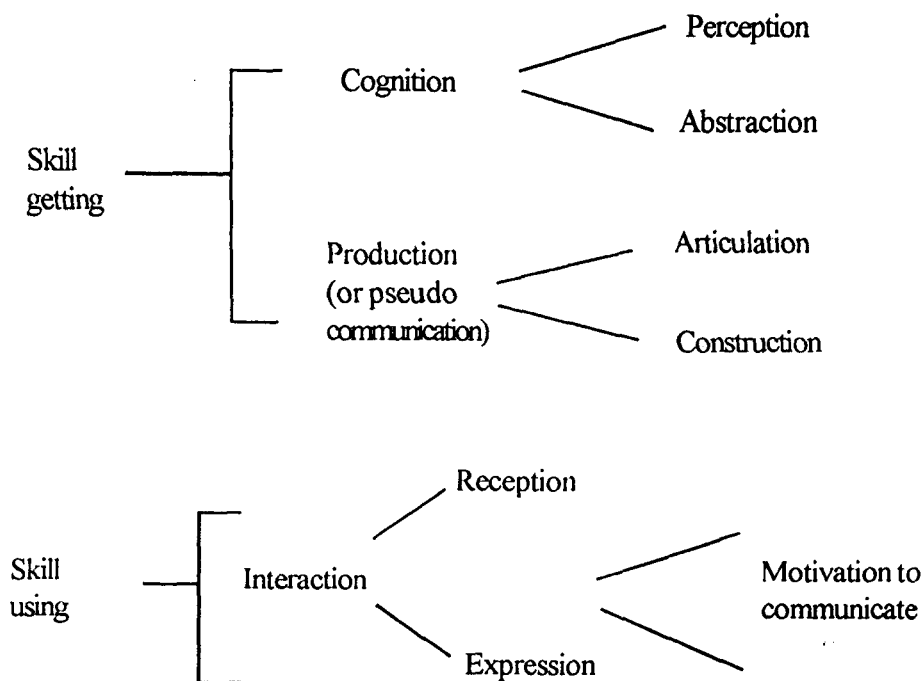
Fig. 4 Skill-learning Model, in Wilga Rivers *Communicating*

Naturally in a *Second Language*. *Cambridge; ELBS. C.U.P. 1983. 43*

Ability to communicate, to interact verbally, presumes some

knowledge (cognition) both in the perception of units,

categories and functions, and in the internalising of the rules

relating these categories and functions (which is a process of

abstraction ...). In the process of acquisition students learn the

production of language sequences; they learn through doing ....

No matter how much we relate these skill-getting activities to

real-life situation this practice rarely passes beyond pseudo –

communication. It is externally directed, not self-originating; it

is a dependent, not an independent activity …. It is a near-

communication with all the outward appearances of

communication, but in these activities the student does not have

to demonstrate that great leap into autonomy – the leap that is

crucial. Our failure in the past has been in our satisfaction with

students who performed well in pseudo – communication. We

have tended to assume that there would then be automatic

transfer to performance in interaction (both in the reception and

expression of messages.) We may have encouraged some

sketching attempts at autonomous interaction; but always with a

supporting hand; the instructor or the native speaker leading the

group, directing the interchange (Rivers 43–44).

The diagram leads to the three main aspects which belong to the

learning of a skill: (1) learners have to learn the principal features of the target

performance in order to make mental plans, (2) they have to practise

converting these plans into actual behaviour, (3) they must be "capable of

expressing an idea or taking part in a conversation by selecting particular

structures or vocabulary". The first two components of learning make up the

'skill-getting' stage, and the third is the 'skill-using', stage.

The particular skills of communication that learners practise might include

➢ Pronouncing new sounds

➢ Selecting vocabulary items

➢ Producing grammatical structures

➢ Expressing specified communicative functions

➢ Using devices for managing conversation

(eg: conversational gambits) (Sen 25).

Natural Process for Developing Spoken Skills

The most obvious condition for the developing of spoken skills is the exposure to language input. We have to expose our learners in the class room to English, perhaps through clearer pronunciation, slower pace, simpler structures and common vocabulary. Krashen (1982, 1985) refers to the simplified speech addressed to foreigners by the term "rough tuning", which may enable them to cope with the language better.

It is now generally accepted that interaction with other people is more important than simple exposure to language, because this facilitates the acquisition of the language. The learner's active engagement in the language tasks takes place only if the learner is highly motivated. The diagram (Fig 4) shows that motivation to communicate must be roused in the learners. It is observed in the class room that whenever a group work is organized, the

extroverts try to steal the show and the introverts are mostly passive. It is true that some learners are temperamentally incapable of interacting, but the responses to the Questionnaire (Appendix A) endorse that many students are shy to speak, they are afraid of being made fun of, are nervous and diffident and have 'inferiority complex'. A genuinely motivated teacher can work wonders in such situations by motivating the 'extroverts', as well as the 'introverts', in the right measure.

Interaction in a typical Kerala U.G. class room, which is more or less heterogeneous, is indeed not an easy task. The psychological barriers of the learners are to be penetrated for creating good interactive conditions. The grouping of the students may be done in such a way that they may comprise many individuals, some with vague notions about the need to learn to communicate, some with high degree of communicative ability, and others at very low achievement level. It is the teachers' job to motivate the group as a whole, and also individually. Some may be reluctant even to look at or interact with each other. Unless the teacher spends as much time coping with these barriers, the activity is not likely to succeed. The teacher should undertake this preparatory task as a part of the real language teaching. Maximum interaction among the group has to be aimed at, and the "group must generate its own impetus, cohere together, help each other, and become interested in each other's individual background, goals and personalities. This is essential for

almost all language – learning groups"   (O' neill 28)

The process of natural language learning can be described with the help

of Fig. 5 below, adapted from Littlewood.

```
┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐
│   Exposure to   │   │   Interaction   │   │   The need to   │
│  comprehensible │───│   with other    │   │   communicate   │
│    language     │   │     people      │   │                 │
└─────────────────┘   └─────────────────┘   └─────────────────┘

        ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────┐
        │  Positive attitudes to English and the learning experience  │
        └──────────────────────────────────────────────┘

                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Internal processing of │
                    │        input         │
                    └─────────────────────┘

                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │    Development of    │
                    │   internal grammar   │
                    └─────────────────────┘

                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │    Communication     │
                    └─────────────────────┘
```
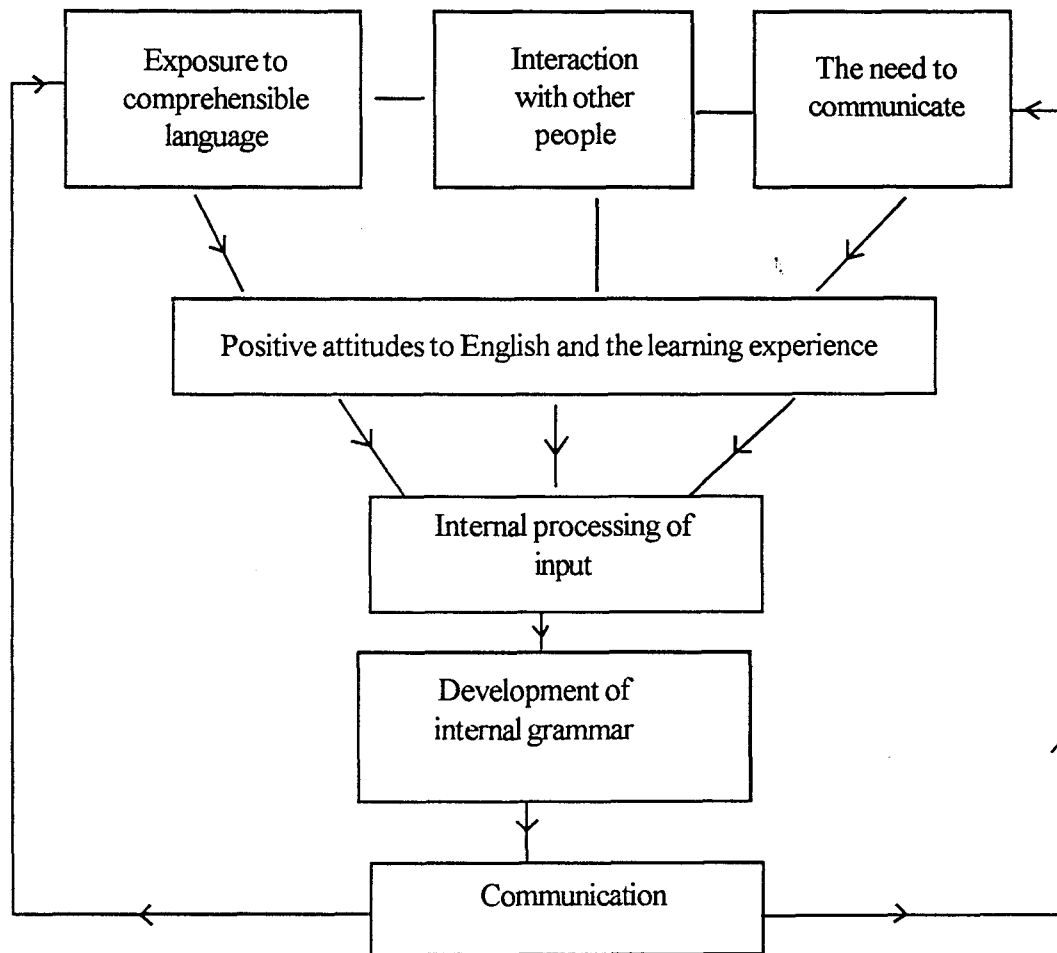
Fig.5. Natural-Learning Model (Adapted from Littlewood 57. Teaching Oral

Communication.Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992).

The three key points of natural learning are exposure to the language,

interaction with other people, and the need to communicate. We often find that

learners from the regional medium often feel insecure when it comes to interaction, and here only a network of supportive personal relationships can help them to engage their whole selves in the learning experience. The learner' attitude towards English, and those who speak in English, either facilitates or hinders the natural learning process. These factors determine the amount of input that reaches the internal learning mechanism.

> Internal mechanisms process the language input in order to find regularities and build up a mental representation of the language. This representation constitutes our internal grammar, which continues to develop as the learner experiences more language. The internal grammar which the learner has constructed at any particular time enables him or her to take part in communication (Littlewood 57–58).

Littlewood suggests two main routes by which learners can internalize language:

1. Consciously, through instruction in the classroom, based on the skill-learning model, and

2. Subconsciously, by engaging in communication outside the classroom.

The main input in the 'conscious' process comes through organized instruction in the class room, where we plan and pre-select the items. (e.g.

sounds, vocabulary, structures and communicative functions) which we ask the learners to internalize. Depending on the problems that have been identified in the students, the teacher can start at any point. For example, if they have a problem with the present continuous, they can be asked to describe what the teacher is doing in the class. Littlewood (1992) calls this the 'pre-communicative stage', where "the main focus is on the forms of the language and the potential meanings they can convey in future communication, rather than actual messages being exchanged with another person." (Littlewood, *Teaching Oral* 71)

At the next stage, which is called 'communicative language practice', the learners can describe 'something' , or 'ask for objects', and gradually can convey new information to each other for a communicative purpose. Since they are still protected from the full demands of communication outside the classroom, this can be considered as structured communication.

Then the learners can be taken to the 'authentic communication' stage where we assume that learners have to work on a project. For instance, they may interview strangers on a railway platform going on their summer holidays. They have the opportunity for spontaneous communication by conversing and studying their perceptions regarding holidays. On weekends they may interview five or six travellers and report their experiences in their groups.

Conclusion

In spite of the limitation in our situation, a committed and motivated teacher, if he/she has the patience and perseverance, can transform the U.G. English teaching programme from the lecture-dominated system to the learner-dominating system. Through problem solving activities, group-work, creative role-playing, simulations, and providing scope for experimental learning, we can increase our students' sensitivity to the way our conversation works. The teacher should be aware of group dynamics, and should be able to help the students in choosing the role that they play, and communicate to them the reason why this method is used in teaching. But the viability of this, to a great extent, depends on the changes we bring about in the examination system.

Writing Skills

Statement of the problem

In the Kerala context the use of the language in its written form is relatively more extensive than in its spoken form. Hence the development of the writing skill in the learner acquires a greater significance. It is observed that the development of the writing skill for specific need-based purposes is not given the required thrust in the curriculum, and in the classroom practice. Although evaluation procedure in most educational systems in India continues to depend heavily on the written mode of communication, it is observed that

the students perform better in reading and listening than in writing and speaking.

At present the teachers merely adopt the traditional method of making learners write answers to textual questions, and stereo-typed composition exercises such as letter writing, essay writing, précis-writing etc. The learners go through these exercises with little motivation, and more out of compulsion. These exercises do not have much relevance in real life situations and the contribution of the teacher is minimal and inadequate. When students are assigned a writing task, they are only vaguely directed, and the majority of them are found to be lacking in confidence and their output is substandard. Only those with a reasonable proficiency in writing actually attempt the task themselves; the rest merely reproduce what others have written.

Introduction of the Communicative Syllabus in the U.G. classes

The general English paper for the first year undergraduate course with the prescribed text book, 'Interactions in English' present great scope for the development of the writing skill. But either due to the lack of class room practice, or proper orientation, the progress achieved in the development of the writing skills is comparatively negligible. The need to study the factors that contribute to the development of the writing skill appears to be crucial.

In the circumstance of the introduction of the communicative syllabus, the teacher has to be aware of the skill-oriented approach, and the focus should

be on the processes that enable the learner to attempt tasks like group discussion on the thematic content, organising ideas in a proper sequence, identifying the format of the writing task, the selection of appropriate language vocabulary etc. The researcher's observation is that such tasks rarely take place in the undergraduate classes in our colleges. Teachers tend to make use of minimum number of hours for communication tasks and maximum hours for explaining the novel, prose, and drama text books. For the teacher, it is difficult to leave the familiar and much-trodden path.

If, a carefully planned strategy is adopted and the students are guided through enabling activities they may come out with much better products. The students need specific help in choosing the appropriate tense, voice, tone etc. depending on the nature of the task, for instance, whether it is a notice, report, description of an object or an activity. The students get more involved in the task if the enabling activity takes them through a variety of processes like interviewing people, collecting data, representing it in diagrams and then writing a report, for instance.

Even highly qualified teachers who are exposed to the communicative approach to language learning tend to adopt the traditional class room methods, and the development of the language skills and enabling activities seldom become the primary concern. The teachers have to be shaken out of the normal state of complacency by the compulsion and demands of a need-based, life-oriented language curriculum.

The Necessity to Develop Writing Skills

Most people have difficulty in writing because it seems to require more effort in terms of care, and in terms of thought, than speaking does, and it always carries with it the notion of correctness of grammar use, of appropriateness of expression, and of comprehension on the reader's part. If one does not have confidence in his/her abilities to communicate through writing, the whole process of writing becomes a burden. For this reason, we need to motivate the students to write. Motivating students to write is a challenging task for the teacher.

In our colleges, the time allotted for writing activities is usually a one-hour period. It is hard to visualise any worthwhile practice being given in writing in such a short time because writing demands reflective activity on the part of the students, and this needs time. In order to write with confidence, students should get repeated opportunities for writing. It is a process involving many activities such as an initial probing into experience, an analysis of it, identifying items of specific and definable significance, their subsequent organisation into meaningful sequence, and finally their expression in a language that is appropriate and correct. Competence in writing depends on two factors: control over the experience to be communicated and control over the language, especially at the level of syntax.

Control over experience can be gradually achieved through oral

discussion of the subject matter. Students should be encouraged to discuss ideas and exchange impressions without any inhibition. If the division of the class into small groups promotes their activity better, the teacher should divide the class into groups of six or eight. Whether the group should be homogeneous or heterogeneous can depend on the discretion of the teacher though homogeneous grouping may avoid groups being dominated by academically stronger members of the class. Each group can select a chairperson to co-ordinate writing sessions and facilitate discussions; a gatekeeper to check that the group does not deviate from the aims they had set for the session; a timekeeper to check that the group does not deviate from the schedule set for each session; and a secretary to act as scribe for the group. With the exception of the role of the chairperson, groups can be asked to rotate roles around the group as they come to each writing session. Students can be invited to negotiate a deadline for producing a first draft of the assignment. Preparatory work of this kind is extremely useful in giving students adequate control over the subject.

Writing is a skill which needs to be taught systematically. Although it appears to be simple it remains true that we learn to write only by writing. If the U.G. class entrant has not mastered the required basic sentence patterns, it would be worthwhile to devote some time to giving the student the necessary fluency in writing a few important sentence patterns. A well framed

substitution table will teach the learners the basic patterns and also the useful and sufficient vocabulary. If the lexical variants are carefully chosen, students can get abundant practice in the construction of innumerable sentences. Students must be gradually led through the graded exercises in areas of grammar which the teacher should prescribe for each term as the minimum requirement. This exercise should give the student an insight into the arrangement of words within a particular structure and also give him plenty of practice in it.

From sentences the practice should move on to paragraphs. They should learn that the development of an idea into a paragraph involves giving particulars and details, examples, comparison and contrast, analogy etc. The emphasis should be on the communication of ideas and the paragraph is the best for the development of this. Writing paragraphs has to be effective in terms of cohesion. Linkers and connectives have to be used for the proper sequencing of ideas. Sequencing also implies the order in which sentences are placed in a paragraph.

Another important aspect of teaching writing is accuracy. Students should be trained to observe meticulously what may appear to be small details of writing such as punctuation, spelling, the right use of the article, concord and so on.

It is advisable to give the students an insight into different kinds of

writing so that paragraphs may be organized, depending on the kind of writing they reflect. The division of the different types of writing can be broadly classified as:

a.   descriptive – of objects, people, events, processes, institutions, arguments etc.

b.   narrative – sequence of events and happenings

c.   expository – giving an expose of a subject, setting it out for view – with definition, classification, examples etc.

d.   argumentative – taking a point of view and supporting it

e.   reflective – looking back on issues, events, activities and people and seeing how your opinions change

f.   persuasive – getting readers to change their views

g.   interpretive – giving the writers' perspective on an issue

(Eapen Lalitha 63).

Conclusion

Although the group writing activity is not without problems, it provides invaluable experiences while it might not be desirable for students to write in groups all the time. A group writing and learning experience could be an important means of introducing many good writing and learning practices to students who might otherwise not be exposed to them.

If one of the objectives of the English course is ability to write

well and expressively in English, then the teacher must guide the students in developing their skills in analyzing and subordinating ideas, and developing lines of thought which carry their readers to the heart of the matter. The English teacher cannot presume that the students already know these things from some other course (Rivers,*Teaching* 32).

Factors Responsible for the Dearth of Comprehension and Communication Skills

Chapter 3

Factors Responsible for the Dearth of
Comprehension and Communication Skills

The Problem Stated

It is generally accepted that the major set back of our English language teaching is, many of the students who come out of the colleges are unable to use English even for the basic purpose of communication. The alarmingly rapid rate at which the standard of English is falling in Kerala is a reason for growing apprehension among the teachers of English. There was a time in our history when one could expect even the matriculates to write correct, idiomatic English. But today, correct grammatical English has become rare even among the undergraduate and postgraduate students.

A complex set of factors would have jointly conspired together to whip this up into a large crisis. Even though getting back into the saddle may not be possible, in this changing milieu of globalisation the demands of English as a language of communication needs to be accommodated, at least through a process of whitewashing. The researcher's observation of the situation, along with the results of an informal survey, unfold some vulnerable problems that intervene in the acquiring of the comprehension and communication skills

among the undergraduate students. A myopic university syllabus, a faulty system of evaluation, lack of teacher training and motivation, and the unbelievably low standard of the students at the time of entry to the college due to the poor quality of teaching in the schools, are some of the issues that have evolved out of this study.

These issues are not too simple to be ignored. We must commit ourselves to reversing the prevalent methods, and thus create conditions that will promote a globally applicable English language, not as a distant goal, but as an urgent practical necessity.

Problem I – The Syllabus and the Related Problems in Language Teaching

The first, and perhaps, the most important precondition for an effective language-teaching is to diagnose and state, distinctly and precisely, the objectives to be achieved. The teaching of English in our country has been handicapped by a lack of purpose on the part of teachers, and students alike. We admit, at least in private, that communicative proficiency has become a casualty, and the most important question is the fixing of a viable philosophy for curriculum planning which holds the possibility of a change as far as English language teaching is concerned. It seems as though the teachers teach English because they are required to do so, and the pupils learn it as they have to pass the examination at the end of the course. There is no specification of

the language skills that are found to be relevant for the learner, and the quantum of language that he needs.

A good syllabus should state its objectives specifically and quantitatively, and should be able to justify the objectives it chooses, basing them on individual needs and social requirements. Moreover, the objectives must be realistic and achievable. In most of the Indian universities the syllabuses are silent or vague regarding the nature of the skills and the amount of language that the student must learn. Our universities offer a compulsory course in General English, which is expected to provide the learner with general competence in English. The General English courses have failed in India because they lack specificity, and are not need-based. In the Indian context where English has the status of a 'link language', a more organized course has to be introduced which may result in the teaching of English for general purposes. We are already introduced to concepts like EGP (English for General Purposes), ESP (English for Special Purposes), EAP (English for Academic Purposes). ESS (English for Social Survival), and EOP (English for Occupational Purposes). A proper integration of these concepts, according to the demand of the individual disciplines, may prove fruitful in the General English courses.

What the students need today is a completely reoriented set of materials, without depending on prose or poetry selections, offering sets of

language learning tasks for their performance in the class room. The tasks have to be designed to develop the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and the sub-skills related to them. Grammar learning activities may form a part of the main tasks, so that while performing the main tasks students will internalize the rules of grammar. For example, tasks organized under topics related to science and technology, which at the same time focus on issues of general human interest will be most suitable for the science students. Though the core of lessons has to be the reading of, or listening to texts it should also offer the content for the other language activities such as role-play, debates, discussion, vocabulary development, grammar and finally, writing. A good syllabus has to state clearly such needs of the students, and also demarcate the role of the teacher and the students. A teacher has to be a guide, a motivator and a facilitator, while the student will be the active participator. The learner will actually speak, write, read and listen in the classroom.

Teaching of English in Indian Universities and Colleges

Traditionally English has been taught in our universities and colleges on a literary basis because it was believed that exposure to great literature can serve important educational purposes. A change has been witnessed during the last forty years as there has been a growing awareness that the teaching of English in its traditional form is no more relevant, and attempts have been

made in several universities to adopt measures for reform. But the momentum of reforms gradually slowed down before it reached the degree level, and the teaching of English in the undergraduate classes remained much unaltered.

The reform movement did not receive the expected tempo as there was some confusion regarding the nature and purpose of teaching at the degree level. Objectives of teaching English at this level could not be specifically stated, and there was great diversity and lack of uniformity in the achievement level of the students as they entered the threshold of the under graduate classes. The concept and the need of ESP was not fully recognized in the beginning. The crux of the problem was, though there was an understanding and awareness of the issues involved, these insights could not be translated into concrete measures.

Aims and Objectives of Teaching English in Colleges

Syllabus Reform in English – Reports and Recommendations of Zonal and National Workshops 1976 – 77 gives a formulation of the aims and objectives of teaching English, in the light of what was perceived to be the need for English.

At the national level, English must serve as our 'window on the world' – as the language in which nearly all contemporary knowledge is accessible. As the language of science and technology, English will be important for industrial and

economic development. It will function as the 'language of development'. Our scientists, technologists, engineers, doctors etc must be able not only to have access to professional literature in English but also to contribute to it, and to communicate with their counterparts in other parts of the world. The continuation of English seems important if our science and technology are to be truly international.

As the associate official language, the *de facto* 'link language', the language favoured by the UPSC, the legal and the banking systems, trade and commerce and defence, English will have important functions to serve internationally – in addition to its role as our 'window on the world'.

English may continue to be the medium of instruction in several faculties at the college level.

Where the medium of instruction is to be some language other than English, the 'library language' function of English will have to be stressed.

At the individual level, English will still serve as 'the language of opportunity; any individual seeking socio-economic advancement will find ability in English an asset.

It is clear, therefore, that English will have important functions

in communications of diverse types. The skills of
communication, oral as well as written, both expressive and
receptive, will continue to be at a premium, and teaching will
have to try to impart a certain minimal competence in these
skills.

It is important, however, that we should be able to identify the
English requirements of various groups of students precisely,
and try to provide for each such group the pattern of instruction
which will be relevant to its needs.

The need to stress the teaching of the skills of communication
was highlighted in the reports of the two Study Groups. The
situation has not altered substantially in this regard in the last ten
years – nor is it likely to, in the next ten years (University Grants
Commission, New Delhi 1977: 3).

The first Study Group recommended the reorientation of the
compulsory English course 'literature' to a course in language skills, and the
introduction of 'two-tier courses' in English at the degree level. It desired a
skill-based teaching with emphasis on comprehension for the lower level, and
greater emphasis on written and spoken English for the higher level. Obviously,
the Study Group was beginning to think in terms of English for special
purposes.

The second study group also followed suit by proposing the diversification of courses. Though there were not many proposals made for courses to be offered at the college level, as part of the degree requirement it was suggested that the principle of diversification was to be extended to the regular courses offered by colleges. It was assumed that the students at the first year degree level would have had about seven (5+2) years of exposure to English learning, and at the intermediate level it would have been largely remedial, and that at this level, the student would have acquired a minimal proficiency in the fundamental skills of 'general service' English. The suggestion was, beyond this point, teaching should aim at.

a) Equipping the student with the communication skills necessary to cope with the situation he is likely to encounter (these should be predictable); and

b) Providing the kind of 'information content which is relevant to contemporary culture' (U.G.C., New Delhi 1977: 4).

The first aim points at teaching skills related to areas of occupational specialization, whereas the second aim involves the study of texts of general, contemporary nature which will lead to the students' awareness of the day to day social and cultural issues. This brings in the question of considering specialized versus general needs. The B.A./ B.Sc./ B.Com. students may need a sort of general English, because the types of occupation they are likely to

acquire are government posts (both administrative and clerical), banking employments, teaching, and private business and industrial undertakings. Students who opt for specialized careers like engineering, information technology, medicine, law etc, on the other hand, need a programme closely related to their specific disciplines. This takes us to the concept of 'registers' of English.

In giving practice in the skills of comprehension and communication, it is important to draw upon methods and materials associated with the specialized disciplines. For example, students of science may have to learn to write reports of experiments, where the application of the use of 'passive voice' will be more workable than romantic poetry, imaginative prose etc. There is a possibility of problems in arranging 'register-based' teaching, in the sense that finding teachers of English sufficiently acquainted with the subject disciplines may not be easy. It will be necessary to build up a group of teachers of English who have a general background in Science and Technology.

Streaming of Students and Remedial Classes

A striking feature of the U.G. classes is that it represents various strata of the society, exhibiting both extremes of learner proficiency in English. Hailing from different economic and social backgrounds, some of them possess very high proficiency, whereas the others possess no skills whatever in English. There is also a middle group, whose reading and writing skills are

satisfactory, but is very deficient in speaking skills. All these three categories remain together as a heterogeneous group, and the first mentioned, comprising children of N.R.I.s and those educated in the CBSE classes are definitely the losers and are bound to get bored by the passive status that is assigned to them in the present system. The lot of the culturally backward children is hard, in that it leads to frustration and lack of interest. The argument that their interaction with the better students will be effective, remains only in theory.

The compulsion of large classes is nothing new to us. It has to be accepted that there is no imminent solution to this problem, and teachers must invariably work within these constraints, adjusting the learning–teaching strategies accordingly. This huge, pedagogical problem of large classes is unknown to the teachers who are used to the ideal classroom situations in the advanced countries. In our context, a large class comprises 70 to 80 students, which indicates the teacher–learner ratio to be 1:75. Since the ideal class room situation, regarding the number of learners, is non-existent here, the best we can do is to follow an ideal streaming of students. As Velayudhan observes,

> As far as we can see, we are not going to get ideally smaller
>
> classes to teach in the foreseeable future. We have got to face
>
> larger classes and do our job as effectively as we can
>
> (Velayudhan 36).

Though there is a marked inbalance in the achievement rate of the

students seeking admission in the U.G. classes, at present the streaming of students is performed without any definite norms, just according to convenience. The result is that the students of Science and Arts sometimes come together, though it has been invariably found that the level of achievement of the former is greater than of the latter. Since there is a marked difference in their level, the teacher is neither able to satisfy them, nor to reduce the gap of difference in their proficiency level.

The researcher's view is to stream the learners into the 'high-level' and 'low-level' groups, either on the basis of a simple proficiency test given at the beginning of the course, or according to their own option. Anderman refers to a similar system introduced throughout Sweden, in 1969.

> The pupils remain in common heterogeneous classes until the seventh grade. In each of the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades students must choose one out of the four options in addition to the compulsory subject. As English is a compulsory subject, the language option offers French or German. Thus in the seventh grade, at the age of thirteen, the child may choose to learn a second foreign language. He must also decide on one of the two courses offered in English – a 'special' course or a 'general' course, the latter progressing at a slower tempo than the former, the choice being entirely his own, with the teacher acting in a purely advisory capacity (Anderman 151).

It is evident from the survey (discussed in Chapter 5 - Administration of the Questionnaire and the Analysis of its Results) that 87 % of the teachers agree with the 'high level'–'low–level' concept.

Remedial Teaching Defined

> Under the best of teachers, mishearings and misunderstandings will occur, and from the first lesson onward a pupil is likely to distort into incorrectness some of the language material that has been presented to him in correct examples of usage. His distortion urgently demand correction through a kind of teaching we may call remedial teaching (Morgan 70).

Remedial course, or bridge course, aims at setting right the mistakes learners make, or removing the deficiencies in their language proficiency and bridging the gap between what the learner knows, and what he is expected to know. This justifies the name 'remedial' for such a course. A remedial course may concentrate on one skill, or it may be multi-skilled aiming at all those skills which are basic to a particular stage.

Ideally, remedial courses may be taken either before the learner enters the U.G. class, or as part of his work at the beginning of the session in the college. Such a course has to be preceded by an analysis of the learner's abilities in the skills for which the course is produced. This analysis should show what the learner already knows and his ability to use his knowledge in

well-defined situations. A well planned and well prepared remedial course may prove to be a desirable solution for the disparity found in the language achievement level of the students who enter the U.G. classes.

Syllabus - The Term Defined

The syllabus is the framework for a course of study listing the contents of that course. "Whereas the curriculum should provide a comprehensive plan on which the system of learning and teaching can be based, the syllabus represents the picture of a particular stage of this overall plan, and the courses are the tools used to achieve the objectives piecemeal by going from one stage to the next higher one and so on." (Das and Kaul 8).

Planning a language course is not simply prescribing some text books for study, and administering an examination at the end of the course. The term syllabus is usually misunderstood to be a list of topics and textbooks provided by the university at the beginning of the academic year. The syllabus has to clearly state what has to be taught. The three main areas that should influence the content of the syllabus are: needs, situation and students. "Before any teaching is done in a classroom, and hopefully before any materials are written, a decision has to be taken about what the students are going to learn." (Harmer 19). The things that a syllabus designer should consider are: what the students need, the situation in which the teaching is to take place, and the motivational differences of students and their levels of achievements.

In all teaching, the learner is certainly more important. Wilga M. Rivers (1978) thinks that "the student is the 'raison d'etra' of teaching. The teacher needs to consider the age of the students, the scholastic background, the culturally absorbed way of learning, and their objectives in studying the language without ignoring the political and social pressures that are largely determining their motivation. Only after such matter have been taken into account, and decisions made about the kind of course that will meet the student's needs in their particular situation will teachers begin to reflect on appropriate ways of selecting and presenting material, so that the objectives of the study may be achieved" (Rivers, *A Practical* 5).

The teacher should know certain important factors about the learners. The competence, attitude, motivation, exposure to English, and the level of achievement in the target language are some of the factors related to the success of learning the language. By the term 'competence' is meant the measure of the ability of the four skills. It is relevant that the teacher should have an idea of the measure of these skills already achieved by the learner, and how much more of this is to be acquired before completing the course. This relates to the problem of dealing with the student's needs. The curriculum should specify the educational needs of the learner, and label all the means by

which these needs can be fulfilled.

B.K.Das and B.N.Kaul (PGCTE, CIEFL) compare the curriculum, and the course to the 'doctor's diagnosis and the treatment that he prescribes. "In the curriculum we try to visualize all the different kinds of experiences that may be used in providing the desired learning, and the course represents an attempt to arrange and organize these experiences for the learner (9). When the teacher is made to know the needs of the learners, the strategies and techniques employed will take a definite turn, and the output of the language learning will be fruitful.

Student Needs

Students learn English for different reasons, and they might be taught differently depending on such reasons. (1) Many students learn English only because it is a part of the curriculum, and had been included in the syllabus by someone in authority, (2) some students want to learn English because it provides a chance for progress in their lives, to get a better job, as English is rapidly becoming the global language of communication, (3) some learn the language to know more about the culture of the people who speak it, (4) there are some others who want to learn English for special purposes (This is often termed as ESP). A student who is going to study at an English University may need English so that he can perform in a seminar situation, write reports, and interact with the English scholastics. This is often called EAP (English for

academic purposes). A student of medicine, physics or chemistry may be able to read journals and books concerning his subject. This is often referred to as EST (English for Science and Technology). Since the purpose of learning English is varied in different learners, the teaching of English in the colleges cannot be too general.

It is imperative that the syllabus designer should consider the needs of the students. A science student may need probably an ability to read science journals or scientific English. This points to the development of the reading skill. A student interested in taking up business studies may need English for commercial purposes, or for international trade. Neither the science student, nor the commerce student needs to cover the four major skills in an equal measure. When the syllabus is designed, it may be decided to demarcate the skills depending upon the needs of the students.

Situation

In planning the syllabus, the situation in which the teaching takes place has to be taken into account. A comfortable class with a small number of students may be treated differently from an overcrowded class, where learning becomes difficult. The number if students in the class, the type of classroom, and the aids and materials available are some of the factors that influence effective learning. The government's and institution's attitude towards English, and the time allotted to the language class are also important. This shows that

the learning–teaching situation is very important when planning a syllabus.

The syllabus designer has to be conscious of the type of students the syllabus is designed for. How the students feel about learning English, or what are the different types of motivations involved in learning English, are also vital.

> Motivation is some kind of internal drive that encourages somebody to pursue a course of action. It seems to be the case that if we perceive a goal (that is something we wish to achieve) and if that goal is sufficiently attractive, we will be strongly motivated to do whatever is necessary to reach the goal. Clearly, language learners who are motivated also perceive goals of various types, and here we might immediately make a distinction between short-term goals and long-term goals. Long-term goals might have something to do with a student's wish to get a better job or become a member of the target language community. Short-term goals might include such things as the urge to pass an end-of-term or end-of-semester exam or complete a unit successfully. It seems possible to suggest that a teacher will find a motivated student with a long-term goal easier to teach than a student who has to study the language because it is on the curriculum and who does not have a goal (Harmer 13).

Motivation can be viewed from two aspects, corresponding to two sources of a learner's emotions and needs. A learner's emotions and needs may arise from within himself – from the understanding of the value and the gain to be attained from learning the language. When a student's reason for studying a second language is the interest in the culture of the group that speaks the language, or even learning the language for a utilitarian purpose, the interest and need originates from within the learner him/herself, and so may be termed "intrinsic motivation". When the emotions and needs that drive a learner may not originate from within the learner himself, but related to the satisfaction of some need lying outside the learning experiences, motivation is said to be external or "extrinsic". If the student who is learning a second language because it is a compulsory examination subject, or in order to get a job, the motivation is extrinsic. Usually extrinsic motivation is more powerful than intrinsic motivation, and it is out of the range of the teacher. Intrinsic motivation is something that the teacher can provide by manipulating the learning process.

Psychology of Learning

A teacher should know the process by which learning takes place, to encourage, command and direct the process of learning. According to psychologists, learning takes place effectively only when it is associated with a pleasant or satisfying experience to the learner. The American psychologist

Thorndike had effectively codified learning in his three famous 'Laws of Learning', The Law of Effect, The Law of Exercise, and the Law of Readiness. The inference of the Law of Effect is that if something is to be learnt, a reward must be offered for the desired response. That is, if a learner is encouraged, greater learning takes place. The awareness of the progress made in learning may also act as a supplementary reward.

The Law of Exercise emphasizes the need of repetition to strengthen whatever has been learnt. The Law of Readiness is concerned with the necessity of attention and motivation for learning.

These three laws imply the importance of motivation in learning. The teacher has to create the atmosphere for learning before teaching begins, and here, motivation takes the semblance of a primary activity. Motivation is also involved with the content of teaching, and the way in which the content is introduced to the learner. According to the 'Law of Effect' the most effective learning is that which is satisfying to the learner. If the learning should be satisfying, what is learnt must be correlated to the needs of the learner, and also, the programme of learning must be rewarding. A word or gesture of appreciation, used as a reward for proper learning, can be a powerful motivation.

Learning can be made self-rewarding also; the sense of attainment which comes from success in learning can also be an impetus for learning. The

Law of Exercise implies that learning results from activity by the learner. The amount pf practice that can be provided to the learners determines how well they learn, and how well they retain what has been learnt.

Syllabus Before Independence

The status of English in India had not been properly identified in the pre-independent times. When Lord Macaulay recommended the spreading of English in India, he failed to think of the importance of English as a language of communication. It would have been thought by the British that Indians would learn to use the English language as naturally as the native speakers. The communication function of the language was taken for granted, and the cultural aspect represented by the language was more marked. The mode of teaching English to the Indians was very similar to the methods adopted in England. That is, English was taught like L_1, and the methods and materials were not different from those employed in England.

The teaching of English literature became so prominent all over India that any course of English invariably comprised plays by Willliam Shakespeare, poems by Milton, Keats, Shelley and prose selections from the great essayists of English. English was not looked upon as a second language, but more or less as the first language. Teaching the skills of the language for purposes of communication was not identified as the objective of the teaching of English.

State of ELT and Syllabus Planning in the 1950s

To put the present situation of syllabus designing in clear perspective it is worthwhile to have a look at the developments in the fields of ELT in India. The method that was in use at the turn of the century was what is called the grammar – translation method. The first book advocating the use of the Direct Method in India was P.C.Wrenn's 'The Direct teaching of English in Indian Schools.' Until the mid-fifties most of the principles associated with the various movements in U.S.A. and U.K. had made little or no impact on the ELT situation in the country. In the fifties a great need was felt for the improvement of materials and methods of teaching English at all levels. This resulted in the establishment of the Central Institute of English, and other English Language teaching institutes to train teachers and produce modern teaching materials. The 25 years following 1952 have been remarkable in the history of ELT in India because it was during this period that new syllabuses and new instructional materials were introduced, and systematic in-service courses and English language institutes set up in the various states.

Inspite of all these innovations and developments in the field of ELT in India, most universities continue to be regardless of conceiving specific objectives for teaching and learning English while framing the syllabus.

Teaching of English in the U.G. Classes in the University of Calicut.

Introduction

The University of Calicut which was established in the year 1968 has the goals to develop qualitatively and quantitatively the higher education and research in all sphere of human development, to uplift the educationally backward people and to expediate the process of human development in comparatively lesser developed regions of Northern Kerala.

Earlier, Calicut University extent covered the seven northern districts of Kerala. After the establishment of Kannur University in 1995, it is limited to the districts of Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Wayanad (except the Taluk of Mananthavady).

There are 108 colleges affiliated to this university. In the Arts and Science Colleges, English is taught as a compulsory paper in the first year and second year undergraduate courses (except II B Com), besides the B.A. English Literature main course that is offered as an optional course. The compulsory English paper that is common for the B.A./B/Sc./B.Com courses is termed as part I English. It is of the nature of General English and there is an ambiguity that English is uniformly taught as a compulsory language following an identical pattern for B.A., B.Sc. and B.Com courses.

Syllabus of the U.G.- B.A./ B. Sc./ B.Com Courses

SYLLABUS

PART I ENGLISH

I BA/B.Sc./ B.Com

2000 ADMISSION 2001 EXAM

PAPER I   : GENERAL ENGLISH

    1. Novel   : "The Woodlanders", Thomas Hardy

    2. Grammar   : Living English Grammar and Communicative Tasks

                        Calicut University Central Co-operative Stores

PAPER II   : MODERN PROSE & DRAMA

    1. Prose   : Spring Blossoms

                        "The Unexpected" and "University Days" omitted

    2. Modern Drama   : "Pygmalion" by George Bernard Shaw

SYLLABUS

II B.A/ B.Sc. Part I English

1999 Admission 2001 Examination

PAPER III   :   SKAKESPEARE & POETRY

    1.   "Julius Caesar" by W. Shakespeare

    2.   An Anthology of English Poems

The Following Poems

1.	William Shakespeare	:	Let me not to the marriage of true minds
2.	Andrew Marvell	:	To his Coy Mistress
3.	John Dryden	:	Mac Flecknoe
4.	William Blake	:	The Tiger
5.	William Wordsworth	:	The world is too much with us
6.	John Keats	:	Ode on a Grecian Urn
7.	P.B.Shelley	:	Ozymandias
8.	Mathew Arnold	:	Dover Beach
9.	Robert Browning	:	My Last Duchess
10.	Alfred Tennyson	:	Ulysses
11.	W.B. Yeats	:	Easter 1916
12.	Emily Dickinson	:	Because I could not stop for Death
13.	Edgar Allan Poe	:	To Helen

Analysis of the Syllabus

In the undergraduate classes of the colleges affiliated to the University of Calicut, English is taught as a compulsory paper in the Ist year and the IInd year, except for the II B.Com students. The Ist year and II year B.A./B.Sc./ B.Com Part II Englsih follow an identical syllabus, but II B.Com students are

excepted from learning English, which means that their English learning is over at the end of the first year.

The pattern of the syllabus has two distinct features: (a) Besides the Novel, Drama and Prose, which is prescribed for their study in the Ist year, there is a language –oriented text book, named <u>Living English Grammar and Communicative Tasks</u>. This text has exhaustive exercises in grammar – sentence structure, Nouns, Verbs, Discourse markers, Problem of Ambiguity, Articles, Tag Questions, Time and Tense and Prepositions. Though most of the items are familiar to the learners, it serves as a reinforcement of the structures, which may equip them for better comprehension and communication. The text is also self sufficient in communicative tasks because it introduces to the learner many communicative tasks like situational conversation, social communication, writing tasks, paragraph organization, letter writing, note-making, report writing, ticket reservation, writing telegram etc. It comprises comprehensive exercises too. (b) The course books prescribed for the second year are purely literature oriented. The content of literature is in the form of Poetry and Drama.

A Partial Introduction of Communicative English in Paper I, Part I

The introduction of <u>Living English Grammar and Communicative Tasks</u> is a marked change from the traditional texts. At the end of the Ist year B.A./ B.Sc./B.Com., students have to answer an identical paper – Part I English,

Paper I, General English. The second part of the paper comprises questions on grammar and communicative tasks. The first part is purely literature oriented. Usually a novel is prescribed for their study (in the given syllabus, _The Woodlanders_, by Thomas Hardy), and the questions asked are purely textual, an essay and a few short answer questions. Out of the 100 marks, 35 marks are from the novel, and the remaining 65 for grammar and communicative tasks. So, it can be concluded that the Ist paper is partially, or, more or less language – oriented.

Though, this is a welcome change in the I B.A./ B.Sc./ B.Com Part I English paper I, it is disappointing that there is no remarkable improvement in the teaching and learning of English. One reason, perhaps, could be the lack of orientation and resourcefulness of the teachers to convert the unwritten views in the syllabus into definite, feasible strategies in the class room. The responses of the teachers, in the questionnaire provided, also point to this. Shortage of time too, accounts for the failure of the teachers to plan and organize their teaching activities more systematically and effectively.

The Need for Teacher Training

For a successful implementation of 'teaching tasks' it is indispensable that the teacher is properly trained. It is important that, primarily, the teacher should appreciate the new objectives, new course content and the changed form, before s/he can implement it. Most of our teachers are excellent

lecturers, but they are less confident when it comes to facilitating 'communicative skills'. Because of a longstanding tradition of content-oriented teaching method a transition to communicative methodology cannot be successfully implemented without necessary teacher training and education. The problem of training all the teachers of English, in the colleges affiliated to the university of Calicut, is an enormous one. Considering the magnitude of the problem, suitable programmes have to be developed in order to offer in-service training to teachers at the undergraduate level. Since the concept of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is new to the majority of the existing teachers, it is ideal to have intensive, full-time and short-term courses all round the year, at the academic staff colleges in the university, with the new under-graduate curriculum in focus.

CLT to be Made the Thrust-area for the Refresher Courses

Refresher Courses are offered every semester at the academic staff college of the University. The teachers in the colleges and universities are advised by the U.G.C. to have attended a required number of Refresher Courses before they enter the next grade in their career. The researcher's experience is that teachers attend the orientation and refresher programmes mainly because it is a requirement for the sanction of increments.

The success or failure of any programme or innovation depends on how the teacher views it; therefore the teacher's role remains indisputably central

to the whole process. The communicative English syllabus envisages a totally changed role for the teachers and places a great responsibility on their shoulders. Curricular innovations usually fail because teachers do not understand the rationale behind the changes, and go on with the old methods of lecture. The inevitable consequence has to be that there is no significant improvement in the learner's acquisition of the communicative skills.

In ideal conditions, all teachers need to be trained whenever changes are introduced, further there should be follow-up training as well, to prevent them from reverting back to their old ways. However, since this is an impossibility in the Kerala (Indian) context, standing within the limitations of our economic conditions, the Refresher Courses can be restructured in the perspective of the recent change in Part I, Paper I English.

The teachers cannot be allowed to take the Orientation/Refresher courses with the same light-hearted bent. They should not only be given proper orientation and be alerted with adequate cues, but be made to practise it in the classroom. By providing a coherent rationale for the techniques, and enforcing interaction of all the teachers in the workshops, the Refresher Courses can be made more meaningful, more than just a means for ensuring the increment. Androsenko thinks:

> The key to the success of the course is conducting it workshop-style, so that the teachers experience the activities themselves

from the stand point of the learner. Approximately two-thirds of the course time is devoted to this format.

New attitude building takes time. Most trainees approach cautiously to the prospect of playing games two or three times a week. Some of them (older and experienced teachers) are candid enough to inform me that they have never played games in class and hopefully will never have to – it is a waste of valuable time which can be better employed in reading and translating another specialized text. Very soon, however, most teachers get enthusiastic about interaction techniques and ask for more. Thus, the purpose of communication exercises and games is not only to demonstrate to the trainees how to conduct a role play or use different types of information-gap activities, but to allow to develop the feeling of excitement and well-being that follows from performing something really meaningful in a group. Only in this way will the trainers truly see the benefits of a communicative approach, believe in its intrinsic usefulness, and what is most important, want to practise it in their own classes (Androsenko 3).

Very often, in the case of syllabus reforms, we find innovations failing, and the initial enthusiasm dying out, because the teachers are happy to revert to

the old culture, and resist change. The Refresher Courses have to be followed by a follow-up programme where the teachers have to produce proper credentials to prove the implementation of the methods. Then only should they be given the completion certificate of the course, which is necessary to ensure the next grade. Since training is an on-going process, it should be made necessary that all those who receive training in the Refresher Course should, as a follow-up, form study circles, conduct seminars, discussions, and arrange talks by experts in the field. In addition to this, teachers of the undergraduate classes can undertake team planning, practice-teaching and classroom observation as a part of the process of self-improvement. In short, interaction among teachers, and between teachers should be promoted, as much as possible.

The researcher's hypothesis is that the academic staff colleges can give thrust to the new methodology in the Refresher Courses to counter the diluting effects of the innovations. The principals and the concerned authorities should ensure the adequate environment for the teachers of English, to implement the new methods, and they should also ensure that newly appointed teachers are inducted into the new methodology before they are given the undergraduate classes to teach.

Purely Literature Oriented Text Books in the Second year

Unlike Paper I, Paper II of the first year, and Paper III of the second

year are purely literature oriented, compulsory Prose and Drama, Shakespeare

and Poetry. Though the objectives of this content are not mentioned in the

syllabus, it is assumed that the aim is to develop literary sensibility in the

learners. Because of the lack of specified objectives, and the text-oriented

examination at the end of the year, the teachers follow a more or less uniform

pattern in teaching these texts. The great proportion of the classroom time is

spent on the texts of prose, drama and poetry.

In fact, if we use a text book in the classroom it should be as a useful

language teaching device. The essence of language teaching consists in being

able to provide the language activity which leads to language learning.

Language activity includes listening to the language, speaking it, reading in the

language, and writing in it. The teacher should be more concerned with making

the student speak, read or write than with doing these things himself. The most

important skill that can be developed with the help of the text books, is that of

reading. Since a student can learn to read only through the activity of reading,

the teacher must give him opportunities to read the text himself. In order to

use the book to teach how to read, the textbook has to be made as interesting as

possible by making the content interesting, and controlling the language used

in the text, so that it is not too difficult for the learner. If the readability is not

ensured, there is the risk of the student not reading the material.

Gradually, the student can be led from reading the textbook to the 'real

life' materials outside the classroom texts. All the reading that is done in real life is done alone, and that is the kind of reading that the teachers have to prepare the students to do.

The researcher's observation is that there is a tendency to teach the textbook for its contents rather than to use it as a means of teaching language. The teachers, mostly, interpret the text in the classroom, as meticulously as they can. The texts for detailed and non detailed study (Part I, Novel) are dealt with in the same exhaustive manner, each idea is interpreted, each word is explained, and each reference is investigated. The student is generally passive, and the teacher is expected to do all the work. While teaching a prose text, or a poem, or a play, or a novel, the teacher begins by giving an introduction to the background of the text; the author, his life, the age in which he lived, his important works, and the literary movement with which the author is related. The teacher perhaps believes that this might help the students to understand and appreciate the text, and also cross the hurdles of examinations successfully. The students are not encouraged to approach the text directly, and read the information which is available in books.

It would be better if the teacher told the students where to find the information, and make them find it themselves. In fact, we seem to spend much of the time telling the students facts which they could find out for themselves.

The Text Book not Always Interesting and the Language not Controlled

As mentioned above, the textbooks should be as readable as possible, and the language adequately controlled.

For example, many of the teachers and students think that the prescribed novel, *The Woodlanders*, is not interesting enough in the present context. Similarly, even though Julius Caesar is a great play, it is too heavy for the General English students, which brings in the problem of readability. The students do not find the context interesting and the language used in the text is too difficult for them.

The researcher's suggestion is that instead of prescribing for study the whole text of Shakespeare, interesting and selected passages from all the great plays of Shakespeare can be prescribed so that at least some interested students may be driven curious to read the plays in full. The teacher's presentation of the text must limit itself to preparing the students for the exercise of individual reading. Sometimes the student may not like to read for a variety of reasons. Then, the teacher's function is to try to understand their 'reading blocks' and to remove them, so that they will be motivated to read. There can be a psychological resistance to reading, perhaps because they do not have the habit of reading, or, the student may be kept away from reading because of linguistic difficulties like occurrence of unfamiliar vocabulary. The teacher can train the students by equipping them with the vocabulary necessary

for reading, but we cannot expect to teach the student all the words which he will come across. A skillful reader is one who has been trained to 'decode' the message in the text without worrying about the meaning of every individual word. The reader should also have the necessary grammar in order to overcome the difficulties created by complicated grammatical structures.

The Present Syllabus Lacking in the Most Important Criterion

Though an attempt has been made to introduce communicative language teaching in the present syllabus, it ignores the most important component of a good syllabus, that is, a statement of clear objectives in terms of the needs of the students. It does not state what are the skills, and what is the quantum of the skills to be taught, and what the students are expected to have achieved at the end of the course.

Other two glaring exclusions are: (1) lack of guidelines to the teacher regarding the teaching methods and strategies to be used in the classroom. (2) lack of instruction as to what to test, and how to test in the examination at the end of the course.

In the absence of adequate guidelines the teachers follow the old method of lecturing, and the paper-setter gives the traditional type of essay, paragraph, short-answer and annotation, purely based on the content of the text. The response to the questionnaire to the teachers directly point to these omissions. Although the language skills to be developed are implicit in the

'Communicative Tasks' (text book, Part I English, Paper I), they are not clearly stated. The teacher cannot be expected to visualize what he is expected to teach by looking at the content of the text, but his teaching activities should be adequately supported by the syllabus and the examination.

Examination Systems

> Perhaps the chief importance of examination in language work is not their effect in testing the pupils' learning, but their effect upon the teachers' teaching. Departments of Education may issue syllabuses and 'Suggestions to Teachers', but what the teacher actually does is always what the examination demands. Regardless of syllabuses, suggestions, or his own ideals, he must do so; he has no choice (West 192).

This observation by Michael West sums up the basis of the examinations held in the U.G. classes today. Examinations are not set on the basis of the instruction detailed in the syllabus, and they simply seem to test the students' ability to memorize and reproduce the content of the text books.

Michael West makes a distinction between two kinds of examinations, knowledge examinations and test examinations. The knowledge examination is a kind of sampling, as in History, for example, where facts are to be learned and answered correctly, and if the student answers half the questions it is assumed that he knows 50%. "It is just the same process as grading a box of

apples." (West 192). The test examination, on the other hand, is a measure of ability to do something, as to "swim a hundred yards before being allowed to go out in a boat on the river". So also in language work we want to know whether the candidate can speak the language at a reasonable speed. Though language is a skill, and its examination should be a test of ability to use the language, there is always the tendency to make the examination a 'knowledge examination', to make it a sampling of facts. Thus the examiner asks a "sample of syntax and grammar rules" and, a sample of facts about the literature of a foreign language. What should be really tested is whether the student can read, write, speak and understand the language.

The 'knowledge examination' is easy to set, easy to apply, and easy to correct, whereas 'tests' involve a more elaborate technique in setting, and in applying. It is easier to prepare a class for a knowledge examination even if they do not possess the language skills.

In the question papers attached, the second part of paper I – General English, seems to test the reading and writing skills, and can be partially said to be a test- examination. Paper II and Paper III, on the other hand, have essays, short answer questions and annotations based on the text, which seem only to test the students' ability to memorize and reproduce the content of the text books. These two papers can be said to follow the 'knowledge examination' pattern. Such a type of examination in language, does not provide any incentive or motivation to develop the language skills.

Question Papers of Degree Examination – Part I English

University of Calicut

FIRST YEAR B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. DEGREE EXAMINATION

MARCH/APRIL 2001

Paper I – GENERAL ENGLISH

(2000 admissions)

Time: Three Hours   Maximum : 100 marks

I.   Write an essay of not more than 300 words in answer to *one* of the

following questions:-

(a) Giles Winterborne ...."was a good man and did good things."

Substantiate.

[*Hints* : Homely, honest – rural-trader in apples – rough exterior –

loves but loses Grace – many sufferings – nobility, concern for Grace

lead to his death.]

(b) Narrate the events that took place on Midsummer Eve.

[*Hints* : Superstition – glimpse of future partner – village girls go to

wood – Fitzpiers and Giles wait for Grace – she falls into former's

arms – beginning of new relationship between them – Suke Damson

episode.]

(1 x 15 = 15 marks)

II. Give short answers, in not more than *two* sentences each, in answer to *ten* of the following questions :-

(a) Who is the First character to appear in "The Woodlanders"? What is the purpose of his journey?

(b) What was John South's obsession?

(c) What was scrawled on Giles' wall? Who did it?

(d) Why did Mr. Melbury want his daughter to marry Giles?

(e) Why did Mrs. Charmond decide against making Grace her companion?

(f) Why did Grammer Oliver take ten pounds from the doctor?

(g) Who was the stranger who came to Hintock House on Midsummer Eve?

(h) Where did Fitzpiers want his marriage to take place?

(i) Who gifted, and who made use of, Darling?

(j) What do you know about Mr. Charmond?

(k) How and why does Tim Tangs try to harm Fitzpiers?

(l) How did Marty indirectly cause the break-up of the Fitzpiers- Mrs. Charmon relationship?

(10 x 2= 20 marks)

III. Write an essay on *one* of the following topics in not more than 300 words:-

(a) World Peace

(b) The Computer Age

(c) Environmental Hazards

(1 x 15 = 15 marks)

IV. Make notes on the following passage using standard symbols, abbreviations and other techniques:-

Mathematics is the base of all other sciences and arithmetic is the base of Mathematics. Arithmetic is the science of numbers and it is taught from the first year of school.

Numbers include whole numbers that are formed by the digits and their combinations. 614 is, for example, formed by three digits – 6, 1 and 4. But numbers also include parts of numbers smaller than one. These are expressed either as fractions (e.g. ½) or as decimals (e.g. 0.5).

There are four main operations in arithmetic – addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Some other basic operations include the following – to square, cube or raise to any other power. Most of these operations lead to very interesting and challenging problems.

There was a time when I believed that arithmetic was the most absorbing subject in school. But later in school I discovered algebra and geometry, and geometrical theorems and propositions. Now give me such greater excitement than the sums in arithmetic.

(10 marks)

V. Make a conversation not exceeding 75 words, on the following situation:-

You are at the Library and cannot find the book you want. The Librarian comes forward to help you.

(5 marks)

VI. Attempt *one* of the following:-

(a) Your friend has lost his/her mother. Draft a telegram of condolence to him/her.

(b) Your friend is getting married. You are ill and cannot attend the ceremony. Draft a telegram to your friend expressing your inability to be present.

(1 x 4 = 4 marks)

VII. Attempt *one* of the following:-

(a) Write a letter to a travel agency applying for the post of Receptionist there.

(b) Write a letter to your former classmate about your plans for higher studies.

(1 x 6 = 6 marks)

VIII. Attempt *one* of the following:-

(a) Draft a report about the cultural activities of the Youth Club of which you are the Secretary.

(b) Imagine you are the local reporter of a newspaper. Write a report about

an earthquake that hit your town.

(1 x 5 = 5 marks)

IX.

(a) Use the correct tense of the verbs given in brackets:

1. My brother —— for an interview last month and —— another

   tomorrow.

   (appear, attend)

2. My friend —— me to a movie but I told him I —— it already.

   (invite, see)

3. These girls —— the dark because they —— in ghosts.

   (fear, believe)

4. My mother —— a crystal glass while she —— the house. (break,

   clean)

(4 x 1 = 4 marks)

(b) Add suitable question tags:

5. I am very late.

6. Let's go for a walk.

(2 x 1 = 2 marks)

(c) Choose the appropriate modals from those given below to fill in blanks:

   (must, ought to have, dare, needn't)

7. How —— he enter the class!

8.   We —— obey laws.

9.   You —— worked hard.

10.   You —— bother to make lunch for me.

(4 x 1 = 4 marks)

(d)   Fill in with the right prepositions:

11.   What is the time —— your watch?

12.   You must abstain —— bad habits.

13.   Teachers sit —— their desks.

14.   The program began —— a prayer —— a student.

(4 x 1 = 4 marks)

(e)   Do as directed:

15.   Mount Everest is in Himalyas. (Use articles wherever necessary)

16.   A —— of arrows fell on the warrior. (Use the right group name.)

17.   "Come in and have a drink," he said to his friend. (Change into indirect speech)

18.   Give the full form of the following abbreviations:-

(i) anon   (ii) i.e.

19.   Give the meaning of:

(i) viva voce   (ii) bona fide

20.   is he dying grace asked her husband

(Rewrite using capitals and punctuation marks wherever necessary)

(6 x 1 = 6 marks)

FIRST YEAR B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. DEGREE EXAMINATION

MARCH/APRIL 2001

Paper II – MODERN PROSE AND DRAMA

(2000 admissions)

Time: Three Hours   Maximum : 100 marks

I.   Answer *one* of the following in an essay of about 450 words:-

(a)   Examine Nehru's tribute to his master and mentor, Mahatma Gandhi.

[*Hints*: The role of Gandhi – condition of Indian workers – dull points of

our national life – emergence of Gandhiji – how he influenced millions –

Gandhiji's personality as a leader of excellence.]

(b)   Does the essay "On Saying Please" reveal Gardiner's keen observation

of life and manners?

[*Hints*: The need for good manners – the lift man – value of courtesies –

example of the bus conductor – the lessons of courtesy and good manners

– which makes life easier – in a world of bad manners and ill humour.]

(1 x 15 = 15 marks)

II.   Answer *one* of the following in an essay of about 450 words:-

(a)   Consider *Pygmalion* as "a play of ideas".

[*Hints*: A number of problems – presented and discussed – Eliza's phonetics –

a problem overcome – Eliza's problem of loss of identity – the class

distinctions – Higgin's lack of interest in Eliza – the predicament of Alfred

Doolittle – his new identity – his quest for belonging - several problems

highlighted – no solution offered.]

(b)   Discuss the role of Colonel Pickering in *Pygmalion*.

[Hints : Elderly amiable military gentleman – devoted scholar of phonetics –

his keen interest in Eliza's education – his generosity – and moral

principles – his crucial role in the play – contrast and similarity between

the two – a foil to Higgins.]

(1x 15 = 15 marks)

III.   Answer each of the following in a *paragraph* of about 120 words:-

(a)   Gandhiji's observations about our everyday actions.

(b)   According to Lynd, how can one avoid disappointment?

(c)   What is the reason for the quarrel between Prof. Higgins and Eliza

Doolite?

(d)   Give a brief character-sketch of Mrs. Pearce.

(4 x 5 = 20 marks)

IV.   Answer the following questions in not more than *three* sentences each:-

(a)   What is the serious problem of controversy engaged in by George

Dyer?

(b)   "It was a question of 'Please' – explain."

(c)   Why does Gandhiji question Alexander's claim to the title "Great"?

(d)   Why is Lynd disappointed in good films?

(e)   What is the peculiarity of the eyes of a toad?

(f)   Who was the note taker? How was this meeting fortunate for both?

(g)   What is the highest compliment that Eliza receives? How did she react to it?

(h)   Why does Eliza throw the slippers at Prof. Higgins?

(i)   How does Col. Pickering's treatment of Eliza differ from Higgins's?

(10 x 2 = 20 marks)

V.   Annotate the following:-

(a)   We merely notice and conform. We are creatures of outside influences, as a rule we do not think, we only imitate.

(b)   We shall not reach this stage, as long as we do not believe – and experience the belief – that God within us, the God of all, is the ever present witness to all our acts.

(c)   As if anyone would expect him to have a burning Catherine wheel in his button-hole.

(d)   Yes, you squashed cabbage leaf, you disgrace to the noble architecture of these columns, you incarnate insult to the English language: I could pass you off as the Queen of Sheba.

(e)   I have taught scores of American millionaires how to speak English, the best looking women in the world. I'm seasoned. They might as well be blocks of wood.

(5 x 6 = 30 marks)

SECOND YEAR B.A./B.Sc. DEGREE EXAMINATION

MARCH/APRIL 2001

Paper III – SHAKESPEARE AND POETRY

(1999 Admissions)

Time: Three Hours   Maximum : 100 marks

I.   Answer *one* of the following in an essay of about 350 words:-

(a)   Critically examine the Funeral speeches in *Julius Caesar*.

[*Hints:* Contrast between two speakers – Brutus appeals to reason – logic fails on audience – Antony faces hostility – wins by appealing to emotions – Caesar's greatness stressed – the will – the mob maddened into fury – Antony gloats over success.]

(b)   Brutus' idealism precipitates in his own tragedy. Discuss.

[*Hints:* Brutus' idealism – at war with himself – caught by Cassius – flattered – love of Rome greater – joins conspiracy – soliloquy in orchard – no malice towards Caesar – ignores Cassius' advice – allows Antony to speak –

overthrow – victim of his own ideals – loved by all]

(1 x 15 = 15 marks)

II.   Answer *one* of the following in an essay of about 350 words:-

(a)   The major concerns in Marvell's poem "To His Coy Mistress" are love and time. Discuss.

[*Hints*: Reluctant mistress – nature of time – importance of love and sexuality – logical argument – defence against passage of time]

(b)   Shelley establishes the transient nature of worldly power and fame in "Ozymandias". Discuss.

[*Hints:* Poet's knowledge of Ozymandias – shattered visage – contrast between past and present – sculptor's knowledge – proclamation on pedestal – pride and ultimate fall – lesson implied.]

(1 x 15 = 15 marks)

III.   Write short notes on *four* of the following each in a paragraph of about 120 words:-

(a)   What are your impressions of the Mob in *Julius Caesar*?

[*Hints*: Mob plays vital role – fortunes of principal characters – attitude to Pompey, Caesar, Brutus, Antony – mob fickle, foolish – easily swayed]

(b)   The dramatic significance of the Quarrel scene in *Julius Caesar*.

[*Hints:* Original – most popular – clash between Brutus' idealism and Cassius' practicality – scene happily concluded]

(c) Comment on the character of Portia in *Julius Caesar*.

[*Hints*: Portia and relationship with husband – her tragic end]

(d) The theme of the poem "Ode On A Grecian Urn".

[*Hints*: Beauty of the urn – beauty is truth – superior to life – transitory nature of life compared to permanence of art – art gives permanence to life]

(e) Sketch the character of the Duke in "My Last Duchess".

[*Hints*: Supreme egotism – arrogant superiority – cold and possessive]

(f) Consider "Dover Beach" as a poem mourning the loss of faith in modern times.

[*Hints*: Decline of moral values, religious faith – spiritual darkness – Victorian age – modern man]

(4 x 5 = 20 marks)

IV. Answer *ten* of the following in not more than *three* sentences each:-

1. What is the source of Shakespeare's play Julius Caesar?

2. Give the names of the Tribunes who appear in the opening scene.

3. What is meant by "Ides of March"?

4. Why does Cassius call Brutus a moral alchemist?

5. What was Calpurnia's dream?

6. Why does Shakespeare say that "Love's not Time's fool"?

7. What is Ulysses' description of experience?

8. How is the beauty of Helen described by Edgar Allan Poe?

9. How does Emily Dickinson describe death in the poem "Because I Could Not Stop For Death"?

10. What is the most bitter wrong referred to in the poem "Easter 1916"?

11. How does Blake describe the tiger's creator?

12. What is the significance of the bronze statue at the end of the poem "My Last Duchess"?

(10 x 2 = 20 marks)

V. Annotate the following passages:-

1. Cowards die many times before their deaths,

   The valiant never taste of death but once.

2. The evil that men do lives after them;

   The good is oft interred with their bones;

3. His life was gentle, and the elements

   so mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up

   And say to all the world, "This was a man!"

4. That woman's days were spent

   In ignorant good-will,

   Her nights in argument

   Until her voice grew shrill.

5. Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard

   Are sweeter;

(5 x 6 = 30 marks)

Problem II – Need for Teacher-Role Reorientation

Teacher – The Vital Factor

As the renewed build-up towards a skill-based language teaching programme escalates, the echoes of the teacher-role resound across the field of ELT, focusing attention on the emerging importance of English as an international language. The various theories of language learning, which try to embark upon principles like behaviourism, audiolingualism etc fail to estimate the essential role the teacher is called upon to play in language learning. The teacher is a more important factor than methods and materials even though linguists and psychologists have built up a proliferation of approaches and methods in second and foreign language teaching. The new concept of language teaching, through novel methods, invariably provides a package of guidelines for the teacher and the learner, but overlooks the truth that the theoretical linguistic theories may fall flat in the absence of the right teacher. Allwright rightly observes, "do we need teaching materials to save us from our deficiency as teachers?" (12).

Even in the absence of classroom amenities, teaching aids, materials, methods and good libraries, a sound foundation for effective teaching can be laid in our colleges , and the expected degree of learning can be more or less ensured, in the presence of sincere devoted teaching personnel, with integrity,

professional loyalty and the right sense of direction.

The Problem Stated

The researcher's study has tried to identify some basic problems which are responsible for poor comprehension and communication among the students in the undergraduate classes. The problem of a well-defined syllabus has been elaborately discussed in the previous section. Another suggestion that emerges from this investigation is the absence of proper orientation, involvement, motivation and sense of direction, at least on the part of some teachers, both in the schools and colleges. By the time a child reaches the college, somewhere along the way, he would have missed learning some of the skills necessary for his proficiency in communication. A learner cannot be expected to have proficiency in comprehension if he never reads at all, so also his communication skills remain below the expected standard if he is not made to write on his own, or speak a few words in English.

The Various Teacher Roles

Several roles are assigned to teachers in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the pre-eminence of particular roles being determined by the notion of CLT that is adopted. Breen and Candlin sums up the teacher roles in the following words.

The teacher has two main roles; the first role is to facilitate the communication process between all participants and the various

activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent

participant within the learning – teaching group. The latter role is

related to the objectives of the first role and arises from it.

These roles imply a set of secondary roles for the teacher; first,

as an organizer of resources and as a resource himself, second as

a guide within the classroom procedures and activities...... A

third role for the teacher is that of researcher and learner, with

much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and

abilities, actual and observed experience of the nature of

learning and organizational capacities (Breen and Candlin 99).

Jeremy Harmer assigns the roles of controller, assessor, organizer,

prompter, participant and resource to the teacher depending on the function he

performs in different activities. The teacher plays the role of the controller

when he is completely in charge of the class. What the students do, when they

speak, and what they speak and write are controlled by the teacher. It has to be

realized that the role of the controller is not necessarily the most effective

role for the teacher to adopt. A good part of a teacher's job is to assess the

students' work. The teacher's function as an assessor is to show where

incorrectness occurs. "Organising feed back is a major part of assessing

students' performance so that they can see the extent of their success or

failure" (Harmer 201).

A distinction has to be made between 'content feedback' and 'form feedback'. 'Content feedback' concerns an assessment of how well the students performed the activity as an activity rather than a language exercise. "Content feedback, in other words, centres on the content or subject matter of an activity: it aims to give students feedback on their degree of communicative efficiency" (202). It is important for the teacher to be sensitive to his students in his role as assessor, and to realize when correction is inappropriate.

'Form feedback', on the other hand, tells students how well they performed in terms of the correct use of language. When communicative activities are taking place the teacher will record particularly common errors and mistakes. After giving content feedback he can ask students what was wrong in the examples he collected. "This may then form the basis for a mini-presentation of language which the majority of students are getting wrong"(202).

Perhaps the most vital and tough role the teacher has to play is that of an organizer. Whenever the students are put into some activity, they should know what exactly they are to do. The teacher has to give the right information, and the instruction should be given so carefully that it should not be conflicting or confusing. The main objective of the teacher as an organizer is to tell the students what they are going to speak, write or read about, to give instruction about what exactly their task is, to get the activity going, and then provide

feedback when the activity is over. Though this looks singularly easy, it can become dangerous if the teacher does not exactly plan beforehand, what he/she is going to say.

The teacher has to be on guard against certain things, for example, not take for granted that the students have understood the instructions. It is better to check that the students have grasped what they have to do, and where necessary, the students' mother tongue can be used for this purpose.

The organisation of an activity can be divided into three main parts. Initially, the teacher gives a 'lead-in', which is in the form of an introduction to the subject. The teacher and students may briefly discuss the topic in order to start thinking about it, and in short, the lead-in is concerned with a familiarization with the topic. After the lead-in stage, the teacher instructs, where it is explained exactly what the students should do. Finally the teacher 'initiates' the activity. He makes sure that the students have understood, and then asks to start, telling to see if they can be the first to finish, thus adding a competition element which is always motivating. "The lead in → instruct (demonstrate) → initiate → organize feedback sequence can always be followed when the teacher is acting as organizer" (204).

Another important role of the teacher, the role of the prompter, is when he/she needs to encourage students to participate, or needs to give suggestions about how they may proceed in an activity, when they are confused about what

to do next. "The role of the prompter has to be performed with discretion, for, if the teacher is too aggressive he starts to take over from the students, whereas the idea is that he should be helping them only when it is necessary"(204).

As a participant, the teacher not only improves the atmosphere in the class, but also gives the student a chance to practise the language with someone who speaks it better than they do. "There is no reason why the teacher should not participate as an equal in an activity especially where activities like simulation are taking place. The danger is that the teacher will tend to dominate, and the students will both allow and expect this to happen. It will be up to the teacher to make sure it does not" (204).

When a communicative activity is taking place in the classroom, it is important that the teacher should not interfere, but s/he has to be aware of what is going on. Moreover, the teacher has to be a kind of 'walking resource centre', in other words, s/he should always be ready to offer help if it is needed. These are certain activities such as the communication games where the students are to be forced to perform in English entirely on their own with no outside help, but there are many other activities like writing individually or in pairs or groups, where the teacher should be available as resource, if the students need.

Richards and Rodgers assign to the teachers the roles of needs analyst,

counsellor, and group process manager. As a needs analyst, the teacher has the responsibility for deciding and reciprocating to learner language needs. This may be done, either informally, holding discussions with the students regarding their "learning style, learning assets, and learning goals". Or, it may be done formally, through administrating a needs assessment instrument which is an attempt to determine an individual's motivation for studying the language.

> For example, students might respond on a 5–point scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) to statements like the following.
>
> I want to study English because ....
>
> 1. I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job.
>
> 2. It will help me better understand English speaking people and their way of life.
>
> 3. One needs a good knowledge of English to gain other people's respect.
>
> 4. It will allow me to meet and converse with interesting people.
>
> 5. I need it for my job.
>
> 6. It will enable me to think and behave like English-speaking people.
>
> On the basis of such needs assessments, teachers are expected to

plan group and individual instruction that responds to the learner's needs (Richards and Rodgers 78).

In Communicative Language Teaching, the teacher- counsellor is expected to play the role of an effective communicator trying to "maximize the meshing of speaker intention and hearer interpretation through the use of paraphrase, confirmation and feedback" (78).

> CLT programmes expect teachers to master less teacher-centred classroom management skills. It is the teacher's task to set the classroom as a ground for communication and communicative activities. "Guidelines for classroom practice (eg. Littlewood 1981; Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983) suggest that during an activity the teacher monitors, encourages and suppresses the inclination to supply gaps in lexis, grammar and strategy but notes such gaps far later commentary and communicative practice. At the conclusion of group activities, the teacher leads in the debriefing of the activity, pointing out alternatives and extensions and assisting groups in self-correction discussion" (78 – 79).

Students' Views of Good Teachers

The demands on the teacher in a learner-centred approach are greater than in the conventional teacher- centred approaches. Luke Prodromou (1991)

reports the results of a survey designed to discover students' views of good and bad language teaching. Although students' opinion and expectations are not sacred, a mild admonition that there is a risk of falling short of the students' expectations, will be a good starting point for beginning to understand and meet students' needs. A teacher ought to read the signals and know more about what skills are required of him to encourage good learning.

With the help of a diagram Prodromou summarises some of the salient features observed in the comments made by the students in the survey. The diagram comprises two circles, the inner circle, and the outer circle. The inner circle shows the constraints of the teacher, which, when overcome, activate a wider range of teacher roles (outer circle).
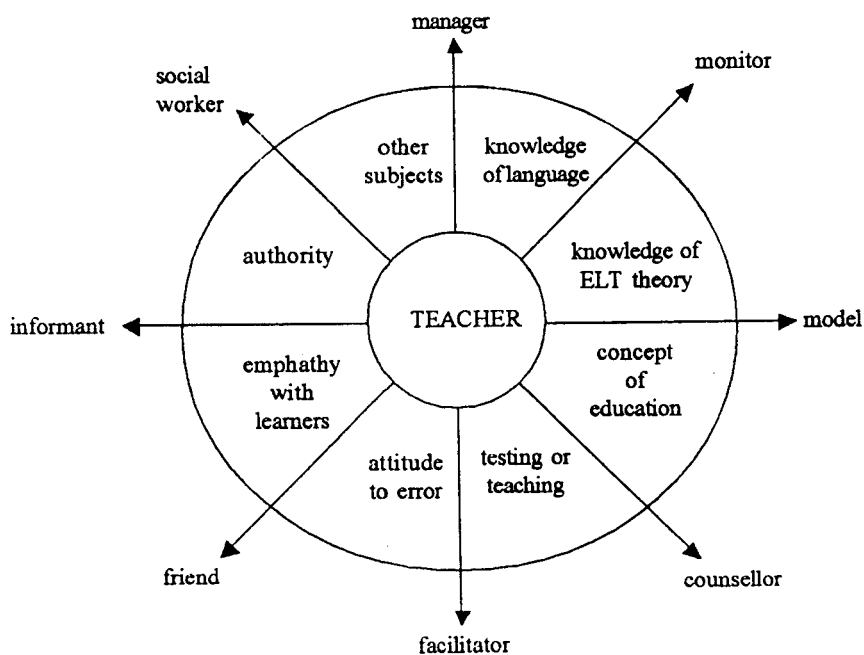
Fig. 6. "Students' view of Good Teachers" .Prodromou 3. English Teaching Forum 1991: 4 .

The Outer Circle : The Role of the Teacher

After having emerged out of the inner circle of professional and pedagogic constraints, the teacher encounters him/herself with many roles to play: friend, manager, monitor, counsellor, facilitator of learning, reliable informant on the language, social worker, model for the students and so on. The following table describes some of the activities teachers engage in, and the roles they are required to play.

Activity	Role
The teacher gives instructions for students to get into groups	Manager
The teacher asks students to repeat a sentence after her for pronunciation practice	Model
The teacher goes round listening to pairs practising a dialogue	Monitor
The teacher advises students how best to approach a task	Counsellor
The teacher explains when we use the present perfect for recently completed actions	Informant
The teacher provides material and guidance to enable students to work on their own	Facilitator

The teacher stays behind after class and   Social worker

     discusses one of the student's personal problems

     which is affecting his/her work

The teacher chats with students over coffee   Friend

     or arranges a cinema visit with the class   (Prodromou 4).

Classroom Management

There are so many activities that the teacher does in the class which are difficult to describe, yet vital to the dynamics of the lesson. However indefinable, and intangible these qualities may be, it is noticed that something goes wrong when they are missing, and the lesson appears to be falling apart. Following is a diagram of some ways of how and when the lesson falls apart.
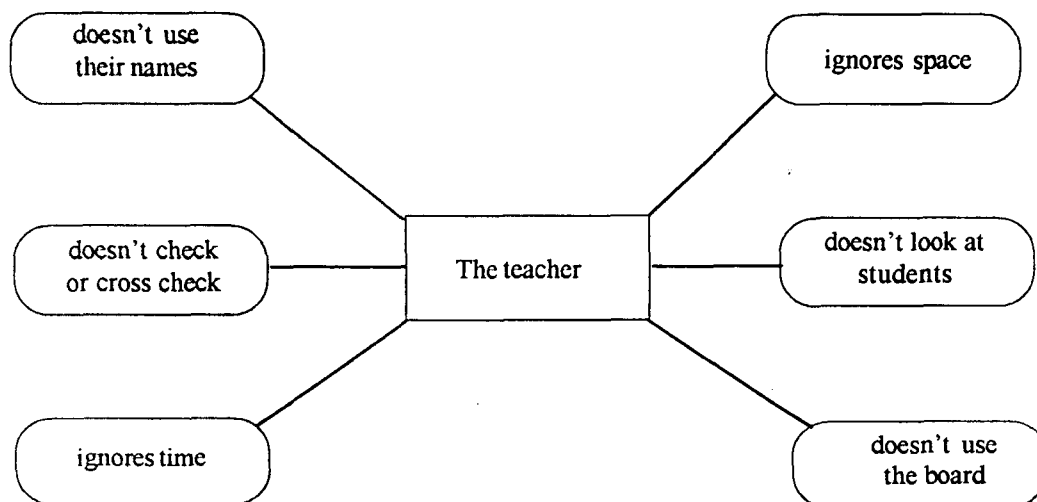
Fig.7. Lessons Falling Apart. Prodromou 6. <u>English Teaching Forum</u> 1991 : 4.

In a large mixed ability class, the use of space and time, the use of students' names, eye contact, the use of the blackboard, and the way checking is conducted all contribute to the cohesion of a lesson or the "togetherness" of a class" (4).

A mixed ability class invariably poses more chances of falling apart, and a badly managed large mixed-ability class not only falls out very easily, but will probably find it hard to come together again. The U.G. classes in our context is an example of a large mixed ability group. The teacher has to be always on guard, manoeuvring some way to hold the attention of the students fully, because what is challenging and exciting to one set of learners may appear to be monotonous to another set.

The other less obvious factors like the arrangement of the classroom, the position of the teacher, knowledge of the students' names, eye contact, time management, and the use of the black board may appear to be not worthy of amplification, but they would certainly form the basis for a strong intervention in the course of a teacher's task. A teacher cannot afford to underrate these issues because even the minds of the U.G. students are so fragile and sensitive that it is not uncommon for the students to mention these qualities in their teacher-evaluation. It should be the golden rule for a prudent teacher to know the students' names and use it, which makes for better rapport with them. Further, eye contact is an important 'managerial teacher–style' that

may have surprisingly significant effects, especially in combination with other factors.

> Although voice training is a skill requiring time and expertise, these are certain common-sense principles that all teachers may bear in mind as a starting point for taking full advantage of one of the most valuable instruments in a teacher's repertoire (6).

This observation focuses attention on the simple fact that a monotone, regardless of changes in topic, very often lead to the students switching off. The power of the blackboard too cannot be neglected in our context even though it may seem to be odd to speak in favour of the black board in the age of the computers, audio visuals and the internet.

Who is a Teacher?

An apt answer has been provided to this question by a British University teacher – a psychologist.

> Teachers can be described in many ways. They have been likened to artists, to gardeners, or, more recently, to social engineers; and each phrase conveys some inkling of their power. Each metaphor, may, however, also overemphasize what is merely one aspect. The 'artists' tend towards neglect of what is useful and humdrum. The 'gardener' may too fiercely discard the weeds and segregate their flowers into the conformities of neat groups. The

'engineer' may lay undue stress upon the study of efficiencies in the control of men.

Better tribute may therefore be paid to both wisdom and experience by using the more humble word 'craftsman' in designation of a teacher's skill. Teachers are craftsmen in their concern with the materials under their hand. They are cognizant of the personal and social processes by which modifications can be wrought. They are craftsmen also in their interest in the stimulation they offer – its content in terms of activity and knowledge, and the materials of instruction through which it can take perceptible shape (Summer Institute in English Teaching 2).

This comprehensive definition raises the teacher to many individuals in one – a moulder of character, a disseminator of knowledge, a seeker of truth, a guide, and so on. But the most suitable role for a teacher is that of a 'craftsman', and his materials are human beings, full of life and blood.

Francoise Cormon promises a new path through the observation:

It soon became clear to me that, although these trends may seem diverse, they have one underlying principle: language learning is at its best when teachers teach the students not the syllabus. This means remembering that students are people and that their personalities, feelings, and interests should be taken into account (Cormon 278).

The concept of 'Humanistic approaches' to language learning give the indication that learners "will learn much better if teachers are interested in their students, not only in their subject, and if the lesson is not about the artificial world, but about the 'here' and 'now' (279).

The communicative classroom requires a teacher of extraordinary abilities:

> A multi-dimensional, high-tech, Wizard-of-Oz-like super person – yet of flesh and blood. He or she must be confident without being conceited, judicious without being judgemental, ingenious without being unbridled, technically skilled without being pedantic, far-shifted without being far-fetched, down-to-earth without being earth-bound, inquiring without being inquisitive – the list is endless. But above all he or she must be learner–centered (Medgyes 107).

Although the highly acclaimed Humanistic–Psychological Approach, as interpreted by Moskonitz and others, is in several respects different from the Communicative Approach, in both views learners are seen not so much as full-time linguistic objects at whom language teaching is aimed, but rather as human individuals whose personal dignity and integrity, and the complexity of whose ideas, thoughts, needs, and sentiments, should be respected. By specific means, foreign language teachers must contribute to the self-actualizing

process of the individual, by striving to be 'human among the humans' (Littlewood, *Communicative* 94), genuinely interested people.

All teachers have been psychologists over the centuries, even if they realized or accepted this or not. The difference between traditional foreign language teachers and Communicative Teachers lies, among other things, in the degree of consciousness. The latter should be fully aware of the means they should take as psychologist-pedagogue in general and as language teachers in particular. The scope and responsibility of Communicative Teachers is, therefore, greatly enhanced. According to the 'Communicative psychology' the success of the learning programme is dependent on the ability of the teachers to withdraw. ' Withdraw' is a keyword in their vocabulary. However difficult it might be, they should not exhibit their own cleverness as conversationalists, but should be ready to radically reduce teacher talking time. For this 'low profile', they will be rewarded sufficiently in the quick development of their students. This 'withdrawal' does not mean relinquishing control over the class, since it would wear away the learner's most basic need, which is 'security'. Learner initiative and teacher control should balance with each other. "The idea that Stevick suggests is that there must be a way which will allow the teacher to keep nearly 100 per cent of the control, while at the same time the learner is exercising nearly 100 per cent of the initiative"(*qtd. in* Medgyes 107).

It is clear that learner's place is at the centre of a space which the

teacher has structured. Teachers are like the supporting actors in a play, who have hardly any words to say, but are the most decisive figures, on whom the whole drama turns. This 'withdrawn-and-yet-all-present' attitude requires of Communicative Teachers a high degree of personal cleverness and professional finesse.

U.G.C. Working Group's Views on Teacher –Role

The working group appointed by the University Grants Commission (1981) to identify the role and responsibility of teachers in meeting the social needs and the challenges of development, rightly observed that the system of higher education in India is often criticized on the ground that it lacks relevance and significance, and has not been able to contribute adequately to national development. In the 'forward' to the report, the Chairman of the U.G.C. reminded that

> It is the responsibility of the teacher to guide and inspire the
>
> students; to enrich his discipline; to inculcate values which are in
>
> consonance with our cultural heritage and our social objectives.
>
> This involves the transmission of knowledge through research,
>
> investigation and enquiry. In order to do justice to this very
>
> challenging task, the teacher has to be actively involved in
>
> programmes of community development, extension education,
>
> curricular and extra curricular activities, national and emotional

integration and social service. Various educational innovations like the restructuring of courses, introduction of examination reforms, making programmes relevant to social environment and community needs, developing new and emerging areas of studies, can be brought about successfully only if the teacher accepts a progressive outlook on education (UGC, *Teacher Role*2).

This integrated role for the teacher may need a robust training package, to enhance the overall teacher capabilities. Apart from traditional functions of having genuine interest in youth, and an understanding of psychology, the teacher has to perform two novel functions. Firstly, the important role for the transformation of the education system through active participation in such programmes as the restructuring of courses, examination reforms, faculty improvement and rural orientation is demanded of him. Secondly, s/he is expected to have commitment to a society based on justice, and strive for the inculcation of these values and extension of knowledge and skills to the society at large.

In effect the teacher should become an effective instrument in the process of development and social changes. He should be a key factor in the transformation of our value-system (2).

For a reshaping of the education sector the study group suggested an

urgent nationwide effort for a simultaneous break-through in the social and the educational sectors. The teachers and students have their share of responsibility in bettering standards, and bringing about changes in the existing system, for example, by initiating examination reforms, restructuring courses etc, and by making education responsive to the needs of the society and the nation.

Repeating the cliché that the destiny of the country is being made in the classrooms, the study group envisages teachers as agents of change. The major responsibility of the teacher is in relation to his students. His duty cannot be simply restricted to giving a number of lectures and covering the syllabus. He is called for a revolution in education – changes in objectives, in content, in teaching methods, in programmes, in the size and composition of the student body, in the selection and professional preparation of teachers and in organization.

The study group's wish is that each individual student should be treated as an end in himself, and has to be provided the widest opportunity to develop his skills, abilities and potentialities to the full.

The general trend among the teaching community is to oppose changes and innovations. It is reminded by the Group that the teacher has to play an important role in the acceptance and adoption of various educational innovations e.g. restructuring of courses, autonomous colleges, examination

reforms, practical orientation to courses, and so on. "Many of the reforms reached a dead end because of the apathy of the teacher".

The report is summed up with the view of the U.G.C. that amongst its essential features, it may be suggested that a teacher is expected to:

(1)   Uphold the dignity of the university and work towards the realization of its aims and objectives and keep the interest of students uppermost in his mind ie. spirit de corps.

(2)   Conscientiously perform his academic duties such as preparation of lectures and demonstrations, assessment, guidance, invigilation, extension and research.

(3)   Participation in adult education and extension programmes, NSS. Physical education and other extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, in keeping with his interest and aptitude.

(4)   Assess the work of the students impartially.

(5)   Avoid inciting students against other students, colleges or administration.

(6)   Express his free and frank opinion in seminars, conferences etc towards the contribution of knowledge (7).

Problem III – Examination System – not Conducive to the Development of Communication Skills

The Problem Stated

The researcher's observation and the answers to the questionnaire indicate that the present examination system is defective, in the sense that it does not facilitate the accomplishment of the objective of teaching a language, namely the acquiring of the communication skills. The principal focus of this observation is: the existing examination pattern places undue importance on the contents of the text that any pupil who has studied the text to a reasonable degree will pass the examination, without generating any intellectual activity, or exhibiting the skills of comprehension and communication. It has been noticed that the same unchanged system has been followed for many years without much modification. The system seems to overlook the fact that ability to merely memorise passages of prose, poetry, drama and novel is woefully inadequate to meet the communicative needs in the professional and social life of the students.

The examination system needs a thorough restructuring that only those who can understand, read and write English remarkably well, should be made to pass the examination. This changed thrust may thoroughly transform the whole profile of teaching, learning and testing of the English language. Since the

major concern today is the content of the text, most of the hours are spent by the teachers explaining the text line by line, giving answers to the questions and dictating summaries and essays. Many students learn these essays and answers by rote, and reproduce them in the answer papers because this will surely harbour them in the area of the pass percentage though they lack the language skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing. The teaching and learning of English is adversely influenced by this hard core malady. Hence, a new system of examination or testing has to crystallize that gives less attention to the contents of the text and more to the communicative skills in English.

Attempts Made to Tinker with Examination System

It has been increasingly felt that our examination system does not serve the purpose it should have served and it needs severe reconditioning in the present circumstances. Although efforts have been made to repair and patch the system, they have more or less remained unchanged. The emphasis on the improvement in examination system became a regular feature only after the presentation of the report of the Indian Education Commission in 1881–82. In the pre-independence era, Lord Curzon, and the first Indian University Commission of 1902 expressed dissatisfaction with the prevalent examination system in the colleges and universities, and suggested changes in the objectives and methodology of examination. The Committee observed:

> The greatest evil from which the system of University education
> in India suffers is that teaching is subordinated to examination

and not examination to teaching (Gupta I).

The Calcutta University Grants Commission of 1917–1919 also pointed out several flaws in the system of University examination, but steps were not taken to improve it, perhaps because the existing system served to fulfil the purpose of selecting clerks to assist the British in the administration affairs.

However, with independence, things began to change, and The Radhakrishna Commission, (1948) set up to investigate into the condition of the system of university education, was convinced that if they were to suggest any single reform in university education it would be that of examination. The Secondary Education Commission (1952) observed:

> The examinations today dictate the curriculum instead of following it, prevent any experimentation, hamper the proper treatment of subjects and sound methods of teaching, foster a dull uniformity rather than originality, encourage the average pupil to concentrate too rigidly upon too narrow a field and thus help him to develop wrong values in education. Pupils assess education in terms of success in examination ...... In short, external examinations are exercising a restricting influence over the entire field of education to such an extent as almost to nullify its real purpose (*qtd. in* Gupta 2).

Certain valuable suggestions for the improvement in examination system were made at the Bhopal Seminar in 1956, and by the S.R. Donkerbery Committee, appointed by the University Grants Commission in September 1957. This was followed by the visit of Dr. Benjamin S. Bloom in 1958 – 59, in response to the invitation of the University Grants Commission. Dr.Bloom's visit resulted in the preparation of a ten-year phased programme of examination reform which was subsequently approved by the Central Ministry of Education and the State Education Departments. The establishment of the Central Evaluation Unit in 1958 was the first major step towards the implementation of this programme. During the few years of existence the Unit established contacts with thousands of teachers and oriented them to the new concepts and techniques of evaluation, and gave training to lecturers in training colleges, and paper setters. The sudden closure of this unit after nearly a decade of useful service, was a great set back to the movement.

In 1965, the University Grants Commission appointed a Committee to review the standards of University education, and this was followed a year later by a report of the Education Commission headed by Dr.Kothari. It remarked:

> In the present system, when the future of the students is totally decided by one external examination at the end of the year, they (students) pay minimum attention to the teachers, do little independent study through most of the academic year and cram

accurately for the final examination. The crippling effect of the external examination on the quality of work in higher education is so great that examination reform has become crucial to all progress (*qtd. in* Gupta 4).

In 1969, the University Grants Commission set up another Committee on Examination Reform in Central Universities which came up with concrete measures to improve the nature of examinations and the sessional work. In May, 1969, student representatives from more than 80 universities were invited to a three day conference, convened jointly by the Union Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission. In its Madurai Session (1970), the Inter-University Board of India and Ceylon outlined and made public its philosophy underlying examination reform. With this started the second practical phase of examination reform in India. In pursuance of the above decision, in 1971, the Inter-University Board of India and Ceylon organized a seminar of the University and College Experts, and published a report in which vital aspects and issues involved in the challenging task of examination reform in higher education were comprehensively discussed.

This was later followed up by a special meeting of the Vice-Chancellors in October 1971, where the suggestions were further analysed. In 1972, the Advisory Board of Education formed a committee for submitting a report on examinations, which was published the same year. The next year an important

document named 'A Plan of Action' came from the University Grants Commission, in which practical methods for effecting examination reform in the universities, were formulated.

It is rather evident that though the question of examination reform was raised for a period of more than a century, and in spite of consensus of ideas and expert opinions, for most of the time the movement was not effective enough to create the needed impact. This brings us to the consideration of various factors which have obstructed the reform in examination. Before any new means are thought about in that direction, it would be more prudent to identify the hurdles and to make an effort to clear them.

Blocks in the Way of Examination Reform

The major block in the implementation of schemes for examination reform has been created by educational authorities and teachers themselves. They, perhaps, fail to realize that examinations of the present type undermine basic educational objectives, and they may be lacking the consciousness of the subjectivity, unreliability, and lack of validity of the examinations as conducted today. Moreover, the Universities have failed in enforcing reforms in examination due to their lack of will in using authority, advice and legal privilege to bring about a change.

Most of the teachers lack the scientific knowledge of the problem, and have only a casual idea about the defects of the present examination system.

Many of them are conservatives in their views, and are traditionalists, lost in old ideas. So, they are reluctant to make new experiments, nor are they prepared to recognize the works of others in this field. If ever there are some teachers who genuinely feel the inadequacy, they lack the will power to come out openly in the field, for fear of criticism and conflict. There should emerge a voluntary effort from the part of the teachers themselves, than the changes being imposed from the top. It is true that examinees too are not much in favour of examination reforms. Examination reforms are met with opposition from the student community, and any move to improve the examination system is looked upon as a plan of the authorities to impose more strictness and discipline.

Justification of Examination Reform Today

The examination in the form they exist today have weakened the educational process by giving wrong orientation to teachers and the students. It has to be thoroughly examined whether, examination in the form they exist today, are conducive to the attainment of basic educational objectives and goals. Basically, the examination should let the teachers know whether the examination goals set by them have been achieved by the pupils. An ideal examination programme has to provide adequate feedback to students and teachers to improve text books, methods of teaching and materials. It should also enable the parents, and prospective employers to know the level of

achievement, and the skills and competence attained by the students.

It is vital that a frame of examination has to be built up that should ensure the development and evaluation of students' intellectual abilities. Intellectual abilities comprise the knowledge of facts, methods, techniques and principles, and the abilities to understand, apply, analyse, synthesise and to perform creative thinking. Our present examinations have been testing the knowledge of facts, methods, techniques and principles alone, neglecting the abilities to understand and analyse. Consequently, the pupils who are examination oriented seldom get a chance to develop their intellectual abilities.

The Over-all Trends in Examination Reform

The traditional approach where the evaluator could, at random, use any method he liked, is taken over by more systematic and scientific trends, and it is believed that the objectives are clearly stated and defined. In the traditional system only the scholastic aspects of the pupil's growth were evaluated. This would neglect several areas which equip the pupils for facing life-situations. This demands improved evaluation programmes which cover both the scholastic and non-scholastic aspects of the pupil growth.

Earlier, educational achievement assessment used to be held after long intervals, mostly in the form of quarterly, half-yearly or annual examinations. The changed scheme aim at continuous evaluation. It has become necessary

that a variety of evaluation techniques have to be used because the evaluation has to be continuous, and the coverage of pupil development has to be more extensive than before. Therefore, under the programme of examination reform, other techniques like oral examinations, project work and other observational techniques are also included, other than the traditional written examination. The new scheme aims at making evaluation a means for the qualitative improvement of education, besides enabling it to perform its measurement function. Even though the traditional scheme tended to look at examination separately, the new scheme views examination as an integral part of the whole educational process.

Different Types of Examination

Examinations help teachers in diagnosing the weaknesses of students, providing individual and remedial teaching, testing to what extent objectives of a lesson are achieved, and keeping a record of the progress of students by providing motivation for learning. The different types of examinations held in India are:

(a)   External examination with a series of question papers, each with a choice of questions, all requiring an essay type response

(b)   Internal assessment based on periodical tests, sessional assignments etc.

(c)   Practical examination

(d)   Viva-voce

(e)   Evaluation of dissertation, project reports

(f)   Open book question papers

(g)   Objective type tests, usually of multiple-choice format

Type (a) is the most commonly used type of examination, though it has got certain short comings from the measurement point of view. Most of the studies have been trying to show how ineffective this examination is, in respect of reliability. Though the value of memorization cannot be underestimated, in this type of examination it receives undue emphasis. These question papers cover a comparatively smaller portion of the syllabus, encouraging selective study.

Internal Assessment

.... &c. has observed that internal assessment will work as a corrective for the chance factor involved in public examinations. The Education Commission makes the following statement in its report.

A system of internal assessment should be introduced as a supplement to the external examination, based on such periodical evaluation. The results of these assessments should not be mechanically added to the external marks but kept separate and both should be shown side by side in the final certificate. Passes should be required in both and the division

gained in them should be shown separately (*qtd. in* Pandey 45).

Though internal assessment works as a proper supplement for evaluating human abilities, the teacher has to be properly trained in order to realize the goals of such activities. The arguments in favour of internal assessment are vast, but there have been atleast some institutions where the voices of protest were heard. The system suffers from two major drawbacks: (1) the teacher's bias and (ii) the students' expectations. The prejudiced teachers make a chaos of the system, and every student expects his teacher to favour him. These two drawbacks are actually the by-products of the defective educational system which is monopolized by a system of examinations. In the present system it is only a pass in the examination that has the highest value. In our society the potentiality of an average man is judged partially by his performance in an external examination. Because of the system of internal assessment the students expect from a 'good teacher' all possible help in getting high scores. Some teachers also feel that the performance of their students in the examination is the most important criterion for judging their efficiency. So the system of internal assessment will become fruitful only if we lessen the value of examinations. The teacher is the centre of this programme and if he does not develop proper attitudes to contribute to the growth of his pupils, nothing much can be expected from this scheme. In short, it should be seen that internal assessment is used as a means for the improvement of achievement

and positive growth of students in all the domain of personality.

Improving Language Examinations

For the improvement of examinations teachers and paper setters have to devote considerable attention to the quality of the paper: its content, validity, reliability, layout and printing, scoring scheme, and the time allowed for the completion of the paper. The interpretation and other uses of test results are also important factors, and this of course relates to validity. The role of examinations in the total process of education, and its effect on the teaching-learning situation is its another important aspect. These three aspects are inter-related. Education and examination should relate to important and meaningful experiences. Unless there is a high degree of meaningfulness, which is closely related to face validity, a question paper has little value as an education test. This factor has greater importance in language teaching programmes.

It is accepted that a language is a set of skills. In the learning of a language, the acquisition of knowledge has very little functional value, and it has nothing much to do with the actual ability to use a language for the purpose of communication. Just as the elemental subskills form the basis for complex skills, the overall ability of the learner progresses gradually from simple to advanced levels of mastering the language. For the effective learning of the language, exercise and use of what is already acquired, is very important. Memorizing or understanding some grammatical rules and forms and word

meanings cannot completely contribute to the ability to use a language. It is said that a language is better learned than taught. The desire to communicate with others, which is a part of human nature, generates a degree of motivation to acquire language skills. The learner who experiences even limited success in using the language in real and meaningful situations will, most probably build up his efforts to learn. Therefore, care has to be taken so as not to obstruct or distort this naturalness of language learning.

Examinations should be only a device to assist and advance all other constituents of the educational programme. Therefore, examination should be planned in such a manner that it enhances the naturalness of the language learning process. When examinations tend to become meaningless exercises, they destroy the interest and motivation of the students, which are very important.

In seeking to render language examinations more supportive of the learning process, Jacob Tharu, (58) suggests two aspects of meaningfulness that can be enhanced. The first aspect is the interpretability of the results of examinations in terms of levels or standards of language competence. For example, with regard to the U.G. examinations, we often refer to a student getting 40 marks, another 55, and yet another 70. We know that the one who has get 40 has 'passed' but "what are the things he can do and cannot do?" "And in what linguistically relevant ways" are the three students different from each

other? Here, we come to the difference between criterion based tests and norm based tests.

> These tests, which are generally contrasted with norm based tests, are concerned with establishing whether or not a person has reached a certain pre-defined standard of ability and competence. In a norm referenced test, although the test content implies standards of some sort, the emphasis is on distinguishing among individuals, usually by reporting percentile or deviation scores. In our system, when we declare that Miss A is the top scorer in a particular examination we are comparing her with her peers, but not saying anything of consequence about her actual attainments and abilities (Tharu 59).

It is suggested that our examination system "has the trappings of a criterion based measure but not its substance. When it is said beforehand that 40 percent and 60 per cent are crucial transition points, it is conjectured that getting or not getting such a mark is related to some tangible differences in levels of ability. In practice no such interpretation can be made, because the marks scored are highly unreliable" (59).

If we are to make a shift towards criterion based tests, the 'objectives', and specification of levels and standards should be clarified. Only criterion based tests can tell the teacher and planners the actual capability of the student.

When criterion tests yield proper and meaningful information about the actual attainment of students at various stages, necessary revision and modification of curricula and courses become possible. This is an instance of the usability of examination results when it is related to the availability of the criteria for interpretaion.

> Another aspect of the meaningfulness of language examinations is related to the perspective of the student. It is an inescapable feature of our system that examinations have an important influence on the whole educational process. Until such time as internal assessment procedures without a bias towards formative evaluation become much more highly developed and widely used, "preparing for examinations" will be a dominant orientation among students and teachers alike (60–61).

If integrative skills and communicative competence are made the major objectives in the language examination, the memorization of formal statements and rules, together with isolated grammatical points, which now occupy most of the students' time will have less force. "It is important that a student doing well in an examination feels that he has in fact demonstrated some substantive and meaningful language behaviour, not merely that he has managed with luck to cope with an 'obstacle course', the relevance of which he does not find convincing."

It is generally accepted that English is retained in the educational system of India as a principal language for advanced studies, especially in science and technology, and also in view of international importance.

> For the Indian students English is not a body of facts to be
> learned but a complex of skills to be achieved; in other words
> English language in the Indian educational system has to be
> treated as a SKILL subject rather than a CONTENT subject. It is
> best conceived not as a subject of instruction which is to be sub-
> divided into such branches as poetry, essay, drama, grammar and
> composition but as a study and practice of the essential art of
> communication by reading, writing, speaking and listening
> (Bhushan 217).

An Evaluation of the Present Language Examination in the U.G. classes in the Colleges in the University of Calicut

The prevailing practice of language examinations is evaluating the performance of the students at the end of the academic year by a three-hour examination. The purpose of such an assessment by external examiners is to evaluate the academic achievement of the students, but in practice, it has failed to maintain a uniform standard. Hence, both students and parents are subjected to anxiety and stress at the time of the examination.

It has become imperative to reform the present system of

examination so that "the merit of the student can be well judged, proper assessment can be made and students' attainments as well as their abilities, aptitude and performance can be ascertained (Education Commission, 1966. *qtd. in* Bhushan 4)

Certain changes, reforms and innovations have been introduced in the examination system, some of them have succeeded, some have come to stay, some have been abandoned and much more are to come in the future. There have been attempts to reform written examinations: to introduce better content, validity, objectivity and reliability. Structure of question papers has been changed to include the testing of comprehension and communication skills. The most innovative change introduced in Part I English, Paper I of I B.A./ B.Sc./ B.Com. examination, since the year 2000, looks very promising. With a view of giving a meaningful structure, out of the 100 marks, only 35 marks are set apart for purely 'content questions' based on the prescribed novel. The remaining marks are distributed among general essay, note-making, reading comprehension, making conversations, telegram drafting, letter writing, report writing, and grammar. This structure can, more or less, succeed in testing the comprehension and communication skills of the students, and also in changing the students' outlook that learning the content of the text will surely facilitate the passing of the examination.

Though Paper I has witnessed a major break through and is sure to

accelerate in the path of success with the proper motivation of both students and teacher, paper II and paper III are still lurking in the dark. Both these papers are purely content based, in the sense that the students are expected to write essays, paragraphs and short answers based on the prescribed textbooks. Paper II is titled 'Modern Prose and Drama' whereas paper III is 'Shakespeare and Poetry'.

Essay type of examinations are generally considered to be uniquely suited for the assessment of the abilities to create, organize, and express ideas. But the present essay type questions in the U.G. English examinations lack the 'discriminating power', which is one of the basic requirements of a good paper. Students and teachers more or less know what essays can be expected from the particular play, poem or drama because certain questions get repeated in some form or other. A set pattern is followed from year to year, repeating certain questions after a gap of one or two years, perhaps avoiding questions asked in the previous year. Because of the stereotyped nature of the questions, even those students with no basic skills are able to score better if they manage to learn by-heart some of the essays prepared by their teachers or provided in the 'guides'. Hence, the essay questions do not help in discriminating the various levels of ability. If the student writes the essay reasonably well, whether it is learned by rote or not, the examiner is bound to give marks.

Essay tests are usually criticized on other grounds too. They allow

subjectivity in determining the scope and content of the answer. The same answer may be considered excellent by one examiner and poor by another. Even when examiners agree on ranks of the answers in order of merit, they do not agree on the marks to be awarded to individual answers.

Guidelines for the Examiners

Proper guidelines to the examiners constitute an important requisite for the elimination of inconsistency in extreme forms. At present, the examiners are not given instructions or hints regarding the maximum marks to be awarded for an essay. The researcher knows that years back, a board meeting of the examiners used to be convened by the Chairman, at which a properly guided valuation scheme was given after proper discussion. For example, the board of examiners used to come to a consensus that 12/15 could be given to a perfect essay, if it was excellent in language, content, form, presentation, coherence, expression of ideas and organization. But for about the last twenty years there has neither been any board meeting, nor any clear cut instruction from the Chief Examiner or Chairman. Examiners value and assess the essays according to their own norms, and standards. This brings in a plethora of anxiety, concern and uncertainty both to the students and their parents who have started to lose faith in the reliability of examination results. Some grave measure has to be immediately taken to orient paper-setters towards the improved methods of question framing, and to orient the examiners as to what weightage has to be

allotted to the different aspects of the answer.

Paragraph questions, the next component in the U.G. papers, also give freedom to the student to select, organize and express his ideas. There are certain advantages in the use of paragraph questions in lieu of traditional essay questions. One is that a larger number of paragraph questions can be used to test the students in the specified time. This will ensure a wider course coverage. Secondly, marking of such questions is less subjective, which gives scope for reliability. Paper-setters' workshops may help in framing good paragraph and short answer questions so that they measure higher mental abilities and skills rather than simple recall and recognition need.

Very short questions, based on the whole text, or particular passages chosen from the text have great potential in testing students' achievements. But the introduction of such questions without adequate preparation may lead to grotesque disjuncture. The short-answer questions very often tend to be stereotyped, and profess the lack of professional skill on the part of paper-setters.

The examinations conducted by boards or universities should really mean achievement tests intended to measure student response to occasions, demanding use of some knowledge, skill or understanding. We have to work on a vigorous, integrated plan, including robust packages, for enhancing the examination methods (if we are to achieve this goal). Precisely, what

knowledge, skill, or understanding are we observing or measuring through the examinations today? The syllabus of English, as we get it, is nothing more than a list of books and poems. There is no attempt to state clearly what the objectives of instructions are and how far the examinations have to take note of them. A clear definition of objectives gives directions to learning and training experiences, and it is also integral to the very meaning and validity of the examination.

The syllabus to be clear, should state

(a)   the objectives of the course in terms of observable behaviour;

(b)   the contents students should study to achieve the objectives;

(c)   the text and reference books for studying the required contents; and

(d)   the type of preparation that may lead to good result in the examination. For example, if intelligent understanding rather than sheer memorisation of facts is likely to pay in the examination, this should be indicated in the syllabus (Gupta 181).

Establishment of Examination Reform Cell

The immediate need before the introduction of any change is the

establishment of an examination reform cell in the university, with separate

personnel for science, humanities and languages examinations. The cell should

comprise devoted persons of merit who are capable of statistically analyzing

various items, scaling of marks, estimating reliability and validity of

examinations. Their task should be to prepare the necessary background for the

introduction of changes, plan the different phases of changes, solve the

problems that may ensue, and after the change has been accepted as a routine,

pass it on to the examination branch of the university. The cell may also orient

teachers to new techniques of testing and organize seminars and courses to

help the teachers.

Since the examining bodies are finding it difficult to cope with the

responsibilities of the conduct of examinations effectively in the present

atmosphere, Hundal (98) suggests the decentralization of examinations.

Decentralization can be in the form of accredited schools or

autonomous schools. It may still be better if a number of

schools are made autonomous as a group but the right of

guidance and quality control remains with the external examining

agency (Hundal 98).

Problem IV - Incompetent Teaching in the Schools

There is no second opinion about the fact that English will, for a long

time, continue to be needed as a 'library language' in the field of higher

learning, and the global language in the field of trade and technology. For this purpose a strong foundation in the language will have to be laid at the school stage. It is the view of the Indian education commission that the teaching of English may begin in class V, and psychologists agree that the learning of a new language can begin before the child attains the age of ten.

Improper teaching at the secondary school level is one of the factors that contribute to the faulty usage and pronunciation, and the inability to communicate in the language.

> The teaching of English in our schools is in a chaotic state today. Pupils are taught English for about six periods a week for six years. But it has been estimated that they hardly know 150 words by the time they join a university. This means that they have hardly been able to learn English words at the rate of one word per period. They do not know how to use the commonest structures of English (Gokak 16).

Though the above observation sounds a bit exaggerated, it is really the state of teaching English in many of the schools in our country. The conditions under which English is being taught and learnt in our schools need careful examination, and only a thorough revolution can change this state.

In a developing country like India many students enter universities, technical institutions and professional colleges to study subjects which can

only be satisfactorily studied if they are able to read text books in English effectively. The problem is, students, who have received several years of formal English teaching, are unable to use the language, and to understand its use in normal communication. H.G. Widdowson (1979) observes that efficient reading involves understanding how language operates in communication, "and it is precisely this understanding which students appear not to acquire during their years of learning English in the secondary schools" (117).

The teaching of English has suffered from lack of purpose on the part of students, and teachers. The teachers are not aware of the aims and objectives of teaching English, they teach because it is included in the syllabus, and the students learn it because they have to pass the examination. 'Incompetent teaching' is one of the causes for the present state of incompetency in the language. Sometimes English is even taught by those who have not been offered this subject while under training.

> It seems generally to be assumed that the reason for this state of
> affairs is that secondary-school teachers do not do their job
> properly; they do not follow the approach to English teaching
> which is taught to them in training colleges and in-service
> courses, and which is embodied in the prescribed textbooks. In
> fact, the root of the problem could be found in the approach
> itself (Widdowson, *The Teaching* 117).

The researcher has made a random survey of the qualifications of the teachers of English in the local schools.

Table 1

Academic Status of the Teachers Teaching English in Schools (Survey Result)

Sl. No	No. of teachers teaching English	Teachers with a degree in English Language	Teachers with a degree in other subjects	No. of teachers attended orientation/ in-service courses
1	7	1	6	7
2	6	-	6	6
3	20	1	19	19
4	29	1	28	28
5	13	1	12	13
6	22	2	20	21
7	15	1	14	15
8	11	1	10	11

The results of the survey show that teachers with a degree in English language and literature are rare among the teachers of English in schools. Certain important aspects of English language teaching, like the focus on the communicative properties of the language and the exposure to the language are totally neglected at the secondary level. The teachers are not competent to shift the focus of attention from the grammatical to the communicative aspects of the language. The English teaching in secondary schools has, in most cases, proved to be inadequate as a preparation for use which students are required to make of the language when they enter higher education.

Highlighting the defects of the present method of teaching English, Viswanathan R. (16) says, from the primary class to the degree level, we give too much emphasis to the teaching of grammar. In the school, we teach the noun, verb, adjective, adverb and clause, with definitions, examples, and exercises. We continue the same pattern in the college also, ignoring the importance of strengthening their vocabulary, spoken English, or pronunciation. He suggests the relevance of strengthening their vocabulary and speaking skills by creating certain 'live situations' in the class room, or regularly giving them oral exercise in factual description, debates, speech, news narrations, reviewing the editorial of a leading newspaper, and other similar activities. We all know that spoken English is not a part of the syllabus. Even though no hours are set apart for teaching spoken English, the teachers can afford to use a few minutes of every English hour for this purpose.

Language learning takes place only through practice and exposure to the language. Many of our students come from socially, economically, culturally and educationally backward situations, and their exposure to the English language is only in the English classroom. In Kerala, English is taught as a second language from class IV onwards, but the competence and proficiency of many of the language teachers is pathetically low.

It is observed that the text books for English at the school level are constructed after a lot of systematic planning. The lesson planners of these

books, especially S.S.L.C. English reader, have done a remarkably good job. But something has gone wrong down the line, which obstructs the hitting of the target. To a great extent, the lack of proficiency of the teachers of English, is responsible for the misfiring. With great hesitation, the researcher refers to an unfortunate example of the lack of teacher proficiency. The class teacher of the English Medium division of Class X, who was also their English teacher, in one of the aided schools in the locality, explaining the poem 'Daffodils' to the ninety students in the class, mentioned that daffodil is a bird. It may be justified that 'tossing their heads in the air' would have misled the teacher, or that the daffodils are unfamiliar in our part of the country, but it is an unpardonable error that the teacher didn't bother even to refer to the dictionary.

At present, proficiency and competence in the language is not taken as a criterion for the appointment of teachers in the schools. Any graduate with a B.Ed. degree is offered the job, if s/he is in a position to satisfy certain demands. An article entitled "Students' English and Teachers' English" which appeared in a leading Malayalam newspaper, reviews the pathetic condition of the teaching of English in some of the schools in Kerala. The author of this article administered a survey, involving 2100 teachers who were engaged in the centralised valuation camp of the S. S. L. C. English paper. A questionnaire containing fifteen questions was given to each teacher, out of which 14 were

Yes/No type questions, and only one question expected open-ended responses, in the teacher's own words. According to the analysis of the concerned researcher, only 56% of the teachers bothered to respond, and among those who responded, more than half had made atleast four mistakes in two sentences. A sample of a few responses of the teachers to the question 'the problems they encounter while teaching', is given below. "Students and teachers' understanding are totally failure", " Wast syllabus", "most of the Malayalam medium students are very difficult follow", "Govt. authorities should be given handbook to the teachers", "Difficincy in fluency of speaking English, 'strengthy syllabus'", 'Fluently English speaking is difficulties", "Time is very low", (Nair 8)

Some of the teachers disclosed that they had received no training in the teaching of English, when some others complained they could not identify the phonetic symbols given at the end of the text to teach pronunciation. Sreedevi K. Nair's survey showed that in the Govt. schools of Kerala, 74% of the teachers of English are graduates, but only 7% of them are graduates in English Language and Literature. 45% of them had not attended any refresher course, or any sort of training programme, and taught English only because they were forced to do so. If this is the prevailing state of the teachers of English in our schools, it is no wonder that the praiseworthy work done by the textbook planners, are at bay. The root cause for the deterioration in the standard of

English lies with the teaching in the school.

> The fundamental years for the teaching of English in schools are in the hands of teachers who neither know enough English nor are familiar with the latest developments in the pedagogy of English (Gokak 18).

The above observation by Prof. Gokak opens our eyes to the depth of the problem. The result of the survey conducted by the researcher (Appendix A) shows that the teacher respondents (of the questionnaire) unanimously agree that the faulty teaching in the secondary schools is one of the causes for poor comprehension and communication skills.

Conclusion

Today, the teacher of English encounters a baffling variety of challenging methods, starting with 'The Grammar Translation Method' to 'Suggestopedia' that may confuse him as to which is to be accepted and which to be rejected. If he consults journals he will be confronted with varying opinions of authorities in language teaching.

The anxiety of deciding on an effective approach lies with the teacher himself/herself. Since there is a crowding of numerous conflicting theories, it is better for the teacher to keep his balance.

> No method is intrinsically good or bad; it is either well used or badly used. Every method needs to be tailored to the local

situation and the context of teaching (Gautam 98).

The teacher has to use his/her practical wisdom to discover in which circumstances and for what purpose is each method most effective. The teacher need not get disturbed by the theoretical controversies. As J.B. Carrol (101) suggests the language teacher need not "despair of the master process" that language learning process is considered to involve. In the context of our college classrooms, the teacher cannot be expected to be some kind of 'educational engineer' – one who knows everything about the functioning of a language, acquisition of language, and one who is well informed of all the latest thinking in ELT methodology. Even if a teacher possesses all these qualifications, he fails if he does not know the art of his job. More important than heaping up all the theories and methods is addressing ourselves with the following thoughts: in what way will the teacher's mastery of the current trends in the teaching / learning process help to improve the quality of his teaching in the U.G. classes; is it possible in the present circumstances to keep the teacher informed of recent development in ELT; and, what do we teach English for?

To have knowledge is one thing, and to have practical wisdom to use that knowledge properly is yet another. Linguistic theories and psychology may equip the teacher with valuable 'insights' but they do not provide the language teacher with any definite strategy to apply these insights into the classroom teaching process. Without proper orientation the knowledge of all the theories

is meaningless. New language teaching theories are flooding in day by day, and by the time the teacher gets hold of one method, the theory which supported his method is being challenged. So, it is better that the classroom teacher is his/her own 'theorist'.

A major question that we need ask ourselves is: who are the 'consumers' of English, and what are they going to use English for in the future? We have to know our 'consumers', the students, thoroughly well – their motivations, needs and expectations. We should try to convince the consumer, the value and usefulness of what he/she gets in the classroom. The truth is that many teachers regard teaching a routine which they do because they have to. Only if the teacher teaches with conviction will he/she be able to win the confidence of the learners.

Two important qualifications that a teacher should master are, (i) faith in his profession (ii) practical common sense. These qualifications will never give way to newer theories, but will stand the test of time, and become stronger with experience. The teacher's sound attitude towards his students, and his work will take him a long way.

There has not been much serious effort on the part of the teachers in our colleges to develop any kind of integrated ELT strategy. Normally, the college teacher does not follow any 'method', he follows what he thinks is 'natural', and convenient. The custom is that the teaching of English at the

college level has been based on a study of the prescribed literary text, lectures on these texts, and dictating the summary and the answers to the expected questions. This is a very casual and effortless way, whereas a methodologist has to consider a reliable taxonomy of objectives ie. what precisely needs to be done, an analysis of the means by which these objectives can be achieved, and a plan for achieving these objectives. As we find it now, in our context, the teacher teaches, disregarding the receptive capability of the learner, and it is the subject matter that is the focus of attention of the teacher, rather than the learner. It has been more or less forgotten that language is a form of activity and one learns a language through activity, and what really produces learning is the provision for opportunities for the learner to practise what he is learning.

One of the factors that hinders the development of comprehension and communication skills in the undergraduate classes is that the process of teaching is not compatible with the learner needs, ie., the ability to use language independently and efficiently in real life situations. If this is to be facilitated, the teacher's job has to be taken more challengingly. For this, a 'multi-skill' approach ie., an approach to speaking, writing, reading and listening, is to be accepted. This will fulfil the role of English in India, primarily as a 'library language' At the college level, emphasis has to be given for cultivating the abilities of independent reading and use of reference techniques. Reading with comprehension is the main activity that should be

required of the student and it should become the technique in the classroom instead of the teacher reading, and the students' listening. Reading activity has to be subsequently followed by oral discussion and language exercise. In these oral activities thrust can be placed on comprehension correctness and appropriateness of expression, and they should be intended as a support for reading and writing.

There is a general tendency among the teachers to argue that language practice and oral activity is not feasible in the typical large English classes. Large classes should not dishearten us because one of the essentials of good methodology is adaptability to actual conditions. Jean Forester (22) claims that 'group method' is a practical way of dealing with large classes. The teacher might face certain difficulties in the proper handling of this method because of the lack of the co-operation or indifference from the students. We always talk about motivating the students, but it is all better said than done. The best way to 'motivate' them to co-operate in the 'group method' is to introduce the system of internal assessment, i.e. allotting a certain percentage of marks for the participation in the group. A total restructuring of examination system appears to be essential for this. The 'group techniques' can be, to a large extent, made effective if the teacher makes a genuine and sincere attempt to organize them systematically.

The qualities of discrimination and adaptability that a teacher needs can

be summed up in the words of Wilga Rivers:

> ....Once you have decided these things, you start working on what techniques will help us achieve the goals of the students through the kind of material and course design that we have in mind. Now, learner factors are extremely important in all of this; in any learning situation we are not just dealing with blocks of wood that are moving around. And this is where the real skill of teachers is, in being able to enthuse and involve students so that they will learn. It is the student him - or herself who is going to do the learning. All you can do as a teacher is to attend to the condition of learning and try to channel the inner motivation of the students (Rivers, *Teaching* 5).

The Use of Internet in Teaching Comprehension and Communication in English

Chapter 4

The Use of Internet in Teaching

Comprehension and Communication in English

The Problem Stated

English has acquired the status of world's global language in the sense that around 20% of the world's population speak English, and English has emerged as the language of international commerce, and the internet. Yet in India we seem to take English, and its incomparable role in the world, for granted. The survey conducted by the researcher revealed the dissatisfaction of the students with the traditional methods of learning English. The constant plea for change was seen echoing throughout the responses to the questionnaire. They demand changes which will suit the present context. The teachers also favour change, and many of them endorse the introduction of modern electronic devices like the internet into the teaching programme.

The potential of internet and e-mail in English teaching/learning is slowly being recognized. The speedy IT revolution has increasingly made the people computer-bound and internet-hooked. It would be exemplary if the teachers of English too could capture the many dimensions of the popular electronic way in the teaching of language skills.

The Present Classroom Scenario

The present examination oriented system generally fails in generating a real, enthusiastic setting in the classroom, which helps the learner actively involve in the language learning process. Creative use of language is often restrained as every activity in the classroom is accelerated towards the key factor, the examination. Consequently, learners remain passive, unable to use English fluently even after their graduation. They seldom get chances to use English in the classroom, and also self-consciousness and inhibition prevent them from using English in the classroom.

Changing Scenario in the World Around: A Challenge

What we are witnessing today is not a small change, but a quantum leap in economics, culture, technology, which may affect the learning and use of English internationally in the 21st century. In many parts of the world, as English is taken into the fabric of social life, it acquires a momentum and vitality of its own.

> Everywhere it is at the leading edge of technological and scientific development, new thinking in economics and management, new literatures and entertainment genres. These give rise to new vocabularies, grammatical forms, and ways of speaking and writing. Nowhere is the effect of this expansion of English into new domains seen more clearly than in

communication on the internet and the development of the 'net English' (Graddol 2).

The enhanced role of computers in every activity has changed learning and teaching methods too. Laptops, laser prints and websites are gradually substituting note-books, handwritten assignments and libraries, respectively. It is beyond doubt that the internet will rule the world in the near future. It is the need of the age that the teachers of English get familiarized with the internet and explore the possibility of using creative methods of teaching English the internet way.

What is Internet?

Internet, one of the most recent and complex innovations of mankind, is a network of networks. Physically, the internet is a lot of computers connected to each other, communicating with each other. It is the largest and most complete tool for information exchange for the global population, communicating over copper and fibre optic telecommunication cables that encircle the earth. They communicate using the same protocol or language called TCP/IP. Information is entered through a computer keyboard into a computer running TCP/IP software and is sent out through a modem or network cable to a destination across the street, state, country or continent.

It can be used to exchange messages with colleagues, friends or relatives at other sites, engage in group discussions, exchange information with

people who share a common interest, automatically receive information on world events, retrieve journal articles, participate in distance learning and academic conferencing, engage in real-time 'chat', publish information for access by other Internet users, and share knowledge and information.

Chatting on the internet is instant communication with people around the world by typing back and forth. It is one of the most frequently used features of the internet. Internet chat rooms provide an opportunity for socialization, and it is a low-cost way to stay in touch with friends and relatives, who have access to the internet.

E-mail Advantage :   Internet services for communication conform to e-mail. To send an e-mail, you need an e-mail address. A language learner can look upon the e-mail as a silent electronic conversation offering an atmosphere free from inhibition and nervousness.

As technology increasingly takes lead in our lives, there is compelling reason for incorporating computer literacy into the classroom, otherwise our students will not be able to function normally in the 21st century. At present, few students in Kerala have computers at home, and a surprising number are quite unfamiliar with them. But now internet has become easily accessible to students at 'internet-cafes', computer centres and even at the computer departments in their respective colleges. E-mail, which can be sent cheaply, with extreme ease, and received almost immediately, is a good way of

introducing young people to the advantages of computers.

The Envisaged E-mail Project

The researcher envisages a plan for developing and implementing a collaborative internet project connecting our students and the students of some other university (preferably, a foreign university), where English is taught as a foreign or second language.

Objectives

The main objectives of this project are:

1. To increase motivation for communication by:

    a) giving students genuine reasons for communicating.

    b) finding NNS (non native speakers) as 'key pals',[3] to create an environment free from embarrassment and inhibition.

2. Give students opportunities to use English as a 'lingua-franca', and let them know how non native speakers in other countries, in identical situations, communicate in English.

Secondary Objectives are to:

3. Familiarize students with using e-mail.

4. Take advantage of the immediacy of e-mail.

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[3] "Key-pals" are simply an up-to-date version of pen-pals, without the delays of conventional mail services. (Eastment 4)

Action Plan

1.   Voluntary Participation

While considering the parameters for the e-mail project the most

important step would be to make the participation in the project voluntary,

rather than a course requirement.

2.   Motivation

In this project also, motivation and interest are vital as in any other

activity. Many students have a feeling that reading and writing in English is only

relevant to them for the artificial purpose of passing exams. Their enthusiasm

is generally low. Developing an e-mail project may help in increasing

motivation and interest.

> Exchanging thoughts, ideas, and information about themselves
>
> and their respective countries with students of approximately the
>
> same age and circumstances would give them an incentive to
>
> write to each other (Fedderholdt 274).
>
> Having a 'key-pal' provided students with opportunities for
>
> writing in English for genuine reasons. They had 'real' readers to
>
> write to, that is to say, an audience of students interested in what
>
> they had to say, as opposed to a teacher who they know is only
>
> reading their text out of duty, to assess them and give them a
>
> grade. However, this does not mean that students will become

more careless with their English. On the contrary, it can help to improve writing, for as Eck, Legenhausen, and Wolff (1994) point, they realize that they need to write as well as possible, because they know that texts are no longer non-committal and they themselves are accountable for what they are writing", or as Blough (1989), puts it, 'they care about being understood' (274).

As motivation is always a key issue in the field of education teachers have to endeavour to present a system of education that is intrinsically motivating rather than one in which the motivation comes from outside influences. It is hoped that the use of the internet in language education on a voluntary basis, may at least with many students, serve the promotion of this type of motivation. Muchleisen (1997) outlines this quite clearly in stating that students are interested in joining the internet revolution for these reasons.

> On a very basic level, students see the internet as trendy and want to be part of it, others are also drawn by the practical aspects of the skills acquisition and on learning skills that will be useful in life. Whatever reasons are at the root of this motivation, it is clear that a great many students in my experience are excited about it (Fox 2000 geraldfox@aol.com).

It is possible that students may also experience further motivation on several levels. They may begin to recognize the usefulness of acquiring ESL

skills in more definite terms, when they realize that not only is the world connected together through the use of this technology, but the majority of the information on the internet is in English. Thus, conceptually, English will be put on a high pedestal, and will take on the characteristic of a vital and important skill that will be useful later in life.

3.   Student Involvement:

The concept of a learner-centred curriculum (Nunan 87) seems particularly important in network-based teaching. In order to highlight the pragmatic role of the students in the whole programme the researcher's plan is to assemble those who wish to join the club and throw them the idea of their communicating with the students of an outside university. It is expected that the students themselves will enthusiastically come forward with an input for conceptualizing such a project. As the first step, they would be initiated into this 'students-managed programme' by having to develop a questionnaire that each student will fill up in order to sign up for the project. Then the students will be made to evolve as the true architects of the project. It is important that students who are not familiar with the e-mail should be given membership in the club, and there has to be simultaneous arrangement to familiarize them. At the same time, those who are familiar with the internet can be facilitated with interpersonal interaction.

In fact, the aim of the programme is to bank upon the potential wealth of

the aptitude and computer knowledge of some of the advantaged students for the benefit of the economically and culturally backward learners. The viability of the programme depends, to a great extent, on the proper motivation that is to be provided to the better endowed learners to stretch supporting hands to the lesser advantaged ones.

The computer project can accommodate students with different learning styles and intelligences. Certain students who may be quiet and reluctant to participate in the classroom may turn out to be the most active participants in the internet projects. Students who appear to be shy in the class would be enthusiastically sending e-mail messages. Internet communication provides anonymity to students, often freeing them from their usual constraints, and therefore, students can express themselves more directly than they otherwise would.

The advantage of forming a group of learners is that learning becomes a pleasure and an interesting experience when the students feel that they are a part of a social process, merged into a community, through their involvement in the project.

4.   Fixing the goals

There are several reasons for using the internet in language teaching. One possible reason is that it can increase students' motivation. Another reason is the belief that learning computer skills is essential to students' future

success, which suggests that it is not only a matter of using the internet to learn English but also of learning English to be able to function well on the internet. A third possible reason for using the internet is that it creates conditions for learning to write, since it provides authentic audience for written communication (Janda 57). It is important for the teacher to clarify the goals. "Technology is developing so rapidly that it can often be difficult or even overwhelming to harness, somewhat like trying to get a drink of water from a gushing fire hydrant" (Warschauer 15). To make effective use of new technologies, teachers must pay attention to some basic pedagogical requirements, and hence the need for concrete goals.

If the immediate goal is to create a certain kind of linguistic environment for students, the teacher has to consider what types of language experiences would be beneficial and organize computer activities accordingly. If the goal is to teach writing, internet activities should be structured so that they bring about an increase in the types of writing processes and relationships essential to becoming a better writer.

After fixing the goal, the basic steps for establishing the collaborative internet project has to be formulated. Identification of appropriate students, and pals from other universities, a partner to work with you, and desirably a partner on the other side (in the other university) appear to be the basic things to begin with. A close relationship with, and guidance of an approachable

teacher in the department of computers is most important. Involvement of the computer teacher is very essential because the teachers of English, though familiar with the internet, may not be technologically adept with the intricacies of the system.

English Second Language students also, at least in some cases, may lack the prerequisites of computer literacy. Though we may have students who are quite experienced with computers, we may also have students who have seldom used a computer, lack basic knowledge such as how to operate a mouse or open a folder, and lack the vocabulary, reading, and listening skills to follow instructions for using the computer. As mentioned above, one of the secondary goals of the project should be to familiarize the students with the computer and internet.

Complexities to be Expected

Besides the issues of learner preparation, there are other complexities involved in introducing internet-based activities in the ESL classroom. To a great extent, activities may be dependent on scheduling the computer lab, and the students finding computers outside the class time to continue their activities. It is possible that Hardware and Software can often malfunction and the system can be down. Other subject schedule might not permit the students to complete the assignment at a time when computers are available.

Exchanges between students can also be complex. The students might

have differences in background, language and experience which can cause further complications. It doesn't mean that internet based activities are discouraging. It only means that situations which fluster both students and the teacher in technical difficulties is not likely to bring about the desired results. Taking into account the complexities which can arise in internet usage, teachers have to supplement the support and encouragement to prevent students from being overwhelmed. The form of help can be various: providing training sessions, not only in the beginning but on an ongoing basis, creating detailed handouts for the students to refer, assigning students to work in pairs or groups so that they can provide support and help to each other, providing information to the students about how and when they can get assistance from computer specialists, and being accessible to students when they need help.

Components of a Successful Programme

Gerald Fox (geraldfox@aol.com) sums up the components of a successful programme under three heads: integration, computer competence and active teacher involvement.

Fox insists on an integrated programme rather than an "add-on part of the overall English education programme". Warshchaver and Whittaker (1997) think that simply creating a key-pal connection is not enough.

It is natural that most teachers who use the internet in teaching start out with some kind of key pal exchanges. But in the course of time they feel

something lacking in the mere 'exchange programme'. Greater involvement on the teachers' part in creating learning activities is needed to get maximum benefit from internet exchanges. It has been suggested by a number of experienced persons in the field that teacher intervention is most successful when it brings about activities and projects that are well-integrated into the course curriculum as a whole. Bruce Roberts reflects,

> There is a significant difference in educational outcome
>
> depending on whether a teacher chooses to incorporate e-mail
>
> classroom connections as (1) an ADD-ON process, like one
>
> would include a guest speaker, or (2) an INTEGRATED process,
>
> in the way one would include a new textbook. The e-mail
>
> classroom connections seem sufficiently complex and time
>
> consuming that if they are goals beyond merely having each
>
> student send a letter to a person at a distant school, the ADD-ON
>
> approach can lead to frustration. On the other hand, when the e-
>
> mail classroom connection processes are truly integrated into
>
> the ongoing structure of homework and classroom interaction,
>
> then the results can be educationally transforming (*qtd. in*
>
> Warschauer *On line* 95).

The second component of a good instructional programme is the level of computer instruction provided. In other words, computer competence is the

most important aspect of a web-integrated programme. It has been observed that students do not always have the necessary computer skills to manage the use of the internet. The first and foremost requirement is to spend a fair amount of time helping students to acquire the basic computer skills that will "make the internet a fun and rewarding part of their language education experience. If this is not addressed properly, students will be quickly overwhelmed and frustrated by the complexity of computer and internet usage" (Fox).

A third vital part of the programme is the active involvement of the teacher in guiding the project. The teachers have to offer the basic support to help students, particularly at the early stage.

The help may take the form of handouts that show in detail how to use a web browser or send e-mail, setting up a home page that the browser goes to by default and has links for students to look at, or creating sites where students can post comments about subjects, even a page that lists homework assignments and class information. All of these reinforce the use of the internet and help students who are not technologically adept at refining these skills (Fox).

Other Avenues

Gradually, the use of chat-room can also be introduced into the project because "the ideal environment is a combination of synchronous (chat room) and asynchronous (e-mail) tools". (Myra Shulman mshul@american.edu). If the teacher and the students are adventurous and innovative, the possibilities on the internet are endless.

> Apart from chatting, teachers could make the process more challenging by setting tasks to visit specific websites for specific information (reading), critically evaluate them (analyses) and present the gist (writing). Tasks based on audio output available at many websites of news, sports and movie agencies and voice mail could be exploited to develop listening and speaking skills. The possibilities are endless for an innovative teacher (Stalin 11).

Grey (28) has identified four ways in which internet can function as an educational tool. These can also be considered to be the four basic ways in which the internet can be used in ESL/ EFL classrooms.

(1) Search for and receive

(Using the internet as a huge virtual library. Students search and receive information).

(2) Publish and provide

(Publishing information on web pages, the basic places where information is stored on the internet)

(3) Talk to and reply

(Conversational activities via the internet through e-mail and chat-rooms).

(4) Collaborate and learn

(Joint projects that involve students thousands of miles apart)

Lee(1997) thinks that of the three basic functions probably the one most often written about in relation to teaching ESL/EFL is the third - Talk to and reply. It is clear that e-mail conversations on the internet provide a useful learning tool for the ESL/EFL classroom. Even casual conversations are occasions for which the student must try to make himself or herself understood to another person. This makes the act of communicating in English not just a theoretical problem, but a practical one. The requirement to solve that practical problem can be a strong motivation for students to try hard to construct clear, grammatical messages that communicate their thoughts.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Learning

Robert Tuck has summarised the advantages and disadvantages of Online Learning as follows:

1. Advantageous Characteristics of On-Line Learning

It embraces collaborative learning/constructivism. [4]

> It is collaborative learning ~ learners learn important interpersonal collaborative skills.

> It is time independent ~ asynchronous-learners can work together without having to be doing it at the same time.

> It is place independent ~ learners can work together without being in the same place.

> It is non-competitive ~ collaborative learning is less competitive.

> There is more "democratic" participation ~ interaction is not dominated by personalities. All members of the group interact more frequently.

> It is student–centred ~ learners are taking responsibility for their own learning.

> They are learning by doing ~ a lot of learning is implicit.

> They can learn at their own speed.

[4] Constructivism is a teaching/learning model based on cognitive learning theory that holds that learners should generate their own knowledge through experience-based activities.

- It is synergistic ~ learners proactively attempt to achieve learning outcomes greater than the sum of their individual contributions.

- Typing is more reflective than speaking ~ the very act of writing, although slower than speaking ~ is more reflective.

- Interaction is recorded ~ all contributions are recorded. This becomes a resource.

- References are linked ~ Forum Hyper-text allows quick referencing.

- They are learning to use technology for an information-based society ~ the very learning of computer technology is a worthwhile endeavour.

- There is no body language ~ some negative body language hinders communication.

- There is peer-grading/peer-correction ~ learners are encouraged to grade each other.

- It increases teacher productivity.

- It can increase the number of students without increasing time-tabled classes.

2. Disadvantageous Characteristics of On-Line Learning

On-line learning however is not without its disadvantages and they are listed below:

➢ It relies on constructivist learning theory ~ CMC is only suitable for group task-based collaborative activities and, as a consequence, can only be supported pedagogically by constructivism; i.e., constructivism validates CMC and collaborative learning.

➢ The lack of face to face (F2F) contact ~ an all-important social angle of education.

➢ Following threads ~ following threads and finding messages can be confusing.

➢ It is time-consuming communication ~ typing is slower than speaking, especially for non-native speakers.

➢ Learning is at the speed of the group ~ slower learners are dragged along by the quicker ones.

➢ There are often technical problems ~ server and PC glitches can hinder participation.

➢ There can be ambiguous instructions.

➢ There is a lack of prompt feedback.

➢ It is not completely student-centred ~ considerable

course design support and restrictions actually limit student-centredness.

> Instructors have a paradoxical role ~ the instructor may have to play many roles to ensure that the task is successful, overtly and covertly, and the roles are sometimes contradictory.

> Technological competence ~ some learners have to cope with the added burden of learning to use new technology.

> Time zones ~ differences in time zones can actually exacerbate communication.

> Student expectations are not met ~ learning may not be obvious to participants.

> It is not suited to all learning preferences ~ some learners are not suitable for either CMC and/or constructivist/ collaborative learning.

> Pre-course learning preferences need to be tested ~ learner's preferences need to be considered before CMC collaborative course to ensure success.

> Pre-course counselling needs to be carried out ~ as with above, counselling is needed to ensure course success.

> Screen reading may be difficult for some students ~

reading from a VDU is harder and less convenient than paper.

> It is fatiguing ~ CMC can be very tiring, heavy and elaborate messages are especially show stoppers.

> Some students enjoy lurking ~ how do we know who is involved in chat sessions?

> There is sometimes too much reliance on the team ~ in team work a group member could let you down.

> Filling in for absent group members is a pain ~ in group work you may have to take on extra work.

> Summarizing is extremely difficult ~ following the turns in the threads and subtle changes in interaction is difficult (this message!)

> Grading is an issue ~ there is ambiguity and difficulty in assessing chat session contributions

(Tuck@britishcouncil.or.kr).

Conclusion

The internet has the potential to make an enormous impact on language teaching. It can break down the walls of the classroom and offer varied sources of information along with opportunities for genuine communication. Any institution that hopes to survive for longer than the next ten years should have

access to technology-enhanced learning programmes, because computer and internet are set to transform language teaching. Far from being an optional item on the conventional language course, they are at the point of bringing about radical changes. The transformation is inevitable. It may become necessary that the teachers of English be set 'on their march' to launch on the path of technological revolution in the teaching of English.

Administration of the Questionnaire and the Analysis of its Results

Chapter 5

Administration of the Questionnaire and the Analysis of its Results

Objectives of the Survey

The survey, with the aid of the questionnaire, was conducted to help the researcher understand the problems of comprehension and communication in the undergraduate classes, from the point of view of the teachers and students, who are directly involved in the process of teaching/learning.

Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was tried out with thirty teachers, teaching in various colleges affiliated to the University of Calicut. The colleges were chosen at random, two government colleges and three private colleges, where the types of classes that they normally teach are typical large classes comprising 80–85 students, truly heterogeneous in nature. Out of the five colleges, two were exclusively girls' colleges, one boys' college, and two were co-education oriented. All these colleges were marked by the attendance of students from Malayalam medium, English medium, Central Schools (CBSE), and also from both urban and rural areas. Among the teachers also, there was a fairly uniform representation of male and female teachers.

The students were individually presented with the questionnaire even

though it was thought that the answers of many students might not be authentic. There is a general tendency among many of our students not to give frank and sincere answers, but to simply copy what others have written. This may be either because they are not used to answering this kind of questionnaire, or because they are not sure of what to answer. To avoid this, an attempt was made to take them into confidence, by being told why the questionnaire had to be answered, and they were also assured that the information given by them would be treated as confidential. This was expected to give them the freedom to express their thoughts without inhibition or diffidence. In spite of this assurance, out of the 250 copies of the questionnaire that were distributed, only 182 were returned. Anyway, the return rate of 72.8% was felt to be quite reasonable.

Analysis of the Questionnaire for Teachers (Appendix A)

The questionnaire was divided into two sections, I and II. Section I comprised part a, b and c, in which, a number of reasons for poor comprehension, poor writing skills, and poor speaking skills were drawn up in lists. The teachers were asked to give their opinion in a five-point scale by encircling any of the letters A, B, C, D, E.

A   stood for Always

B   " "   Very Frequently

C   " "   Sometimes

D	Stood for	Rarely
E	" "	Never

Section 1

Part – a

Causes for Poor Comprehension

Part a, under section I comprised 15 statements, which were identified as the causes for poor comprehension. The first statement, 'lack of interest causes poor comprehension', was marked 'C' by the majority of the informants (23 out of 30, i.e. 77%), which implies that it was so, only 'sometimes'. Four marked B, two D, and one A. For the second statement, 18 circled C, eight D, and four B. This shows 60% think that 'lack of motivation' is only 'sometimes' the reason for poor comprehension.

The responses to statement 3 very closely relate to the finding of the researcher and endorse the fact that not specifying the objective of achieving reading skills in the syllabus, is one of the major causes for poor comprehension. Fifteen teachers, out of 30, responded favourably to scale B, eight to A, and six to C. That means, 53.3% of the respondents agree that very frequently the reason for poor comprehension is the want of specific objectives in the syllabus, and another 20% endorse that it is always so.

The responses to the fourth statement is, more or less, equally

favourable to scales B and C. 33.3% of the respondents favour 'very frequently', when another 33.3% favour 'sometimes', for the 'lack of proper guidance'.

Statement no.5 points to the lack of reading practice, and the results of the questionnaire endorse that this contributes greatly to poor comprehension. 36% of the teachers agreed that very frequently that is the cause, and 30% thought that it is always so. Another 20% opted for 'sometimes'.

Statement no.6 is related to Problem IV mentioned in the Chapter 3 of the thesis. In the evaluation of the survey it was found that 40% of the teachers endorse that lack of foundation in elementary schools is responsible for poor comprehension; 40% ticked A (Always), 30% B (Very frequently), and 10% C (Sometimes).

Learning by rote from the examination point of view is a major defect of our system. Regarding poor comprehension, 47% of the teacher respondents think it is always so, and 34% think it is so, very frequently. This is the finding through statement no.7. Statement no.8 is also related to another aspect of examination – the internal assessment. Only 13% think that the absence of internal assessment is 'always' the reason for poor comprehension. 20% think it is 'frequently so', while, 40% is of the opinion that it is so 'sometimes'.

Statement no.9 relating to the occurrence of unfamiliar vocabulary,

words and phrases seem to have not much relevance because 53% think that it is only 'sometimes' the reason for poor comprehension. Only 30% think that it is 'frequently' the reason.

Statement no.10 is related to statement no.6. 14 out of 30, that is, 47% of the respondents think that lack of knowledge of the structures and vocabulary taught in previous classes 'always' leads to poor comprehension, and another 12, out of 30 (40%) agree that it is frequently so.

Statement no.11 touches the personal inadequacy of the students – lack of concentration and careless reading. 14 out of 30 (47%) think that it is only sometimes (C) the reason for poor comprehension. 27% think it is always the reason, and only 3 out of 30 think that it is 'very frequently' the reason.

Statement no.12 was a sort of self analysis for the teachers. Teachers seem to be not diffident, but at the same time, not very confident, about the teaching methods. 18 out of 30, that is, 60% think that defective method of teaching is only sometimes(C) the reason for poor comprehension, but the rest of 40% think that it is 'Very frequently' (B) the reason.

Responses to statement no.13 indicate that the importance of the choice of materials and texts can never be denied in ELT. Eleven out of 30, that is 37% think that the wrong choice of materials and texts is 'Sometimes' responsible for poor comprehension. 27% think that is 'Very frequently' the reason, whereas only one person out of 30, thought that it was always so.

Statement nos. 14 and 15 refer to the importance of reading comprehension. For statement no.14, fourteen out of 30 (47%) think that lack of the awareness of the importance of reading comprehension 'Very frequently' leads to poor comprehension, while 33% think that is only 'Sometimes'(C) the reason, six out of 30 (20%) think that it is always (A), the reason. Statement no.15 points to the lack of reading habits, which has become very common among the students. 16 out of 30, that is 53% think that it is 'Very frequently' (B) the reason for poor comprehension, and 12 out of 30, (40%) think it is always the reason.

Part – b

Causes of Poor Communication Skills

Writing Communication : Eight statements were given in this section of the questionnaire, as the reasons responsible for the poor writing skills. The first was, 'Lack of Motivation'. 20 out of 30 (60%) think that only 'sometimes' it is the reason for poor writing skills. When 7 out of 30 (23%) think that it is 'always' the reason, only 3 out of 30 think it is 'rarely' the cause.

Table 2

Lack of Motivation : Cause for poor communication Skills

A	B	C	D	E
-	7	20	3	-

The second statement again points to the defect of the present examination system, by-rote study methods from examination point of view being one of the reasons for poor writing skills. The result of the questionnaire is as follows:

Table 3

By-rote Study Methods : Cause for Poor Communication Skills

A	B	C	D	E
6	10	11	3	-

20% think that it is always so, 33.3% think, it is so very frequently, 36.9% think that it is so sometimes, and 10% think, it is only rarely so. The third statement is also, more or less, the same in effect as the second one – 'improper system of examination where writing skill is not tested' may lead to poor writing skills.

Table 4

Improper Examinations ; Not Testing the Writing Skills : Cause for Poor Communication Skills

A	B	C	D	E
6	4	12	8	-

40% of the respondents circled 'C', which means that it is the reason only sometimes.

Statement no.4 endorses Problem l, stated in the Chapter lll of the thesis. About 27% of the informants say that not specifying the objective of achieving writing skills is 'always' the reason for poor communication skills, while 30% think that it is 'very frequently' so, and nearly 37% are of the opinion that it is only 'sometimes' so.

Table 5

Objective of Achieving Writing Skills Not Specified in the Syllabus : Cause for Poor Communication Skills

A	B	C	D	E
8	9	11	-	2

Practice in writing is an important factor in developing writing skills. 18 out of 30 respondents (60%) think that lack of practice very 'frequently' leads to poor writing skills, whereas 8 out of 30 (26.7%) think that it is always so. Only 13% think that it is only 'sometimes' the reason.

Table 6

Lack of Practice in Writing : Cause for Poor Communication Skills

A	B	C	D	E
8	18	4	-	-

Statement nos. 6 and 7 can be taken together in the sense that 6 points

to the 'defective method of teaching', and 7 refers to the 'availability of teachers' notes and guides'. The result of the response to the statement nos. 6 and 7 are follows:

Table 7

Defective Method of Teaching : Cause for Poor Communication Skills

A	B	C	D	E
-	6	14	10	-

Table 8

Availability of Teacher's Notes, and Guides : Cause for Poor Communication Skills

A	B	C	D	E
4	6	12	4	4

47% and 40% respectively agree that these two (6 and 7) are only 'sometimes' responsible for poor writing skills.

Statement no. 8 was to remind the teachers of the need for encouragement and opportunities for the development of creative writing. 10 out of 30 (33%) think that lack of opportunity and encouragement is 'very frequently' responsible for poor writing skills, whereas only 13.3% think, that is 'always' so. But 46.7% think, that it is sometimes so.

Table 9

Lack of Encouragement and Opportunities for Creative Writing : Cause for

Poor Communication Skills

A	B	C	D	E
4	10	14	1	1

Part – c

Speaking Skills : Five causes were identified by the researcher as responsible

for poor speaking skills, and were presented for the opinion of 30 teachers.

They are:

1. Socio-cultural background

2. Lack of exposure to spoken English

3. Lack of opportunities and chances at home and college

4. Nervousness and diffidence

5. Inferiority complex

For the first statement responses were as follows:

Table 10

Socio-cultural Background : Cause for Poor Speaking Skill

A	B	C	D	E
12	16	2	-	-

12 out of 30 (40%) think that the 'socio-cultural background' of the students is 'always' responsible for poor speaking skills, whereas 53.3% think that it is the cause 'very frequently'. Only 6.6% are of the opinion that it is only 'sometimes' the reason.

Majority of the teacher respondents (73.3%) agree that lack of exposure to the spoken English is 'always' the reason for poor speaking skills. The remaining 26.7% think that 'very frequently' that is so.

Table 11

Lack of Exposure to Spoken English : Cause for Poor Speaking Skill

A	B	C	D	E
22	8	-	-	-

Lack of opportunities and chances to converse in English at home and college may lead to the low development of the speaking skills. Responses are almost equally shared for A and B. 14 out of 30 think that it is 'always' so, and another 14 (46.6%) also think that it is 'very frequently' the reason.

Table 12

Lack of Opportunity at Home and College : Cause for Poor Speaking Skill

A	B	C	D	E
14	14	2	-	-

In the Kerala situation where the mother-tongue is largely used for all social communication purposes, nervousness and diffidence may lead to the low achievement of speaking skills. Result of the survey is shown in the following table.

Table 13

Nervousness and Diffidence : Cause for Poor Speaking Skill

A	B	C	D	E
8	12	10	-	-

8 out of 30, that is, 26.7% are of the opinion that nervousness and diffidence is always the cause for poor speaking skills. 12/30, that is, 40% think, it is 'very frequently' the cause and 10 out of 30 (33.3%) think that it is so, only 'sometimes'.

Statement no. 5 is very closely related to the statement no. 4. 46.6% think that 'very frequently' 'inferiority complex' leads to poor speaking skills, whereas only 6.6% are of the opinion that it is always so. 4% expressed the view that it is so only 'sometimes'.

Table 14

Inferiority Complex : Cause for Poor Speaking Skill

A	B	C	D	E
2	14	12	2	-

Section II - A – (Syllabus and Textbooks)

Section A comprised 12 questions, the nature of which is described in the table below.

Table 15

Nature of the Questions in II (A)

Sl. No	Nature of the question	No
1	Yes/No	7
2	Multiple choice	3
3	Open ended	2

The questions were drawn to get the teachers' opinion on the objectives of teaching English at the undergraduate level. Question nos. 1–4 were Yes/No questions, specially aimed at sharing their views on the syllabus. For Question no.1, 28 out of 30, that is 93% ticked 'No' and only the 2 (7%) marked 'Yes', which means the majority of the teachers think that the present syllabus of Part I – English does not spell out the aims and objectives of teaching English in the U.G. classes. This endorses the observation made by Ramesh Mohan.

> Most of the teaching and study of English in our Universities and Colleges, unrelated to any particular social context and purpose, and having no specific objectives or carefully planned programme, has become an aimless and superficial activity in most of our classrooms (Mohan 8).

Question no.2 was meant to know if ever the teachers think that the U.G

syllabus is compatible with the student needs. 26 out of 30, that is, about 87% think, it is not compatible. Question no.3 was given to ascertain whether the teachers are aware of the concept of designing the syllabus according to the student needs. It is surprising that the responses to the question showed, only 50% are really aware of this concept. Question no. 4 was intended to know whether the specific setting down of the objectives will help the teachers to teach more effectively. 93% of the teacher respondents think, it will be helpful.

Question no.5 was of a 'multiple choice' nature. The question was meant to get the teachers' view on the content of the teaching of English in the U.G. classes. 93% of the informants are of the opinion that it should limit itself to the teaching of communication skills, whereas, the remaining 7% think that emphasis should be given to the study of literature.

Question no.6 was also of the same nature, seeking an evaluation of the present syllabus and textbooks. The evaluation is as follows:

Table 16

Emphasis in the Present Syllabus and Text Books

A	B	C	D
16	4	2	2

16 out of 30 (53%) think that the present syllabus and text books

emphasize the study of English literature. Only 4 out of 30 (13%) think that there is emphasis on the language for its use in communication.

Question no.7 was a very direct question, whether they are satisfied with the present syllabus. The response is also very direct; 30 out of 30, that is 100%, are not satisfied with the syllabus.

Question no.8 had two sub questions: (1) Which is the most important and useful language skill for the students, and (2) Which is the most neglected skill in the present U.G. courses. Responses to the questions are tabulated below:

Table 17

The Most Useful Language Skill

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening
12	16	-	2

Table 18

The Most Neglected Skill

Writing	Speaking	Reading	Listening
-	28	2	-

Responses show that 'Speaking' is the most important and useful skill,

and it is also the most neglected one.

Question no. 9 was a sort of compromise – even the present syllabus, if taught properly, could be used to develop the language skills. 24 out of 30 (80%) seem to be optimistic, whereas 13% are not.

Question no.10, which was intended to seek the teachers' opinion on the prescribed Novel, Prose, Drama, Poetry and Grammar/Composition texts, was open ended. Only 50% responded to this, and out of the 15 respondents 13 (88%) think that the texts are not satisfactory. Question no.11 was also open ended and asked for reasons for their dissatisfaction with the present U.G. course. Out of 30, only 18 responded to this. The reasons mentioned are given below:

1. The course is more of a theoretical pattern – lack of workshops, discussions, paper readings and such creative activities.

2. Large classes disable the teacher to give personal attention.

3. Emphasis on by rote learning destroys creativity.

4. Lack of opportunities for developing the speaking skills.

5. Absence of internal assessment.

6. Careless framing of questions and the lack of proper testing of comprehension skills.

7. Purely exam-oriented course.

8. Ill-edited, badly compiled textbooks.

9.   Absence of hand books for teachers.

10.   Lack of proper evaluation methods.

11.   Emphasis on testing only the writing skills.

Question no. 12 was to get the teachers' responses to the introduction of communicative English in the first year General English paper. 29 out of 30 (97%) welcome this innovation by responding 'Yes'.

The inference that can be drawn from the responses to the questions under section A is that the syllabus formulated by the university does not clearly state the aims and objectives of teaching English. In view of this situation, what is needed is a statement of clearly defined objectives. Most of the teachers think that the syllabus is incompatible with the student needs. Syllabus can never be static, it has to charge according to the needs of the times. Hence a thorough restructuring of the syllabus, with special emphasis on communication skills is desired. A remarkable and emphatic suggestion made by the teachers was that speaking skill, which is the most important and useful one is the most neglected in our syllabus.

Section ll - B (Teacher Training)

Section B, comprising 6 questions (13 – 18) sought teachers' views on the importance and usefulness of professional training. All the six questions were of Yes/No nature.

11 out of 30, that is 36.6% of the respondents think that the teachers appointed in the colleges immediately after their M.A. (with N.E.T.) are sufficiently equipped to teach in the U.G. classes. But, another 36.6% are of the view that they are not sufficiently equipped. The remaining 26.6% seem to be not certain. (Question no.13).

As response to question no. 14, the majority of the teachers (22 out of 30, that is 73.3%) are of the opinion that some kind of training in ELT is essential before appointing a teacher. Only 2 out of 30 think, it is not essential. But 20% think that they are not certain. Question no.15 was drawn to get the teachers' views on the necessity of in-service courses before the introduction of innovations and changes in the syllabus. 29 out of 30 think that such courses are necessary. Responses to question 16 also show the need for a short-term in-service course or some kind of workshop to help the teachers in dealing the communicative English in General English paper I. 26 out of 30 think it is needed.

Question nos. 17 and 18 point to the refresher courses. Majority of the teachers have attended the prescribed number of refresher courses. But only 12 out of 30 (40%) think that it is helpful in making the teaching methods more effective. Another 40% think it is not helpful, while the remaining 20% are not certain whether it is helpful.

Responses to questions under Section B lead to the inference that

training in ELT, in-service courses for teachers, and short courses and workshops are very essential for effective teaching. It also gives a subtle suggestion that the present refresher courses are not very effective, in view of which, thought has to be given for the better conduct of such courses, to be helpful in communicative language teaching.

Section II - C (Examination System)

Section C comprised 5 questions (19 – 23), out of which two were of multiple-choice nature, and the remaining three, Yes/No questions. Question no.19 was intended to know whether the teachers were satisfied with the present examination system. 26 out of 30 informants (86%) seem to think that the system of examination at present is not satisfactory. Only 10% think, it is satisfactory. Yet, one respondent thought, the system was ideal.

In response to question no.20, twenty eight informants out of 30 (93.3%) think that the aim of giving an examination in English at the end of the course should be to test whether the student has acquired the skills of the language to express his ideas. Only the remaining 6.7% think that it should be to test whether the student has developed a sensitivity to literature.

Question no.21 was designed to know whether the teachers thought that the pattern of examination has significantly changed in the last five years. 24 out of 30 (80%) think that there has not been a significant change, and 4 out of 30 are of the opinion that it has changed to some extent, and 2 out of 30 think,

it has changed. Even though 80% agree, there has been significant changes, 90% think that the changes have not resulted in better teaching. 6.6% respondents are not certain about this, and only 3.4% think it has resulted in better teaching. To Questions no.23, the response is unanimous that internal assessment has to be introduced.

The inference from the responses to Section C is that the teachers are not satisfied with the present system of examination. It is thought that there has not been significant changes in the pattern of the examination during the last five years, and if ever there has been any change it has not resulted in better teaching. The researchers' assumption is that the area of examinations is as important as teaching, and considerable thought has to be given to the reforms in the examination system.

Section II - D (Motivation and teaching methods)

Section D included 22 questions (24 – 45), out of which 16 were Yes/ No questions, 4 were of multiple-choice type, and 2 were open ended.

Question no.24 sought whether the teachers make an attempt to know the social/cultural background, attitudes, interests and ambition, and the level of achievement of their students. Teachers seem to be aware of the importance of knowing the students personally and motivating them to learn the language. 25 out of 30 (83%) of the teacher respondents make an attempt to know the details about the students, but the remaining 5 (17%) think that in the present

context of large classes it is not possible to know the students personally. To question no.25, the response has been 100% positive. All the respondents seem to make an attempt to motivate their students.

Question no.26 was to check whether the teachers used the lecture method, or more student-oriented methods. 18 out of 30 (60%) mainly resort to lecture methods, whereas 4, that is, 13%, resort only to lecturing. The remaining 27% only use more student-oriented methods.

Question nos.27 and 28 were related to the teachers' awareness of teaching strategies and teaching aids for making the classes more interesting. When 18 out of 30 say that they are aware of such strategies, 12 say that they are unaware of such things. As response to question no. 28, these 18 respondents say that they try these strategies in the class. Out of these 18, only 8 think that the class is responsive to such strategies, whereas 10 think that they are responsive only sometimes (Question no.29). Twenty nine out of thirty informants make use of activities like games, discussions and debates as a part of teaching. (Question no.30) Twenty six of them think that the responses from students have been encouraging, when only three think, it was discouraging. (Question no.31). 25 respondents 'sometimes' introduce these activities in the class, 4, often, and 1 never use such activities. (Question no.32). 50% of the teachers think that these activities are not feasible in the present classroom situations, whereas the remaining 50% think, they are

feasible. (Question no.33).

Question no.34 was of multiple-choice type with an option for open-ended responses. This was meant to get an idea as to how the teachers plan and prepare their lessons. 20 out of 30 respondents ticked the two options and only 10 came forward with responses of their own. A few responses are recorded below:

1. Prepare situations which would help in understanding the text 'better'. The situation would be explained and the students react or at least participate in the process.

2. Plan ways of giving the maximum interpretation of the given text. Plan also ways of making the text interesting.

3. Mainly explains the lesson through 'lecture'. Probable questions for the exams are discussed. Paper presentations are conducted.

4. Divides the lesson into separate heads, gives anecdotes or examples applicable to it, gives assignments to the students.

5. Equips the self with all the relevant data of the text to be taught in class.

6. Helps the student to understand the text by explaining in detail the meaning, context etc.

7. A partial application of options 'a' and 'b' and sometimes other learning activities mentioned in item no.30 (Games, discussions, speech, debate, other activities)

8. Asks comprehension questions before and after a specific portion is taught.

9. Tries to make the topics more interesting by narrating anecdotes, stories, jokes etc.

10. Gives a suitable background and invokes the interest of the students, and engages in such a way as to improve the language skills of the learners.

Question nos. 35 to 38 were very personal questions, related to the methods used by the individual teacher. 20 out of 30, that is 66.6% teachers explain every line of Prose, Poetry, Drama and Novel texts. 8 out of 30 (26.6%) ticked 'no' to question no.35. Only 6.3% teachers say that they do it 'sometimes'. 16 (53%) teachers do not agree with the idea that by explaining less you equip the students to make an attempt at comprehension. Only 12 (40%) seem to agree with that. Another 7% say, it is true to some extent (Question no.36). Question no.37 was whether the teachers finish their portions before time. 26 out of 30 finish before time. Question no.38 was to know how they make use of the remaining hours. Out of these 26, twelve, give revision, eight, give practice in spoken English, two, leave them free, and four, give the hours to subject teachers.

As response to Question no.39, 99% agree that a few minutes of every English hour could be used for some kind of student-oriented activity. Only one person disagreed with the proposition. The reason for the disagreement

was the problem of finishing the portion due to time shortage.

Question nos. 41 to 45 were Yes/No questions. 93% of the respondents tick 'Yes' to Questions no.41, to mean that by introducing student-oriented activities through the syllabus, the English classes can be made more meaningful and interesting. 26 out of 30 (87%) informants are enthusiastic about changing the present method of teaching while the remaining 4, (13%) are not enthusiastic. (Question no.42). 93% (28 out of 30) are of the opinion that translation exercises would improve the comprehension and communication skills of the students (Question no.43). 73% of the teachers think that the rules of grammar should be taught in the U.G. class, when 27% think it is not necessary (Question no.44). To Question no.45 the response is unanimous. All the 30 respondents agree that the application of grammar in the composition classes will be more meaningful and useful.

An overall analysis of the teachers' responses indicate that a majority of teachers understood the pedagogical value of motivating their students. It is a different mater whether they actually practice motivating methods, but it is true that they understand the value and power of motivation.

It is often said by the people involved in language teaching that a student who really wants to learn will succeed whatever the circumstances are under which he studies............................

All teachers can think of situations in which certain 'motivated'

students do significantly better than their peers, and it seems

reasonable to suggest that the motivation of the student is

perhaps the single most important thing he brings to the

classroom (Harmer 3).

Teachers' awareness regarding practical consideration of teaching

methods manifests itself in the classroom performance. Teachers' responses

reinforce the point in Problem III of Chapter III that an adequate preparation

by the teacher, of the lessons to be taught, is an essential part of teaching

strategy. Analysis of item 35 show that for 66.6% of the teachers explaining

the text line by line is a significant mode of their instructional strategy. It is

evident that this technique is given precedence over all other activities

practiced by the teachers. The researcher's observation also reveals that nearly

all teaching is devoted to explaining the text materials.

Section II - E (Remedial Teaching)

Section E comprising 4 questions (46 – 49) was exclusively related to

remedial teaching. Only 13 out of 30 (43%) of the respondents stated that they

have remedial teaching at the U.G. level. The remaining 57% (17 out of 30)

informed the absence of remedial teaching in their colleges. (Question no.46)

29 out of 30 teachers are not happy with the present system of grouping

the students, without any specific norms. (Question no.47). Question no.48

was of multiple-choice nature, with scope for open ended answers. 26 out of

30 (87%) preferred 'high level' and 'low level' groups on the basis of a general test for measuring the levels of achievement. Out of the remaining 13%, half, i.e. 6.5% favoured the mixing of Arts, Science and Commerce students, whereas the other half asked for different groups of Arts, Science and Commerce. 80% of the teachers are of the opinion that Remedial courses/ Bridge courses will help to level the gap of achievement. Seven percentage of the respondents do not agree, whereas the remaining 13% think it is true, to some extent.

Section II - F (Reforms)

The final section, Section F, included 8 questions (50 – 57), out of which only 4 were Yes/No questions. Question no.50 was of multiple choice nature with scope for open ended answers also. The question was designed to get an idea of the techniques used by the teachers in the teaching of a poem or a Prose text. 12 out of 30 (40%) resorted to the traditional method of giving a brief introduction about the author, the cultural background, and explaining line by line, giving meaning of different words (a). 27% used a combination of a and b (make the students read and ask comprehension questions to ensure that they have grasped the central idea). 3 out of 30 use the combination of a, b and c (read the poem/prose aloud and give line by line paraphrase in English and Malayalam.

The responses to Question no.51 show that most of the teachers know

which is the right technique, but they are not able to use it in their classroom situations. 16 out of 30 (53%) think that (b) is the best technique, six (20%) think (a) is the best, and eight are of the opinion that the combination of a and b is the best.

Responses to item no.53 reveal the constraints of the teacher. Most teachers do not practise what they consider to be the most effective and useful method of teaching because of the following reasons.

a) covering the syllabus will be impossible

b) large classes

c) heterogeneous groups of students

d) priority for good results

e) lack of motivation because of the present system of examination.

Twenty seven teachers out of 30 (90%) ticked 'Yes' for item no.53, which shows that most of them know, more effort and hard work will be demanded of them if changes are brought about in the ELT programme and examination system. 93% of the teachers assume that it will not be difficult for them to change over to a new system. Out of the remaining 7%, 4% say that a change will be difficult, whereas 3% think, it will be difficult to some extent (Question no.54).

Question no.55 was to seek the teachers' opinion regarding the need of training if changes are introduced. 29 out of 30 say that training is essential before the introduction of changes. Only one person thinks it is not necessary.

As to the introduction of computers and Internet in language teaching, 53% think that it will be interesting and useful. 2 out of 30 do not agree with the idea, and 10 are not sure.

Question no.57 was to seek suggestions for making ELT programme in the U.G. classes more meaningful and purposeful. Only very few teachers responded to this, and some responses are given below.

1. The number of students should be limited to 30–40, to establish rapport with the students, which will help in giving better awareness of the language.

2. Stress to be given for spoken language. Opportunity for discussions, debates etc. to be introduced.

3. Lack of confidence in spoken English is evident. Practice in spoken English is very essential. Introducing an exclusive paper for 'spoken English' will be ideal.

4. The instructors of ELT programme should be meticulously selected. Up-to-date text books with proper guidelines and handbooks are very essential.

5. Testing the Communicative Skills rather than the students' memory to be introduced.

6. Any method that will help them to come out with better communication skills is acceptable.

7. Encourage loud reading and participation in group discussions.

8. Teaching of English in the schools to be taken seriously.

9. Appointment of competent teachers, introduction of internal assessment, and participation of the students in the classroom learning process, to be recommended.

10. Teaching of skills of language to be given priority – not the teaching of literature.

11. Limit the number of students in each class.

12. Introduce 'high level', 'medium' or 'low level' batches.

Analysis of the questions under section F (Reforms) reveals that paraphrasing and explaining the text is a significant aspect of the instructional strategy. It is evident that this teaching technique is given precedence over all other methods. Most teachers seem to be aware of the reforms that have to be brought about to cater to the practical requirements of the students. There are a lot of restraints that prevent the teachers from practising the reforms in teaching methods. Only a thorough change in the system, and change of priorities can bring about reforms in the teaching methods.

> The teacher will have to work out the best way to use the text book: he should never let the textbooks use him, or dictate the decision he takes about the activities in which the students are

going to be involved...... The two overriding principles behind

good lesson planning are variety and flexibility (Harmer 220).

Analysis of the Questionnaire for Students (Appendix B)

The field study was planned and designed to collect information about

the comprehension and communication skills of the students, their views and

attitudes to the classroom teaching and its relevance to their academic needs,

examination system, and so on. In order to give the survey a realistic touch a

column was provided for the personal profile of the students. The items of

information required in this section were the name, sex, name of the College,

subject and the name of the board of examination passed. The students were

assured that it was not any kind of examination, but only the part of a survey to

rate the comprehension and communication skills of the undergraduate

students in the colleges, and to identify their problems in learning English as a

second language.

The Questionnaire was divided into three sections, A, B and C. Section

A was a sort of test in reading comprehension; a passage with a number of

comprehension questions was provided. It was found that the exercise was

taken quite enthusiastically; 178 students out of 182 completed the exercise.

The grading of the comprehension test is as follows: 153 out of 182 scored

below 40 %, 25 out of 182 scored between 40% - 60%, only 1 above 60% and

none above 80%.

Section B comprised 15 sentences – to be translated from English to Malayalam. 149 out of 182 (81.46%) attempted the translation exercise and the performance was considerably satisfactory. It is evident from the work that the students do not have much problem with the vocabulary items even though they are not very through with the sentence structures. The observation of the researcher is that the comprehension and communication skills of our learners can be improved considerably by giving them constant practice in reading comprehension and translation work.

Section C, 'Questionnaire for the students' comprised sub sections A, B, C, D, E and F.

Section A

The first 8 questions of Section A were very light ones, related to the comprehension and translation exercises, meant to arouse the interest of the students. Only 6.77% of the student respondents think that the translation exercise was tough. 86.47% are of the opinion that it was simple, whereas 6.77% think it was too simple. Students do not seem to have had problems with the vocabulary items because 84.87 % of them say that they were able to recognize the vocabulary. Only 15.13% had difficulty with the vocabulary. 89.48% agree that translation is a creative activity, when only 10.52% do not agree with it.

Question nos. 9 to 17 were directly related to the text books, comprehension skills and composition classes. To question no.10, 'have these texts helped you in improving your skills in reading and writing?', 93.3% ticked 'yes', and the remaining 6.7% marked 'no'. 93.93% of the respondents seem to realize the importance of comprehension, and 90.24 % are aware of the fact that skill in comprehension will help them in competitive examinations like MBA entrance, TOEFL, Banks tests etc. (Question nos. 11 and 12) : Question no.13 is open ended. Out of 180 only 140 responded – 44.3% think that English classes help them in the competitive exams. 28.2% think, it does not and 27.5% think that it helps them to some extent. The response to question no.14 shows that 93.87% are of the opinion that composition classes are as important as novel, poetry and drama classes. The students seem to be generally satisfied with the performance of their teachers in the composition classes. 83.95% of the students say that the teachers give proper importance to the composition classes and 89.75% admit that directions and corrections are given during this hour. (Question nos. 15, 16 and 17).

Section B

Questions in Section B (1–7) were designed to elicit the students opinion on the importance of learning English. 98.9% think that learning English is essential, only 1.1% do not agree. (Question no.1). To Question no:2, 'Why do you want to learn English?', 7 options were provided, to which

78.86% responded 'because of the status of English as a global language',

17.14 % expressed the view that they need English to meet certain job

requirements. It implies that they are aware of the fact that without a

reasonable proficiency in English language they would be handicapped to make

a career for themselves. The various options provided for the question are the

following.

- a) Because of the status of English as a global language
- b) Only to pass the examination
- c) To help in getting a job
- d) May help in higher education
- e) Interest in the culture and literature of the English people.
- f) For social prestige
- g) Any other reason.

The responses to the above options are as follows:

- a) 78.86 %
- b) 1.71 %
- c) 17.14 %
- d) 17.71 %
- e) 3.43 %
- f) 1.71 %
- g) 4 %

Question no:3 was to get an idea of the relative importance given by the students to the learning of English. (Do you consider English classes as important as the other subject classes?). It is heartening to know that 87.8% of the respondents consider English as important as the other subject classes. Though they were asked to give reasons, most of them have not done so.

Responses to question no.5 show that 76.69 % of the student informants have a positive attitude to English classes. The attitude of 22.09% is neutral whereas only 1.23 % marked 'negative'.

Question no:6 was an open ended one, 'Can you give any suggestions to make English classes more interesting and useful?'. Out of the 9.75 % who responded, the suggestions mostly pointed to making English teaching/learning more interactive and communicative. To question no.7 the responses are as follows: 55% marked 'yes', and 45%, 'no'. It shows that the teaching of English needs to be changed according to the needs of the students.

Section C

Questions under section C, more or less similar to section B, were designed to know whether the students enjoy their English classes. It is encouraging to know that 92.47 % enjoy, and only 7.53 % do not (Question no:1). Those who said that they do not enjoy the English classes have not mentioned the reasons for the same, even though they were provided with a number of options.

Responding to question no:2, 92.47 % say that 'English' should be compulsory in the degree classes. Only 7.53 % think, it is not necessary. But only 55% are satisfied with the present syllabus; 45% are dissatisfied. (Question no:3) 71.1% think that novel, prose, grammar, poetry and drama should be included in the syllabus. At the same time 38.66% are of the opinion that stories, poems and novels with English background are difficult for them to understand.

Responses to the questions in Section B and C show that the students wish to study English at the undergraduate level. 78.86% express the view that they want to learn English because of the status of English as a global language. Some of them seem to be aware of the fact that without a reasonable proficiency in English language they would be handicapped to make a career for themselves. It implies that they need English to meet certain job requirements.

Section D

Questions in this section were designed to get the students' responses to the various methods used by the teachers, especially with regard to the development of the speaking skill. Question no:1 was a very simple and straight forward one , 'Are you given any training to speak in English ?' 68.55% of the respondents have given an emphatic 'no' to this, while the remaining 31.45 % say 'yes'. To the next question. 'Are you called upon to narrate your

experiences and ideas in the class?', three options were given: 'sometimes', 'never' and 'always'.

The responses are as follows:

Table 19

Training Given to Speak in English

Sometimes	Never	Always
64.71 %	30.64 %	5.64 %

Responses to question no:3 'if you are given chances to do so, do the students respond?', are quite suggestive. 71.05% say 'yes', and only 28.95% say 'no'. 69.03% think that it is the same, very few students who come forward to speak, but 30.97% do not agree with it. (Question no.4). Three options were given to question no.5. If the majority do not come forward, it is because of:

a)   Inability of express in English

b)   Lack of encouragement from the teacher

c)   Fear of being made fun of

The responses are as follows:

Table 20

Reasons for not Speaking in English

A	B	C	Others
38.71 %	8.39 %	42.58 %	10.32 %

Responses to question nos.1, 6 and 7 very strongly indicate the students' desire to improve their spoken communication skills.

Question no:6 : Would you like it better if you have discussions, group activities and debates in the class? Response :

Table 21

Preference for Discussions, Group Activities and Debates in the Class

Yes	No
95.63 %	4.37 %

Question no.7: Would you like spoken English introduced with composition? Response :

Table 22

Preference for Spoken English along with Composition

Yes	No
94.41 %	5.59 %

Response to question nos.6 and 7 indicate that the learners are eager to have discussions, group activities, debates and 'Spoken English'. Question no.8 was to know whether teachers use oral techniques in the class. The responses show that only 58.12 % use such techniques. Question nos. 9, 10 and 11 intended to elicit the students' attitude to these techniques. Their responses show that the attitude is quite positive because 72.65% of the

respondents prefer such classes to others and they endorse that if oral techniques are introduced they will be more interested in the English classes and it will be more useful. 96.08% are willing to co-operate with the teacher if such techniques are introduced.

Responses to the questions in section D reveal that the students are not satisfied with the traditional lecture method, but look forward to methods where thy are given opportunities for interactions. The teacher, with his motivation and professional interest can play a significant role in satisfying the students' desire.

A teacher is largely responsible for the effectiveness of his class and of his individual students. Accordingly the style that he adopts will have a great deal to do with the ultimate success that his students experience in learning. The teacher-leader therefore has the responsibility to ensure that he selects those teaching strategies that are likely to be effective. Otherwise he will not get the right thing done (Davies 178).

Even in the absence of guidelines and objectives in the syllabus, the teacher may choose a method of teaching to cater to the learner needs. The best method is one which provides the best results.

No matter what method is in vogue or is officially advocated, the individual teacher who is professionally alert will adopt its

techniques to his purposes, to his own personality, and to what he feels to be appropriate for the particular class he is teaching (Rivers, *Teaching Foreign Language* 13).

Section E

Section E comprised questions related to the development of language skills, especially the reading skill. 68.24 % of the respondents are in the habit of reading English books and novels, whereas 31.76% do not have the habit (Question 1). 80.8 % read English newspapers and magazines; 19.2% do not. 65.53 % say that they watch English TV Serials, movies etc., only 34.47 % do not. Again, 74.48 % listen to English news on the radio on the TV. Though the 25.57% who do not listen to English news were asked to give reasons they have not done so. 94.04 % agree that it will be useful to cultivate the habit.

To Question no:6, 'Do your teachers of English speak to you in English?' The responses are as follows:

Table 23

Teachers Speaking in English

Yes	No
95.88 %	4.12 %

59.06 % think that they can answer their teachers in English with confidence (Question no.7). 72.94 % say that they get chances to listen to English elsewhere, other than English classes (Question no.8). To question no:

9, 'Are your subjects explained in English or Malayalam?', the responses are as follows:

Table 24

Subjects Explained in English or Malayalam

English	Malayalam	Both
43.64	21.72	32.06

92.61 % of the respondents prefer their subjects taught in English, 4.23 % in both English and Malayalam, and only 2.72 % in Malayalam alone. (Question no.10). 26 % students think that the teachers should use Malayalam in the English classes (Question no: 11). Almost 74 % of the students answer their subject exams in English. To the last question in the section, 'Are you happy with the present method of teaching English?', the responses are the follows:

Table 25

Students' Responses to the Present Method of Teaching English

Yes	No
61.9 %	38.1 %

Responses to the questions in this section show that exposure to the target language is indispensable in second language acquisition.

Section F

Section F comprised 14 questions, some of which were personal ones, regarding their proficiency in English. There were open ended questions also, in order to elicit the students' opinion on the present system of teaching English, and examinations, and also to get their suggestions for changing the methods of teaching in the modern context.

To Question no.1, five options were given. 'The present method of teaching English'

a)   helps to improve your writing skills

b)   helps to improve your speaking skills

c)   helps to improve both writing and speaking skills.

d)   helps only to pass the examination

e)   does not help (a) (b) (c) or (d)

The responses are as follows:

Table 26

The Skill of Language Developed by the Present Method of Teaching

a	b	c	d	e
20.92 %	0.5 %	20.56 %	20.26 %	-

0.95 % have given 'a' and 'd', i.e., helps to improve writing skills and helps to pass the examination. It is remarkable that only one student, out of 182, thinks that the present method of teaching English helps to improve the speaking skills.

As a response to Question no:2, 23.6 % say that they can express themselves through writing and speech. 64.47 % can express themselves in writing, whereas only 15.79 % are capable of expressing themselves orally. Only 17 persons out of 182 can speak fluently while communicating with another person in English. 137, out of 182 can speak only a few words and 5 persons can only say 'yes' and 'no', whereas another 5 cannot speak at all. (Question no.3).

Responses to Question no:4 show that 82.28 % can write applications on their own, while 17.72% cannot. 61.76 % of the respondents say that they can make enquiries at an office on their own, whereas 38.24 % cannot. 32.94 % use English at home, whereas 70.59 % do not. (Question no:6). Responses to Question no:7 show that 75.9 % have parents who encourage to speak in English. Regarding the method of learning English, 3.66 % learn by heart, and 96.34 % 'understand and learn'.

Question no:9 was regarding the examination system. At the examination 29.24 % reproduce exactly the notes given by the teacher. 86.2 % have the habit of using the dictionary (Question no:10). Responding to

Question no:12, 58.22 % think that the present system of examination is ideal and 41.78 % are of the opinion that it tests only the knowledge of the content of the text. 71.43 % believe that the methods of teaching English should be changed in the modern context, and 28.57 % do not think so.

Question nos. 11 and 14 were similar and open ended. Only 68 out of 182 answered these two. Except 3, the respondents are not satisfied with the present method of teaching English. Many of them think that the present system is examination oriented, and does not help in developing the language skills. It helps only in passing the examination. According to a few, 'effective communication' must be the aim of teaching English. At least some are of the opinion that recent books and 'current topics' should be prescribed as the texts. To some, classes are boring because the teachers are concerned only about completing the syllabus. Some students also feel that student participation is less in the present system. It should be changed, and the students be persuaded to speak in English. Some are afraid that the present system lacks 'creativity'.

As response to Question no:14 certain suggestions are given by the students which can be consolidated in the following way:

(1)   Teaching should give emphasis to the spoken English.

(2)   Do away with the lecture method and introduce methods to improve the communication skills.

(3)   All the skills should be developed.

(4)   Teachers must persuade the students to speak in English.

(5)   There should be role-play, debates, group discussion etc.

(6)   Thrust on fluency in oral and written language rather than the text.

(7)   Encourage the students to speak in English in the college as there is no other place where many of them may get exposure to the language.

(8)   Make 'Spoken English' a part of the syllabus.

(9)   Just lecturing is boring – marks should be given for students' involvement in the class. 'Much importance should be given for Spoken English'.

(10)   Give opportunities to listen to native speakers of English.

(11)   Loud reading should be encouraged in the class.

(12)   Texts should be interesting.

(13)   Science fiction to be introduced, 'technical writings' and other skills should be developed because 'we are projected to a world where English is not the language of only Shakespeare and Milton, but my language too'.

Conclusion

The aim of this work has been to understand the problems of comprehension and communication in the undergraduate classes. The study has given the researcher certain useful insights into the state of English language teaching in the U.G. classes, which have been recorded at relevant places in the foregoing chapters of this thesis. The work involved a scrutiny of certain factors in the teaching and learning of English, in view of the history of ELT, and of the present methods of language teaching. An evaluation of the role of English in the context of its global popularity established the indispensability of English as a 'window to the world'. The importance of English and the problems related to the acquiring of comprehension and communication skills were further validated by a survey administered with the teachers and students (Appendix A, and Appendix B).

What has emerged most strongly as a problem in the area of comprehension and communication is the question of a well specified syllabus. Though the present syllabus is definitely better structured than the traditional ones, it still falls short of the expectations of teachers and students. An analysis of the Calicut University U.G. syllabus reveals that it does not clearly spell out the aims and objectives of teaching English in the U.G. classes. This revelation has been strengthened by the responses to

Questionnaire (see Appendix A). The syllabus does not state the expected 'terminal behaviour' of the student in terms of the degree of competence, which he requires in the use of English for various purposes after leaving college. The level of proficiency in English indicated through the prescribed content is not defined in clear terms of language skills.

In the syllabus, novel, grammar, composition, prose, drama and poetry are prescribed for U.G. classes. But, it does not specifically indicate what is intended to be achieved by the students through the study of these. Merely incorporating poems, prose collections, drama and novel in the text books without any reference to the language skills to be mastered, does not serve the purpose of satisfying the students' communication needs. The need for a well defined syllabus has been supported by the responses to Questions 1- 4 in Section II A of the Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix A). A model syllabus, recommended by the U.G.C. for the Undergraduate classes is appended at the end of this work (Appendix C).

English language teaching can be effectively practised only with task-specific teacher training programmes. Because communicative language teaching has been partially introduced in the U.G. syllabus of the Calicut University, it has to be assumed that we are standing on the threshold of a language revolution. It demands the introduction of minor procedural changes in the whole fabric of language teaching. We have to admit that only lip service

has been rendered so far to the mission of making 'communication' the proper aim of language teaching. The question of providing training to all the teachers seem to be an enormous one. It has been the researcher's suggestion to make CLT the thrust area at all the refresher courses conducted by the academic staff colleges of the university. The responses to the Questionnaire strongly supported the view that professional training would enable the teachers to teach the language-based course more effectively and purposefully. The department of English in the University may take up the responsibility for the conduct of in-service training for the concerned teachers.

The immediate need for spoken English, and the total neglect of it in the U.G. syllabus is a matter of concern for teachers and students. 'The global need for spoken English' was largely reflected in the learner needs survey conducted by the researcher through questionnaires administered to the students of various colleges. It was seen that there is an overwhelming demand for the inclusion of spoken English in the syllabus. This means that we have to visualize the emergence of a set of classroom strategies which tend to maximize the acquisition of a second language for common purposes and minimizing the teacher role.

A critical analysis of the role and function of the teacher has been discussed in the relevant chapter. The fluency of the teachers' spoken English is very crucial in improving the spoken English of the learners. Since exposure

to the native spoken English, which is ideal, cannot be made available to our learners, the best we can aspire for is the service of Indian teachers who are highly fluent in this foreign language.

There has to be a sharper awareness of the significance of an emphasis on the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and the communicative purpose they may serve. The work testifies that a new flavour can be given to the teaching and learning of English by taking the focus completely off the language as content and putting it into the communication needs of the learners.

It is precisely the lack of flexibility of the system that is responsible for the poor style of functioning of our language teaching. Our system seems to put all the learners into one rigid slot, whatever be their 'entry behaviour'. They are all forced to chew and swallow the same course content, irrespective of their different proficiency level in the language. The distinctive division of High Level English and Low Level English for U.G. courses has been recommended by the researcher. The survey also testified the dissatisfaction of the teachers with the present method of streaming the students. The syllabus recommended by the U.G.C. for undergraduate General English (Appendix C) also advocates this differentiation of courses. This may put an end to the undesirable air of heterogenous groups, which hamper the proper co-ordination of communicative activities in the classroom.

Large classes are also defamed for its' interference with the efficiency of communication strategies. Jean Forrester has suggested ways of dealing with large classes in <u>Teaching Without Lecturing</u>. Large classes cannot accommodate to change, considering the economic constraints of our country, and are therefore to be accepted and used to advantage in the best possible manner. Since the ideal-sized classes are non existant in our local context, the best we can do is to follow an ideal streaming of students, and 'do our job as effectively as we can'.

The more ominous aspect of the situation is the wrong focus on the examination, which gives a totally different direction to the teachers, as well as the students. The major concern of the examination is the content of the text. Knowledge of the content is, undoubtedly, decisive of the students' grade in the examination. It is obvious to everyone that the ability to listen, read, write and speak well in English are not the criteria for a pass in English. A thorough restructuring of the examination system has to evolve where testing the knowledge of the text has to give way to the testing of the skills, and a student who demonstrates some substantial and meaningful 'language behaviour' has to be given credit.

As Widdowson(1978) says efficient reading involves understanding how language operates in communication "and it is precisely this understanding which students appear not to acquire during their years of learning in secondary

schools." For many teachers in schools, teaching of English is as tough as cutting the Gordian knot. Some of them make disparaging outbursts of their helplessness; they do not know any phonetics and hence are unable to teach pronunciation, do not know structures, hence unable to teach grammar. To such a community of teachers are most of our school children entrusted to learn English. The crux of the problem is deeper than we can imagine; the unhealthy state of English in the colleges is an indicator of the unhealthy state of English in the schools. There is a need for a continuous and consistent campaign against this scourge, along with a massive reconstruction in the basic infrastructure of language teaching.

Over the years the education department did make some efforts to check the fall in the standard of English, but the problem persisted. What can we expect of our students if most of their teachers are not trained to teach English as a second language. Nothing beyond the inadequate English textbook is provided, and that too for the most part is taught in the regional language. This is a problem that has to be immediately tackled; we need to take a renewed look at the recruitment of teachers in our regional medium schools.

The possibility of exploiting the potential of the internet in English teaching has been examined by the researcher. The desire to restructure the teaching methods was expressed by the students, as well as the teachers. If teachers get acquainted with the internet to explore methods of teaching

English the internet way, we may succeed in revolutionizing ELT, to a great extent.

The fact that everybody wants to learn English has become obvious in the course of the survey. Therefore, through successful teaching strategies, we have to ensure that all students acquire functional communication skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The introduction of Communicative English in the U.G. syllabus is a sign of positive thinking, which would provide a scope for the qualitative improvement in the teaching of English.

APPENDIX A

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am working on a research project entitled "Comprehension and Communication in English: A perspective of its problems in the Undergraduate classes". Many of our students experience difficulties in getting at the meaning, and interpreting the idea when a comprehension passage is given to them, and they are incapable of communicating their thoughts. I have drawn up a list of such difficulties, particularly those that the students may be experiencing while required to comprehend a written text. You are required to judge the possibility of the occurrence of these difficulties from your experience. Your opinions are sought in two sections. In section I, they are to be obtained in a five-point scale for which you will kindly encircle any one of the letters A, B, C, D and E according to your judgment, where

      A   stands for Always

      B   stands for Very frequently

      C   stands for sometimes

      D   stands for rarely

      E   stands for never

In Section II you may please put a tick (√) mark against your choice, and give

your remarks and suggestions wherever necessary.

Your valuable responses as experienced teachers of English will go a long way in identifying some of the problems in ELT. Your responses and suggestions on the problems will be highly valued and appreciated.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

Irinjalakuda

28 – 9- 2000

Anne Mary K. Manavalan

Kindly furnish these details also:

1. Name of the college where presently working :

2. Male / Female :

3. Years of experience as a teacher of English :

4. Whether attended any orientation / refresher / in-service programme in ELT : Yes / No

Questionnaire for Teachers

Section I

Sl. No	Causes for poor comprehension	Scale to mark
1	Lack of interest	A B C D E
2	Lack of motivation	A B C D E
3	Objective of achieving reading skill not specified in the syllabus	A B C D E
4	Lack of proper guidance	A B C D E
5	Lack of reading practice	A B C D E
6	Lack of proper foundation in elementary school learning	A B C D E
7	By-rote study from examination point of view	A B C D E
8	Absence of internal assessment	A B C D E
9	New vocabulary, unfamiliar words and phrases	A B C D E
10	Lack of knowledge of usage of structures and vocabulary content taught in previous classes	A B C D E
11	Lack of concentration and careless reading	A B C D E
12	Defective method of teaching	A B C D E
13	Wrong choice of materials and texts	A B C D E
14	Lack of the awareness of the importance of reading comprehension	A B C D E
15	Want of reading habits	A B C D E

Causes for Poor Communication

a. Writing Communication

Sl. No	Causes for Poor Communication	Scale to mark
1	Lack of motivation	A B C D E
2	By-rote study methods from examination point of view	A B C D E
3	Improper system of examination where writing skill is not tested	A B C D E
4	Objective of achieving writing skill not specified in the syllabus	A B C D E
5	Lack of practice in writing	A B C D E
6	Defective method of teaching	A B C D E
7	Availability of teacher's notes and guides	A B C D E
8	Lack of encouragement and opportunities for creative writing	A B C D E

b. Speaking Communication

1	Socio-cultural background	A B C D E
2	Lack of exposure to spoken English	A B C D E
3	Lack of opportunities and chances at home and college	A B C D E
4	Nervousness and diffidence	A B C D E
5	Inferiority complex	A B C D E

Section II

Section A (Syllabus and Textbooks)

(Please put a tick mark (√) against your responses)

1. Do you think the present syllabus of Part 1 English spell out the aims and objectives of teaching English in the U.G. classes? Yes / No

2. Do you think that the present Degree English syllabus is compatible with the student needs? Yes / No

3. Have you ever thought of the concept of designing syllabus according to the student needs? Yes / No

4. If the objectives of teaching English are clearly specified in the syllabus, would it help the teacher teach more effectively? Yes / No

5. What, in your opinion, should the teaching of English in U.G. classes emphasis?

    a. Study of English literature

    b. Limit itself to the teaching of communication skills so that students may find it useful in future.

    c. Teaching from the point of view of performing well in the examination.

6. Do you find in the present syllabus and text books any emphasis on:

    a. The study of English literature.

    b.   Learning of the language for use in communication.

    c.   Developing the reading skills to read and understand books/ journals etc.

    d.   Help the students in competitive examinations, interviews etc.

7.   Are you satisfied with the present syllabus? Yes / No

8.   There are four important aspects of English language teaching, namely (a) Writing (b) Speaking (c) Reading (d) Listening.

1.   In your opinion, which are the most important and useful for the students?

    (i)   (ii)

2.   Which aspect is most neglected in the present U.G. course?

9.   Even the present syllabus, if taught properly, can be used to develop language skills. Do you agree? Yes / No

10.   What do you think about the prescribed novel, prose, drama, poetry and grammar/composition texts as materials for teaching comprehension and communication?

11.   If you are not satisfied with the present U.G. course in English could you kindly mention some of the reasons for your dissatisfaction, other than the ones mentioned below.

    a.   The course does not emphasize the teaching of language skills of writing/ speaking/ listening/ reading.

b. ....

....

....

....

12. Don't you think that the introduction of communicative English in the I year General English paper (Part I, Paper I) is a recent innovation and a welcome change?   Yes / No

Section B (Teacher Training)

13. Teachers are appointed in the colleges immediately after their M.A. (with N.E.T.) Do you think they are sufficiently equipped to teach in the U.G. classes?   Yes / No / Not certain

14. Do you think some kind of training in ELT (English language Teaching) is essential before appointing a teacher? Yes / No/ Not certain

15. Do you think in-service courses are essential for teachers before introducing innovations and changes in the syllabus? Yes / No

16. Do you think a short term in-service course or some kind of workshop will help you to teach the 1st year communicative English (General English – Paper 1 – Composition and Grammar) more effectively?

17. Have you attended the prescribed number of refresher Courses? Yes / No

18. Do these courses help you in any way to make your teaching methods

more effective? Yes / No

Section C (Examination System)

19. What do you think about the present system of examination?

(a) Ideal (b) Satisfactory (c) not satisfactory

20. In your opinion, what should be the aim in giving an examination in English at the end of the course?

a. To test whether the student has developed a sensitivity to literature.

b. To test the ability to memorize and reproduce the texts that have been taught.

c. To test how well the student has understood the text.

d. To test whether the student has acquired the skills of the language and can express his ideas well.

21. Do you think the pattern of examination has changed significantly in the last five years?   Yes / No/ to some extent

22. Do you think the changes (if any) have resulted in better teaching? Yes / No

23. Do you think internal assessment should be introduced? Yes / No

Section D (Motivation and teaching methods)

24. Do you make an attempt to know the following details about your students as a part of your pre-plan?

a. Their social / cultural background.

b. Attitude / motivation to language learning.

c. Level of achievement in English.

d. Their interests and ambition

Yes / No

25. Do you make an attempt to motivate your students? Yes / No

26. What is the teaching method that you use in the English class?

a. Lecturing

b. Mainly lecturing

c. More student-oriented methods

27. Are you aware of teaching strategies and teaching aids which can make your classes more interesting? Yes / No

28. Have you tried any teaching strategies to develop the oral communication skills of your students? Yes / No

29. In case you have been using such strategies, was the class responsive? Yes / No / sometimes

30. As a part of teaching / learning activities do you resort to the following?

a. Games

b. Discussions

c. Speech

d. Debates

e.   Any other activities   Yes / No

31. If Yes, what was the response from the students?

    a.   Encouraging

    b.   Discouraging

    c.   Indifferent

32. How often do you introduce such activities in the class?

    a.   Often

    b.   Sometimes

    c.   Never

33. Do you think such activities are not feasible in the present class room situations? Yes / No

34. How do you plan/ prepare a lesson?

    a.   Look up different words in the dictionary and note their uses in different contexts

    b.   Plan the ways of improving the language skills of the learners with relevance to the text

    c.   ....

        ....

        ....

        ....

35. Do you explain every line of the prose, poetry, drama and novel texts?
Yes / No

36. Don't you think by explaining less you equip the students to make an attempt at comprehension? Yes / No

37. Do you finish your portions before time? Yes / No

38. If 'Yes' how do you use the remaining hours?

    a.   Give revision

    b.   Give practice in spoken English

    c.   Leave them free

    d.   Give the hours to subject teachers

39. Don't you think, a few minutes of every English hour could be used for some kind of student – oriented activity? Yes / No

40. If 'No' kindly give your reasons:

....

....

....

....

41. Do you think, by introducing student-oriented activities through the syllabus, the English classes can be made more meaningful and interesting? Yes / No

42. Are you enthusiastic about changing the present method of teaching? Yes / No

43. Do you think translation exercises would improve the comprehension and communication skills of the students? Yes / No

44. Do you think the rules of grammar should be taught in the U.G. classes? Yes / No

45. Don't you think that the application of grammar in the composition classes will be more meaningful and useful? Yes / No

Section E (Remedial Teaching)

46. Do you have Remedial Teaching at the U.G. level? Yes / No

47. Are you happy with the present system of grouping the students for the General English class, (without any specific norms)? Yes / No

48. In your opinion, which of the following is the ideal way of grouping?

  a. Mixing Arts, Science and Commerce students

  b. Different groups of Arts, Science and Commerce

  c. 'High Level' group and 'low level' group on the basis of a general test for measuring the level of achievement.

  d. Any other suggestion :

    ....

    ....

....

....

49. Do you think Remedial Courses / Bridge Courses will help to level the gap of achievement level? Yes / No

Section F (Reforms)

50. Kindly mention some of the techniques you use in the teaching of a Poem and Prose text.

   a. Give a brief introduction about the author, the cultural background and explain line by line, giving meanings of different words.

   b. Make the students read, and ask comprehension questions to ensure the students have grasped the central idea (giving guidance wherever necessary)

   c. Read the Poem/ Prose aloud and give line by line paraphrase in English and Malayalam.

   d. Any other method:

   ....

   ....

   ....

   ....

51. Which of the above is the best, in your opinion? (a) (b) (c)

52. It is assumed that most college teachers do not practise what they consider to be the most effective and useful method of teaching because of circumstantial constraints. Please tick (Ö) against the statements which apply to you. If there are other reasons, kindly write in the space provided.

    a.   If the teacher follow their own method, covering the syllabus within the allotted time will be impossible.

    b.   Large classes

    c.   Heterogeneous group of students with different levels of language ability.

    d.   Priority for producing good results rather than improving students' proficiency in English.

    e.   Lack of motivation on the part of the students because of the present system of examination.

    f.   Any other reason:

    ....

    ....

    ....

    ....

53. If the present system of ELT programme is changed and the examination

system restructured, don't you think it will demand more effort and hard work from the part of the teachers? Yes / No

54. Will it be difficult for you to change over to a new system of teaching culture?

Yes / No

55. Do you think some sort of training is essential if such a change is introduced?

Yes / No

56. Do you think the introduction of computers / internet will make the learning of communication skills more interesting? Yes / No

57. Please give your valuable suggestions for making the ELT programme in the U.G. classes more meaningful and purposeful.

....

....

....

....

Thank you for your co-operation

Questionnaire for the Students

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions given below it. Certain words in the passage are printed in bold to help you to locate them easily for answering some of the questions.

It is time we looked at the **latent** causes. Where does the strength of India lie? Not in numbers, not necessarily in our moral stands on international issues. In modern times the strength of a nation lies on its achievements in science and technology. This is not to say that other fields do not count.

In the five decades after independence, we have yet to demonstrate our originality in applied science and technology. Though Japan also started like us, by cultivating the technology of the West, the Japanese adopted, improved and displayed originality in several areas of science and technology. The generation which is at the helm of affairs in science and technology in our country after independence, mostly consisted of self seekers. By and large, with a few exceptions, the science and technology managers in India concentrated in gaining power and influence. They loved publicity. Most of them stopped doing science while they **managed** science. Things would have been better had they been humble enough to acknowledge the difference between doing and

managing science. Instead they claimed they were the foremost in science and technology, simply because they were at helm of affairs. As a result, they ceased to inspire the younger lot. India continues to be a borrower of science and technology, even though its potential for originality is **substantial.**

Our achievements in nuclear science and technology may be **dazzling** to our people. But, in worth and originality, they are ordinary and routine. While our own people remain ignorant, the people of other countries know all about the **pretensions** to knowledge of our nuclear science and technology managers. One subtle way of sabotaging our nuclear goals is to help hollow persons reach and remain at the helm of affairs. International bodies come in as handy tools in that subtle process. The veil of secrecy effectively protects the mismanagement in our nuclear establishments. The talk of national security comes as an easy weapon to prevent any probe into mismanagement. On nuclear matters, the media in our country, by and large, avoid the investigative approach. As a result, the mismatch between promise and performance in the nuclear field does not get exposed as much as the mismanagement in other fields.

1. What does the author mean by doing science?

    a) Demonstrating exaggerated performance without achieving the desired level.

b) Managing effectively the administrative functions involved in the power game.

c) Concentrating on such researches which have very low practical utility.

d) Displaying genuine acumen and performance in scientific studies.

e) None of these.

2. 'Doing science' and 'managing science' as implied by the author is analogous to

a) Set target and achieving it.

b) Fact and fantasy

c) Originality and adaptability

d) Scientific inventions and discovery of principles.

e) Inspiration and aspiration

3. The author of the passage has

a) Criticized the power-hungry Indian technocrats.

b) Appreciated the Japanese scientist unduly and exorbitantly

c) Hailed India's technological advancements in the past five decades.

d) Underestimated the Japanese and Chinese scientists and technologists.

e) Unreasonably criticized the Indian politicians for their apathy.

4. Which of the following is the commonality between the Indian and the Japanese scientists? Both have displayed

a) Originality in applied sciences.

b) An advancement of substandard quality

c) Greed for influence and power

d) Remarkable lust for publicity

e) None of these.

5. Which of the following is the correct assessment of India's post independence nuclear and scientific advancements?

a) Originality and adaptability is duly displayed in the field of applied science.

b) Our achievements in nuclear science and technology are dazzling.

c) Our achievements are of a very ordinary quality and routine nature.

d) Our scientists have given full justice to the developmental needs of nuclear science.

e) None of these.

6. It appears that the author of the passage is fully convinced that

a) Most of the managers of science and technology are not doing their work properly.

b) India's strength lies in its moral stands on international issues.

c) India's potential for originality in science and technology is over utilized.

d) Our scientists though criticised in our country are recognized abroad.

e) People lacking the desired qualities are supported to get at the helm of affairs.

7. What according to the passage is the criterion to decide the strength of a country?

   a) The country's population

   b) The moral values of the people

   c) International understanding cherished by the people.

   d) Potential of people to achieve desired targets.

   e) None of these.

8. The author of the passage thinks that

   a) India should continue to borrow technology from abroad.

   b) India's potential for originality is not to optimum utilisation.

   c) India lacks the necessary potential to compete with other nations.

   d) Our scientists did all their best to inspire the younger lot.

   e) Our achievements in nuclear science and technology are dazzling.

9. Which of the following factors help prevent the exposure of drawbacks in nuclear establishments?

   a) The concept of secrecy

   b) The constraint of national Security

   c) The investigative approach of the media.

      (1) Only A   (2) Only B   (3) Only C

      (4) Only A and B   (5) Only A and C

10. Pick out the word that is most nearly the SAME in meaning as the word printed in bold type as used in the passage.

    a) MANAGED

        (i) performed (ii) manoeuvred (iii) trained (iv) organized (v) conducted

    b) PRETENSIONS

        (i) claims   (ii) access   (iii) apathy (iv) permissiveness (v)shortcomings

    c) SUBTLE

        (i) innocent (ii) soft (iii) dangerous (iv) insidious (v) devastating

11. Pick out the word that is most OPPOSITE in meaning of the word printed in bold type as used in the passage:

    a) SUBSTANTIAL

        (i) extensive (ii) independent (iii) noteworthy (iv) uncompromising (e) insignificant

    b) LATENT

        (i) concealed (ii) real (iii) apparent (iv) dubious (v) untrustworthy

    c) DAZZLING

        (i) glaring (ii) unscrupulous (iii) unexposable (iv) unnoticeable (v) lustrous

Translate the following sentences into Malayalam so as to show that you have understood the meaning of the word / words italicized.

1. The College Day celebration went *according to* plan.

2. Each man has his own *aim* in life.

3. Are you going to *argue for or against* the proposal?

4. Switzerland is *bounded* by mountains on all sides.

5. A *certain* man came to our house yesterday.

6. 'Come in!' *cried* the Principal as the boy went and stood outside his room.

7. It is *far better* to read a book than go to a movie.

8. The *late* Principal of the college was a good sportsman.

9. They *offered* me a job in the factory.

10. Each parent is *proud* of his children.

11. We want the right man to *govern* the country.

12. Don't discuss *delicate* subjects with strangers.

13. You must be able to *frame* your thoughts.

14. He *organized* the college sports all by himself.

15. Will you please do it for my *sake*?

Questionnaire

A.

1. How many minutes did you take to complete the comprehension exercise?

2. What is your score in the exercise?

3. Do these texts help you improving your vocabulary?

4. Do you care to learn the new words that appear in the lesson?

5. What do you think about the translation exercise given above?

    a) Simple

    b) Too simple

    c) Tough

6. Were you able to recognize the vocabulary items? Yes / No

7. Do you think Translation is a creative activity? Yes / No

8. Comment on your score –

    a) Do you think you could have scored better if you had received enough practice in comprehension exercises in the composition class?

    b) Have you had composition classes in the first year degree course?

c) How many hours had been approximately spent in the first year

to teach comprehension skills?

(i)   No hours at all

(ii)   1 hour

(iii)   Less than 5 hours

(iv)   More than 5 hours

(v)   About 10 hours

d) Do you think that was enough to improve the skill? Yes / No

9.   Which were the English texts presented for your study in the first year

and in the second year?

10. Have these texts helped you in improving your skills in reading and

writing? Yes/No

11. Have you realized the importance of comprehension? Yes / No

12. Do you know that it will help you in the competitive examinations? [

MBA entrance / TOFEL / Bank tests etc]

13. How far do the English classes help you to achieve this end?

14. Do you think composition classes are as important as novel, prose,

poetry and drama?

15. Usually what is the role of the teacher in the composition classes?

16. Do the teachers give proper importance to the composition classes?

Yes / No

17. Do they give direction / correction during the composition class?

B

1. Do you think learning English is essential? Yes /No

2. Why do you want to learn English?

    a) Because of the status of English as a global language.

    b) Only to pass the examination.

    c) To help in getting a job.

    d) May help in higher education.

    e) Interests in the culture and literature of the English people.

    f) For social prestige

    g) Any other reason.

3. Do you consider English classes as important as the other subject

    classes? Yes/No

4. Give your reason. ....

5. What is your attitude to English classes?

    a) Positive

    b) Negative

    c) Neutral

6. Can you give any suggestions to make English classes more interesting

    and useful?

7. Does the teaching of English in the college help you to achieve your

    aim in learning English?

C

1. Do you enjoy your English classes?   Yes / No

    If Yes -

    > a) Some
    >
    > b) All

    If No -

    > a) Not interesting
    >
    > b) Too difficult
    >
    > c) Because of lecture method.
    >
    > d) No student involvement.
    >
    > e) Do not concentrate on teaching any language skills
    >
    >   (speaking / writing / reading etc)

2. Do you think that English should be compulsory in the degree syllabus? Yes/No. Why?

3. Are you satisfied with the present syllabus?

4. Do you think Novel, Prose, Grammar, Poetry and Drama should be included in the syllabus?

5. Do you find stories, poems and novels with English background, difficult to understand?

D

1. Are you given any training to speak in English?

2. Are you called upon to narrate your experiences and ideas in the class?

   a) Sometimes

   b) Never

   c) Always

3. If you are given chances to do so, do the students respond?

4. Is it the same, very few students who always come forward and speak?

5. If the majority do not come forward, it is because of:

   a) Inability to express in English

   b) Lack of encouragement from the teacher

   c) Fear of being made fun of.

6. Would you like it better if you have discussions, group activities and debates in the class?

7. Would you like Spoken English introduced with composition?

8. Do your teachers use oral techniques in the class? Yes / No

9. If 'Yes', do you prefer those classes to the others?

10. If spoken English is introduced,

    a) Will you be more interested in the English classes? Yes / No

    b) Will it be more useful? Yes / No

11. Will you co-operate with the teacher if it is introduced? Yes / No.

E

1.   Do you read English books / Novels? Yes / No

2.   Do you read English Newspapers/ magazines? Yes / No

3.   Do you watch English TV serials/ Movies etc? Yes / No

4.   Do you listen to English news on the radio or TV (Star News, BBC etc)?

      Yes / No

      If No, is it because:

      a)   You find it difficult to understand

      b)   Not interested

      c)   Does not have that habit

5.   Don't you think it will be useful to cultivate that habit? Yes / No

6.   Do your 'English' teachers speak to you in English?

7.   Are you able to answer in English with confidence?

8.   Do you get chances to listen to English anywhere else, other than the

      English classes? Yes / No

9.   Are your subjects explained in English or Malayalam?

10.   Which do you prefer?

11.   Do you think Malayalam should be used by the teacher in the English

      classes?

12.   Do you write your subject exams in English or in Malayalam?

13.   Are you happy with the present method of teaching English? Yes / No

F

1. The present method of teaching English

    a) Helps to improve your writing skills. Yes/ No

    b) Helps to improve your speaking skills. Yes/ No

    c) Helps to improve both writing and speaking skills. Yes/ No

    d) Helps only to pass the examination. Yes/ No

    e) Does not help (a), (b), (c) or (d)

2. Can you express yourself in English?

    a) In writing

    b) Orally

3. When speaking in English to another person can you :

    a) Only say Yes and No

    b) Cannot speak at all

    c) Speak only a few words

    d) Speak fluently

4. Can you write a letter of application on your own? Yes / No

5. Can you go and make enquiries at an office on your own? Yes / No

6. Do you use English at home? Yes / No

7. Do the parents encourage you to speak in English and read English papers and magazines? Yes / No

8. What is your method of learning English?

a) Learn by heart

b) Understand and learn

9. While answering the examination paper, do you reproduce exactly the notes given by your teacher? Yes / No

10. Are you in the habit of using a dictionary? Yes / No

11. If you have any comments on the present method of teaching English, please write in the space provided.

....

12. What do you think about the present system of examination?

a) Ideal

b) Does not test your skill in the language / tests only the knowledge of the content of the text

13. Do you think the methods of teaching English should be changed in the modern context? Yes/ No

14. Have you any suggestions to make?

Appendix C

Model Syllabus

A NOTE ON THE NEW CURRICULUM

The new curriculum originates from the concept of education as an instrument of human resource development. With this concept in mind, an attempt has been made in the curriculum to cater for the needs of the learner on the one hand and the demands of the society on the other. It is towards this end that the course content at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels has been designed. How this has been done is discussed below.

Undergraduate Level

The new undergraduate curriculum comprises a General English course and a Special English course. The General English course has been made compulsory for all students, keeping in view the fact that all students need some English for academic and professional purposes and for social interaction.

In developing the new curriculum an attempt has been made to keep in view the learners' needs with regard to English. The primary need of learners at the undergraduate level today appears to be an ability to use the English language effectively both for the pursuit of academic studies and for success in future careers. The traditional General English curriculum is characterized by a

literary-humanistic and heavily content-based syllabus. This is beyond the linguistic competence of many college entrants, and besides, it does not equip learners with the necessary language skills for functioning in English. In contrast, the General English curriculum proposed now is specified, not in terms of a set of texts, but instead, in terms of the communication skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing; and thus it aims at enabling students to acquire the communicative use of English.

To cater to the heterogeneous tertiary-level student population (the range of linguistic competence is extremely varied since students from both English – medium and regional-medium schools come together at this level), the General English course is conceived of as comprising different units and modules suited to the different levels of learners. The patterning of the courses is such that students, depending on their linguistic competence at the time of admission, would not only begin their General English programme at different levels but also reach different levels at the time of graduation (see Annexure IV under Undergraduate Courses for details). This would enable low achievers to improve their language skills through suitable remedial work, and the better ones to attain higher level proficiency skills. Provision is also made for "Functional English Units"- applied language courses which are vocation-oriented. The purpose of these units is not only to improve the students' language proficiency in general, but to equip them with the necessary language

skills for their future careers as well.

In order to meet its objectives, the new undergraduate curriculum envisages the use of materials, methods and testing procedures different from those used in traditional courses. The literary texts to be used are carefully selected to suit different learner levels. Most important, the texts are intended to be exploited through challenging tasks and exercises in order to promote greater learner involvement and greater communicative use of the language in the classroom. The conventional lecture method is to be replaced by a pedagogy in which students are actively engaged in the learning process, the teacher motivating them to communicate in the classroom and providing feedback. As regards testing, it is envisaged that the skills acquired, rather than the knowledge of reproducible content, would be tested.

Thus the new undergraduate curriculum in English differs from the existing curriculum in respect of its underlying philosophy, objectives, course content, and the general approach to teaching/learning. It is hoped that this curriculum will produce graduates who are able to use the English language effectively to fulfil academic, professional and social needs.

Some of the special features of the proposed curriculum are summed up below:

1. It provides, besides the course description and course content, the general objectives of each programme together with specific

objectives of each unit of paper, where necessary.

2. It not only recommends the textual materials from out of those available, but also suggests ways and means of preparing fresh materials where required.

3. It suggests methods and modes of teaching the new courses.

4. It indicates methods of testing and evaluation.

5. It suggests how teachers should be trained in order to ensure a proper implementation of the curriculum.

6. It provides under the course content, full details of the course, including, the skills, the sub skills, and tasks etc.

7. It provides, in the General English course at the undergraduate level, different courses for students of different language abilities.

8. It lays emphasis, in the General English course, on developing the learner's language and communication skills rather than on acquiring knowledge.

9. It provides, at the undergraduate level, certain need-based, employment-oriented modules such as English for Competitive Examinations, English for Secretarial Practice, English for Business Communication, and English for Advertising and Copy Writing.

COURSE CONTENT AND TEXTBOOKS

This annexure provides in detail the content of courses in English for the three-year BA/BSc/BCom programme.

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

The General English course is to be prescribed on a compulsory basis for all students of BA, BSc and BCom, whereas the Special English course is offered on an elective basis to BA students only. Thus some BA students may study both special English as well as General English. The BA, BSc and BCom programmes for which these courses are being recommended are programmes following 12 years of schooling.

GENERAL (COMPULSORY) ENGLISH

Introduction

The objectives of the General English course are:

a. To equip the student for his present and future academic pursuits: to understand classroom lectures, read textbooks, do reference reading, participate in classroom discussion, and write assignments and examination answers.

b. To prepare him to function effectively in his future profession.

c. To prepare him to function effectively in the social and other situations in which he may be called upon to use English.

The specific objective of this course is to develop the following communication skills:

Reading

Efficient processing of connected written discourse; adjusting speed and strategy to the reading material and to the purpose of reading.

Writing

Production of coherent written discourse of various kinds (e.g. summary, expository writing, commercial correspondence, different types of letters, telegrams, etc.) with attention to appropriate strategies and conventions of writing.

Speaking and Listening

Production and processing of language useful for academic professional, and social life. This would imply engaging in activities such as:

➢ listening to classroom lectures, radio and TV programmes, and recordings

➢ reading aloud and participating in discussions and interviews with some degree of ease and fluency, and

➢ observing appropriate conventions of speech in social situations (e.g. in greetings and in showing courtesy and politeness in conversation)

Acquisition of the essential elements of English pronunciation, including word-accentuation, in order to promote effective oral communication

NOTE: All the skills and sub-skills listed above are to be treated in an integrated manner, and not in isolation from one another.

Vast differences exist in the level of attainment in English among the students seeking admission to BA, BSc, BCom. In the circumstances, prescription of the same course to all students is not a sound principle. At the same time, the frequently suggested remedy to conduct additional courses for weaker students to bring them on par with the rest is neither possible nor realistic. Therefore, different courses for different levels of students are recommended. The courses recommended for the three years of BA, BSc, BCom programme are:

A. Review Unit

B. Communication Skills Unit – Level I

C. Communication Skills Unit – Level II

D. Advanced Unit

E. Functional Unit (e.g. English for Competitive Examination)

While the Review Unit is essentially a remedial unit, the difference between Units B, C and D is envisaged in terms of different levels of language skills as reflected in the textual materials and examination questions. Unit E is a functional unit offered in the second/third year of General English to students who have attained at least the competence envisaged in Unit B. These units are not envisaged as watertight compartments. In fact an oral

approach is advocated and whatever is not adequately done in one unit may be carried over to the next. Different entry points, viz, A, B, C are provided for students of the first year to suit their differing proficiency levels. To implement these proposals, the student population is to be divided into three different streams on the basis of a placement test. These three streams will not only begin their General English programme at different points but also arrive at three different points at the time of their graduation. Thus Stream I (the lowest stream) will start with Unit A in the first year and move on to Unit B in the second year and Unit C or E in the third year (where a third year of General English is provided); Stream II will start on Unit B in the first year, move on to unit C or E in the second year, and Unit D or E in the third year (where provided); Stream III will start on Unit C in the first year, move on to Unit D or E in the Second year, and Unit E in the third year (where provided)

While all streams should get the same BA, BSc or BCom degree, the units studied by individual students for their General English course would be indicated on their marks sheets.

A   REVIEW UNIT

1.0 Rationale/Objectives

This one-year course will be offered in the first year of the B.A., B.Sc., B.Com. programme to students who are admitted to the lowest stream (Stream I) on the basis of the placement test referred to earlier. It is assumed

that the students belonging to this stream failed to acquire language skills adequate for the +2 stage and, as such, are not sufficiently equipped to start on the Communication Skills Units. These students, therefore, need re-inforcement of the basic language skills; and that is what this course provides.

2.0 Course Content

2.1   Skills to be developed

    2.1.1 Independent reading of simplified and graded readers

    2.1.2 Comprehension of simple passages

    2.1.3 Understanding and reacting to classroom discourse

    2.1.4 Writing guided composition with emphasis on fluency (correctness coming only gradually)

    2.1.5 Consolidating and expanding vocabulary

    2.1.6 Using grammatical structures taught at the school level in meaningful contexts

    2.1.7 Reference skills such as consulting a dictionary (for meaning and usage), index and library catalogue

2.2   Elaboration of the course content (sub-skills to be developed)

    2.2.1 Independent reading

    Selecting and reading at least five books out of a given collection of books and answering simple objective-type questions on them to show that they have actually been read.

2.2.2 Comprehension skills

Reading aloud and fluently informative, narrative and descriptive passages

Picking out the main points in a given passage

Reading silently simple passages and answering questions which may be factual and inferential (i.e., inferring facts from the context). The answer may be oral or written.

2.2.3 Understanding and reacting to classroom discourse

Participating in routine classroom activities and orally answering simple questions that do not require rote learning of facts or content.

2.2.4 Writing guided composition

Guided writing using information provided of topics related to the day-to-day activities of the students.

Re-ordering sentences into a coherent paragraph of 100-150 words

2.2.5 Consolidating and expanding vocabulary

Inferring word meaning from available clues

Forming words using common prefixes and suffixes

Using words as different parts of speech in connected discourse

Forming adjectives, verbs, nouns, etc from given words and using them in sentences.

2.2.6   Using grammatical structures taught at the school level

Re-inforcing such structures as the students are found deficient

in, through contextualised presentations

Correcting sentences through reformulation exercises (re-

phrasing and editing of students' own written work)

2.2.7   Reference Skills

Using a table of contents and index to locate information / areas

of information

Consulting a library catalogue to locate books

Consulting a dictionary to locate a word for spelling, the right

meaning and use

3.0   Materials

The following types of materials are suggested for realizing the

objectives outlined earlier.

3.1   Textbooks

1. DAS, BK & DAVID, Annie   A Remedial Course in English

for Colleges Book 1. Delhi,

OUP, 1980

2. BROUGHTON,Geoffrey   Success with English Books 1,2

and 3, Harmondsworth,

Middlesex, Penguin books, 1968,

1969, 1970.

3. BHASKARAN, M   Strengthen Your English.

   HORSBURGH, David   Delhi, OUP, 1973

3.2   Workbooks

Suitable workbooks with a sufficiently large number of exercises should be prepared to reinforce and supplement classroom teaching.

3.3   Books for extensive reading

For extensive reading, stories retold/translated in simple language, simplified and illustrated classics or life-stories may be used. Books appropriate to the students' ability levels/interests may be selected from the following series:

(1)   Sangam Graded Readers (Orient Longmans)

(2)   Macmillan Junior Readers

(3)   Macmillan Stories Retold

(4)   Ladybird Readers

(5)   Sunbird Readers (OUP)

4.0   Methodology

4.1   Lecturing or explication of texts must be kept to the minimum. The exercises that follow the texts (or those contained in the workbooks) are of vital importance. Students should be made to do most of these exercises in the class with necessary help and

feedback from the teacher.

4.2   Initially, the teacher should emphasize fluency rather than correctness; attention to correctness should increase gradually.

The teaching of this unit should be conducted largely in small groups, not exceeding 30, in order to ensure individual participation and attention to individual learners.

A judicious use of the mother tongue (e.g., in teaching certain words, in presenting reading passages/stories, etc) may be resorted to at the initial stages of the course, but it should be withdrawn later in a phased manner.

NOTE: Correction of students' assignments by teachers is envisaged as an important teaching strategy at this level. This should be taken into account while assessing the teachers' workload.

Testing

There will be one public examination at the end of the year.

The distribution of marks will be as follows:

Part A		i. Reading comprehension	...	40 %
(Final Examination)		ii Writing ability	...	40 %
Part B		iii Reading of extensive readers		
(Internal assessment)		(oral and written test)	...	10 %
		iv Listening and speaking	...	10 %

The students must pass separately in Part A and Part B, and the marks obtained in each must be indicated separately on the marks sheet. The type of the English course studies, viz, the Review Unit, should also be indicated on the marks sheet. The marks obtained in the English course should be counted towards the overall grade/division/GPA in BA/ BSc / BCom.

At least fifty per cent of the questions in the examination should be based on unseen passages but care should be taken to ensure that testing is closely related to the work done in the class.

B.   COMMUNICATION SKILLS UNIT – LEVEL I

Rationale/Objectives

This one-year course will be offered to the following categories of B.A., B.Sc. and B.Com. students:

a.   Students of Stream ll (the middle stream) in the first year, and

b.   Students of Stream I (the lowest stream) in the second year.

This unit prepares students to proceed to Communication Skills Unit-Level II as well as the Functional Unit, and leads them, in a graded manner, to the communication skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking as specified below.

2.0 Course Content

2.1 Skills to be developed

2.1.1   Intensive reading

2.1.2   Independent reading for enjoyment

2.1.3   Use of different forms of written communication

2.1.4   Oral communication and listening

2.1.5   Study skills (including reference skills)

2.2   Elaboration of the course content (sub-skills to be

            developed)

2.2.1   Intensive reading

            Understanding the meaning of words, phrases and

            sentences in context

            Understanding logical relationships between statements

            (through recognition of grammatical devices such as

            linkers and connectors)

            Distinguishing statements of fact from beliefs, opinions,

            hypotheses and expressions of probability and certainty,

            etc.

            Inferring facts, opinions, instances, reasons, causes,

            results, requests, conclusions and general statements

            from a given passage

            Skimming a passage to identify general ideas and

            information

            Scanning passages to locate specific details

Identifying the main theme/central idea/topic of a given

passage

Pinpointing arguments in a given passage

Retrieving relevant information from charts/graphs/time

tables, etc.

2.2.2   Independent reading for enjoyment

Encouraging reading habits by making the student

select and read five simple abridged books (novels/

travelogues/biographies) from a given collection of

books.

(NOTE: the teacher must ensure that reading has

actually been done by conducting oral/written internal

tests as and when a student has finished reading a

particular book.)

Motivating the students to read by asking them to

maintain a record/scrapbook containing items from

newspapers and popular magazines which they may find

interesting. Captions and headings may be prepared for

each of such items.

2.2.3   Use of different forms of written communication

Training of the students to write coherently simple and

correct sentences making use of different forms of writing:

Descriptive writing relating to:

➢ objects

➢ persons

➢ places

➢ processes

Narrative writing:

➢ arranging events in a chronological order

➢ narrating events form different points of view

➢ narrating a story/incident

Writing application/personal letters

Filling up forms, pay- in –slips, etc

Writing notices, telegrams, schedules, etc.

2.2.4 Oral communication and listening

Training in effective reading aloud with proper pauses, stress and intonation

Training in listening in order to:

➢ identify key words in speech

➢ identify specific information in normal speech

➢ discriminate between essential information and details and redundancies

➢ take down main points and take notes while listening

➢ interpret signals of speech such as pauses, falling and rising tones and focus of intonation

Training in oral communication for day-to-day routine activities such as:

➢ introducing oneself to people

➢ introducing others

➢ making inquiries, seeking information

➢ responding to inquiries/supplying information

➢ making, accepting and refusing offers/invitations

➢ expressing agreement/disagreement in informal situations

➢ using some conventions of politeness/courtesy in speech (e.g., Excuse me, Thank you, Oh, it's a pleasure)

2.2.5 Study skills (including reference skills)

Note-making through reading/note–taking through listening

Techniques of note-taking/making such as:

➢ identifying important ideas and supporting details

> ➢ brief outlining of points

> ➢ numbering/sequencing of ideas

> ➢ use of abbreviation/symbols

Types of note-making

> ➢ listing

> ➢ branching

> ➢ argumentative

Consulting a dictionary for meaning, stress and

pronunciation

3.0 Materials

3.1 Teaching materials are viewed as sources of activity in the classroom and not as mere texts to which the students are to be exposed.

3.2 The teacher must have at his disposal a wide variety/range of materials from which he can select what suits the interests and ability levels of the students.

It is suggested that specially written materials/workbooks be made available to the students to provide practice in language woks, reading comprehension, and written communication.

Audio/video taped materials may be made available for use as "models" and practice materials for promoting oral communication and listening skills

as envisaged in the syllabus.

The following types of materials are suggested for consultation and use:

BHASKAR, WWS &   English Through Reading. V 1. Madras

PRABHU, NS.   Macmillan, 1975

BHASKARAN, M &   Strengthen Your English, Delhi,

HORSBURGH, David   OUP. 1973

FREEMAN, Sarah   Written Communication in English.

                        Bombay, Orient Longman, 1977

PRABHU, NS   Gulmohar Graded English Course. Reader

                        8. Madras, Orient Longman, 1976

UNIVERSITY OF   Note-Making and Composition

BOMBAY, ELT CELL   Exercises.

                        Bombay, University of Bombay, 1979.

SARASWATHY, V.   Origanised Writing Bk I. Madras, Orient,

                        Longman, 1984.

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY,   Developing Reading Skills Bk I.

Pondicherry   Pondicherry, Central Unversity, 1986

_____,   Written Communication – I. Pondichery,

                        Central University, 1986

DAS, BK 7 DAVID,   Remedial Course in English for Colleges

Annie   Bk 2. Delhi, OUP, 1981

The following types of materials are suggested for extensive reading :

Sangam Graded Readers 4,5,6 (Orient Longman)

Macmillan Senior Readers

4.0 Methodology

4.1 A learner-focused and learning–oriented approach is necessary for the type of course content outlined above. The teacher's role is envisaged as that of a facilitator of the learning process. The teacher also provides feedback through direct corrections and reformulation (i.e., by enabling the learner to rephrase his utterances correctly). Lecturing in the traditional sense is to be kept to the minimum.

4.2 The classroom situation is expected to be an activity-dominated one. The students are to be encouraged to communicate fluently. The teacher will have to promote different types of interaction to ensure that real communication takes place in the classroom. (For example, pair- work and group- work may be used to promote teacher –student/teacher-class and student-student interaction.)

4.3 Teaching aids and the teacher's own resourcefulness may have to be heavily relied upon to facilitate and promote the creation of contexts for communication in the classroom.

NOTE: Correction of students' written work and preparation of materials should be taken into account while assessing the teacher's workload.

5.0 Testing

5.1 There will be one public examination at the end of the year.

5.2 The examination will be directly related to the objectives of the course. i.e., testing is to be based on the skills developed during the course and not on the memory of the content and /or discrete grammar items.

5.3 Unseen passages for comprehension (at least 50%) and writing and listening tasks which are unrehearsed but similar to the ones done in the class must also be used for the purpose of testing.

5.4 The purpose of extensive reading is to ensure that reading for enjoyment takes place. A suitable system should be evolved by the teacher to record the learner's reading progress (for example, through progress charts/reading cards, etc). Extensive reading is to be tested internally.

5.5 Oral communication and listening skills can also be tested at the end of the year with the help of an external examiner.

5.6 The distribution of marks will be as follows:

i   Reading comprehension (final examination)   ...30 %

ii   Written communication (final examination)   ...40 %

iii   Extensive reading (internal assessment)   …10 %

iv   Oral communication and listening

(internal and external assessment)   … 20 %

The students must pass separately in the internal assessment and final examination, and the marks obtained in each must be indicated separately on the marks sheet. The type of the English course studied, viz, Communication Skills Unit – Level I, Should also be indicated on the marks sheet. The marks obtained in the English course should be counted towards the overall grade/ division/GPA/ in B.A./B.Sc./B.Com.

C. COMMUNICATION SKILLS UNIT – LEVEL II

Rationale /Objectives

This one-year course will be offered to the following categories of BA, BSc and BCom. students:

a.   Students of Stream III (the most advanced stream) in the first year,

b.   Students of Stream II in the second year,

c.   Students of Stream l in the third year (in the universities where the General English Course is spread over three years).

This course is a continuation of Communication Skills Unit – Level l, and leads the student, in a graded manner, to the attainment of a higher level of the communication skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as specified below.

2.0 Course Content

   2.1   Skills to be developed

       2.1.1 Intensive reading

       2.1.2 Independent reading with enjoyment

       2.1.3 Use of different forms of written communication

       2.1.4 Oral communication

       2.1.5 Study skills

   2.2   Elaboration of course content (sub-skills to be developed)

       2.2.1 Intensive reading

Rapid scanning of longer passages for specific information

Understanding the underlying logical organization / inconsistencies / contradiction / fallacies in the passage

Summarizing the main ideas of the passage

Judging the tone (humor, irony, satire, pathos, etc) of the passage and recognizing the attitude/bias of the author

Deduction of meaning from incomplete, truncated and distorted passages/sentences, telegraphic messages, newspaper headlines, etc.

Selecting information from a passage for a particular purpose (e.g., for filling in a given format, for presenting a point of view, for presenting arguments for and against)

2.2.2 Independent reading with enjoyment

Asking the students to select and read at least five complete (unabridged) books (novels, biographies, etc) from a suggested list of books. At least one of the five books selected by the student should be from outside the suggested list.

Students should maintain a record of their readings in a given format (recording information like the name of the book, important characters, theme, a brief synopsis, etc). This could form a basis for the oral test for internal assessment.

2.2.3 Use of different forms of written communication

Essay writing (descriptive and expository). Skills to be developed:

> preparing an outline

> structuring and organizing of ideas

> writing coherently (within a paragraph and between paragraphs)

> writing around a theme

> mechanics of writing

Summary writing (abstracting relevant ideas), preparing

schematic plans and writing summaries)

Official and commercial correspondence (making

enquiries, placing orders, writing letters of complaint,

etc)

Report-writing, i.e., reporting an event or an activity (e.g,

accidents, functions, visits, festivals) by:

- ➢ collecting relevant and interesting items of

  information

- ➢ organizing the information in a coherent format

- ➢ presenting it in a readable and effective manner

- ➢ adding comments or observations

Writing short speeches

Writing classified advertisements for newspapers

(matrimonials, sale/purchase, lost/found, etc)

2.2.4 Oral Communication

Listening to radio/TV talks/discussions, etc with

comprehension and making use of this information for

specific purposes, e.g., making notes, participating in

debates

Recognising tone and attitude of the speaker

Participating in discussions

Participating in debates

Participating in interviews

Marking short extempore speeches

2.2.5　Study skills (including reference skills)

Note-taking in different formats (e.g., outline, quotation-

notes, summary-notes, paraphrase)

Interpreting given charts, graphs, tables, etc.

Information transfer exercises

Consulting dictionaries, thesauruses and encyclopaedias

Making use of the library to locate information for

writing assignments

3.0　Materials

3.1　Teaching materials have to be viewed not as mere texts but as

sources of activities for the students to engage in.

3.2　The teacher must make available a wide range of materials to

cater for the varied needs, interests and ability levels of the

students.

3.3　Special teaching materials and workbooks will have to be made

available.

3.4　Taped materials (audio and video) may be prepared and made use

of for teaching as well as testing.

3.5   Materials form the following books can also be made use of by the teacher in the classroom:

1. BHASKAR, WWS & PRABHU, NS   English Through Reading. Bk.2. Madras, Macmillan, 1975

2. NARAYANASWAMY, VR   Strengthen Your Writing. Madras, Orient Longman, 1979

3. FREEMAN, Sarah   Study Strategies in English. Delhi, OUP, 1979

4. UNIVERSITY OF BOMBAY, ELT CELL   Note-Making and Composition Exercises. Bombay, University of Bombay, 1979

5. NARAYANASWAMY, VR   Organised Writing. Bk.2. Madras, Orient Longman, 1984

6. BK & DAVID, Annie   Remedial Course in English for Colleges. Bk.3. Delhi, OUP, 1981

7. DOUGHTY, Peter PEARCE, John & THORNTON, Geoffrey   Language in Use. London Edward Arnold, 1971

8. CENTRAL UNIVERSITY Pondicherry   Developing Reading Skills. Bk.2. Pondichery, Central University, 1987

9. ——————————— <u>Written Communication – 2</u>.

Pondicherry, Central University,

1987

Methodology

The teacher's role is envisaged as that of a facilitator of the learning process and he is expected to provide regular feedback to the students through correction and re-formulation. Lecturing is to be kept to the minimum. Thus a learner–focussed and a learning–oriented approach is necessary for a course of the type outlined above.

The classroom situation is expected to be an activity-dominated one with individual students participating in the different types of interactional situations to be created by the teacher in the classroom. The teacher is expected to ensure that real communication takes place in the classroom through group work, role play, etc.

Teaching aids promoting classroom activities may have to be heavily relied upon.

The focus in oral communication at this stage should shift form mere fluency to fluency with correctness.

NOTE: Correction of students' written work and preparation of materials should be taken into account while assessing the teacher's workload.

Testing

There will be one public examination at the end of the year.

The examination should be directly related to the objectives of the course.

Unseen passages for comprehension (at least 50%) and writing and listening tasks which are unrehearsed but similar to the ones done in the class, must also be used for purpose of testing.

The purpose of extensive reading is to ensure that reading for enjoyment takes place. A suitable system should be evolved by the teacher to record the learner's reading progress (e.g., through progress charts, reading cards, etc). Extensive reading is to be tested internally.

The distribution of marks will be as follows:

Reading comprehension (final examination)   ...   30 %

Written communication(final examination)   ...   40 %

Extensive reading (internal assessment)   ...   10 %

Oral communication (internal and external assessment) ... 20 %

The students must pass separately in the internal assessment and final examination, and the marks obtained in each must be indicated separately on the marks sheet. The type of the English course studied, viz, Communication Skills Unit – Level II, should also be indicated on the mark sheet. The marks obtained in the English course should be counted towards the overall grade/

division/GPA for the year and also towards the final grade/division/GPA in BA/ BSc/BCom.

D.   ADVANCED UNIT

1.0   Rationale/Objectives

This one-year course will be offered to the BA/BSc/BCom students of:

a   Stream III (the most advanced stream) in the second year, and

b.   Stream II in the third year (where there is provision for 3 years of General English)

In either case students should have successfully completed the Communication Skills Unit - Level II in the preceding year.

This course aims at developing advance-level skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing as specified below.

2.0   Course Content

2.1   Skills to be developed

2.1.1   Close critical reading of discursive as well as imaginative wring for interpretation, analysis and evaluation

2.1.2   Expository and imaginative writing with attention to the type of reader and the form of discourse

2.1.3   Participation in seminars and panel discussions and making of formal speeches

2.1.4   Writing a short project report on a contemporary theme involving extensive reading and reference skills.

2.2   Elaboration of the course content (sub-skills to be developed)

2.2.1 Close critical reading

Understanding the underlying organization of longer

passages

Selecting information from long passages for particular

purposes.

Evaluating the ideas, arguments developed in a passage

Understanding the construction of plots in short stories

and one-act plays

Discussing characters in short stories and one-act plays

Using one's knowledge, opinions and imagination to

provide information related to that given in a passage

(agreeing with the opinions expressed or refuting them)

Making comparisons between passages/stories,

newspaper/magazine articles on similar themes

2.2.2 Expository and imaginative writing

Writing letters to the editor

Making outlines and summaries

Recording minutes of discussions and meetings

Writing to persuade or to argue

Writing reviews of films

2.2.3   Participation in seminars and panel discussions, and making of speeches

Making formal speeches

Participating in debates

Participating in seminars and presenting papers on current topics

Taking part in panel discussions on current topics/affairs involving

➤   planning to delimit aspects of a topic

➤   confining oneself to the area selected

➤   effective presentation (making a point, illustrating an idea, etc)

Acting as announcers, commentators and comperes

2.2.4   Writing a short project report

Selecting and retrieving information relevant to a contemporary theme through extensive reading (newspapers, magazines, journals, books, etc) and by making use of reference skills (skimming, scanning, note-making, etc)

Mechanics of reporting:

➤   ordering information in a logical manner (coherence, unity)

> ➤ supporting facts with evidence and illustration

> ➤ using information transfer devices (charts, graphs, tables, diagrams, etc)

> ➤ displaying originality in presentation

> ➤ editing the writing to make it concise, precise and purposeful

> ➤ listing the source materials used

NOTE:

(1) The project envisaged here is an extended assignment/essay (as distinct from a research project) of around 2,000 words on topics like drug addiction, terrorism, national integration, world peace, films, etc.

(2) The project will be assessed internally. It will carry 20 marks (10 for the written work, 10 for the viva voce examination to be held at the time of the oral communication examination, which will be conducted with the help of an external examiner).

3.0 Materials

3.1 Special materials for this course (including workbooks) may have to be prepared.

3.2 The following books are suggested as course books:

1. NARAYANASWAMY, VR   Strengthen Your Writing. Madras, Orient Longman, 1979

2. KANE,TS   The Oxford Guide to Writing. New York, OUP, 1983

3. JONES, Leo   Functions of English: A Course for Advanced Students. Cambridge, CUP, 1977

4. ————————   Activities for Intermediate and Upper Intermediate Students. Cambridge, CUP, 1984

5. LITTLE, Peter   Oral and Written Communication. London, Longman Group, 1973

6. COGGINS, Gordon   A Guide to Writing Essays & Research Papers. Toronto, Van Nostrand and Reinhold, 1977

7. SOUTHER, JW & WHITE, ML   Technical Report Writing 2 ed. New York, John Wiley, 1957

8. GRAHAM-HELWIG, H   How to Take Minutes 8 ed. London, Pitman, 1975

9. TICKOO, Champa & SASIKUMAR, Jaya   Writing with a Purpose. Delhi, OUP, 1980

10. GONDIN, RW &   The Art of Speaking Made Simple.

    NAMMAN, EW   London, W.H.Allen, 1970

11. WYLDER, RC &   Writing Practical English. New

    JOHNSON, Joan Gissberg   York Macmillan, 1966

12. BROUGHTON, Geoffrey   Success with English.

                            Harmondsworth, Middlesex,

                            Penguin Books, 1968

Methodology

Students at this stage should be encouraged to do more work on their own. The teacher should act more as a resource person introducing the students to the various techniques and resources available, and providing feedback when necessary.

The teacher has to provide supplementary materials and organize classroom activities of the kind needed for the suggested course.

A successful implementation of this course calls for collaboration between the teachers of English and those of other subjects for preparation of course materials.

[Evaluation]

Correction of student's written work and preparation of materials should be taken into account while assessing the teacher's workload.

Testing

There will be one public examination at the end of the year.

5.2 The distribution of marks will be as follows:

i Writing (final examination) ... 30 %

ii Reading (final examination) ... 30 %

iii Project Report (internal and external assessment) ... 20 %

iv Oral communication and listening

(internal and external assessment) ... 20 %

NOTE: As stated under 2.2.4, the viva voce examination for the project will be conducted along with the oral communication examination with the help of an external examiner.

5.3 The students must pass separately in the internal assessment and final examination, and the marks obtained in each must be indicated separately on the marks sheet. The type of the English course studied, viz, the Advanced Unit, should also be indicated on the marks sheet. The marks obtained in the English course should be counted towards the overall grade/division/GPA for the year and also towards the final grade/division/GPA in BA/BSc/BCom.

E. FUNCTIONAL ENGLISH UNIT

Keeping in view the students' needs and interests, a Functional Unit has been designed. This one-year course is intended to be offered in the first year

of the General English course to students who have attained the competence envisaged in Communication Skills Unit-Level I. This would offer students a variety of alternative modules to prepare them for various professions or professional courses. Admission requirements for the courses are given under module (i): English for Competitive Examinations

Universities could introduce the following vocational modules, of which a student can choose any one:

English for Competitive Examinations

English for Secretarial Practice

English for Business Communication

English for Tourism

English for Receptionists and Telephone Operators

English for Management Communication

English for Marketing and Sales

Revised syllabuses for following modules are given below:

English for Competitive Examinations

English for Secretarial Practice

English for Business Communication

Courses for other modules could also be framed in a similar fashion.

Universities should introduce these courses gradually, as and when course becomes available to teach them. To make such expertise available in the course of time, measures should be taken to provide suitable training to teachers of English.

ENGLISH FOR COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS

Rationale/Objectives

Admission to this course will be open to all students who have successfully completed at least the Communication Skills Unit – Level

I.   It will thus be open to :

(a)   Students of Stream III (the most advanced stream):

      i.   In the second year (where only a 2-year General English programme exists) as an alternative to the Advanced unit

      ii.   In the third year (where a 3-year General English programme exists)

(b)   Students of Stream II :

      i   In the second year (where only a 2-year General English programme exists) as an alternative to Communication Skills Unit – Level II

      ii   In the third year (where a 3-year General English programme exists) as an alternative to the Advanced Unit

(c)   Students of stream I in the third year as an alternative to Communication Skills Unit – Level II

Designed as a one-year programme with an end-of-the-year examination consisting of written and oral components, the course has four objectives:

    a. To prepare students for competitive examinations, which they can take after graduation

    b. To increase their overall proficiency in English

    c. To provide a rapid review of the skills acquired during the earlier units

    d. To train the students to read and to respond to questions with speed

These four objectives are sought to be realized through a two-pronged strategy of

    i. systematically sequencing the course content of language comprehension, composition, grammar and oral communication, and

    ii. providing intensive practice in these components

2.0 Course Content

2.1 Skills to be developed

    2.1.1 Reading comprehension

    2.1.2 Grammar and vocabulary

    2.1.3 Written communication

    2.1.4 Oral communication

Elaboration of the course content (sub-skills to be developed)

2.1 Reading comprehension

Skimming a passage to extract general ideas and information

Understanding the meaning of words, phrases and sentences in context

Understanding logical relationships (through recognition of grammatical devices) between statements and recognizing inconsistencies/contradictions/fallacies in the passage

Summarizing the main ideas of a given passage

Judging the tone of the passage and identifying the attitude and bias of the author

2.2 Grammar and vocabulary

Reinforcing language structures according to learner needs

Correcting given sentences using active knowledge of grammatical structures

Completing incomplete sentences/filling the blanks in sentences through correct choice of grammatical structures/vocabulary

Inferring word meaning from available clues

Applying word-formation rules

Using words as different parts of speech

Applying spelling rules

Using synonyms and antonyms

Using one-word substitutes

2.3   Written communication

Re-ordering jumbled sentences to form a coherent paragraph

Elaborating a given idea by:

> listing of points

> organizing points around major ideas

> developing points to form connected sentences

> building paragraphs

Writing summary/précis by:

> abstracting relevant ideas

> making a schematic plan of the passage

Writing different types of essays with special attention to:

> preparing outlines

> structuring and organizing ideas

> coherent presentation

> writing around a theme

> mechanics of writing: punctuation, different formats of

   writing, etc

2.4   Oral communication

Listening comprehension

➢ understanding various types of questions and their scope and focus

➢ understanding truncated utterances

Speaking

➢ intervening /politeness strategies

➢ responding to questions asked and supplying relevant information

➢ expressing agreement/disagreement

➢ use of stress and intonation for clarity of expression

2.5   Study skills

Collecting, classifying and storing information from newspapers/journals/magazines, etc

Note-making and note-taking techniques and types

Materials

Teaching materials may be specially designed and graded carefully so that sufficient practice is provided and the response time is gradually reduced. To accomplish this, a large number of multiple-choice/objective-type items should be provided. Besides, exercises requiring one-word/one-sentence answers should also be provided for comprehension practice.

Materials for consultation: leading journals for competitive examinations such as Careers and Competitions and Careers Digest.

Additional materials may have to be specially designed.

Methodology

The entire methodology will have to focus on providing repeated exposure to language items and vocabulary while, at the same time, enabling the students to respond faster.

Simulated interview sessions will have to be repeatedly conducted with special care to ensure the participation of every student.

Cyclostyled practice materials will have to be prepared for regular use.

Testing

There will be one public examination at the end of the year. However, regular internal assessment through objective-type testing should be done throughout the year and each such assessment/assignment should be given lesser time than the previous one; alternatively, the number of items to be tested should be gradually increased.

Unseen passages alone should be used for comprehension and précis/ summary writing tests.

Oral communication should be tested at an interview or in group discussion sessions to be conducted by a panel of at least two examiners. The distribution of marks will be as follows:

Part A		i.	Reading comprehension	...	20 %
(Final examination)		ii	Written communication	...	50 %

Part B	iii	Periodical objective-type tests …	10 %
(Internal assessment)	iv	Interviews …	10 %
	v	Group discussions …	10 %

The students must pass separately in Part A and Part B, and the marks obtained in each must be indicated separately on the marks sheet. The type of the English course studied, viz, the Functional English Unit – English for Competitive Examinations, should also be indicated on the marks sheet. The marks obtained in the English course should be counted towards the overall grade/division/GPA for the year and also towards the final grade/division/GPA in BA/BSc/BCom.

ENGLISH FOR SECRETARIAL PRACTICE

1.0   Rationale/Objectives

For admission requirement, see 1.0 under English for Competitive Examinations

This course is envisaged as a one-year course. It is designed to equip the student with the language proficiency expected of him if he chooses to take up a secretarial job (i.e., the job of a Personal Assistant, an Office Secretary, a Steno-typist, an Office Assistant, etc) in a commercial, official, or administrative organization.

2.0   Course Content

2.1   Skills to be developed

    2.1.1   Independent reading with comprehension

    2.1.2   Use of different forms of written communication

    2.1.3   Oral communication

    2.1.4   Study skills

2.2   Elaboration of the course content (sub-skills to be developed)

    2.2.1   Independent reading with comprehension

    Independent, rapid reading of commercial/administrative correspondence, circulars, memos, advertisements, statements, articles, agenda, diaries, reports, minutes, notices, etc

    Rapid scanning of passages for specific information

    Summarising main ideas from a written passage

    Deducing meaning form incomplete, truncated and distorted passages or sentences, telegraphic messages, newspaper headlines, etc

    Reading aloud of a passage with proper pauses, tone groups and intonation

    2.2.2   Use of different forms of written communication

    Writing various kinds of letters/applications, memos,

circulars, agendas, statements, articles, reports, short
speeches; issuing notices; making enquiries and
complaints; placing orders (taking care of the
mechanics of writing in carrying out all such tasks).

Recording and writing up minutes, comments,
proceedings of a discussion

Structuring and organizing ideas, making summaries of
letters, reports, discussions

Taking down dictation at a rapid pace

Converting oral instructions into written notices

Processing routine correspondence

Maintaining a diary and using memory aids

Preparing advertisements for newspapers and souvenirs

Composing telegrams / telex messages

Editing draft letters, proof- reading typed matter and
making corrections

Preparing schedules, itineraries

2.2.3 Oral communication

Listening to telephone messages and instructions and
answering queries, making and canceling engagements
and maintaining a record of these

Comprehending speeches, and oral discussions and giving

a brief resume of these

Presenting reports and taking part in discussions

Dealing with superiors and subordinates with courtesy:

acting as a PRO between the staff and the officer-in-

charge

2.2.4   Study skills

Note-taking in different formats (e.g., outline, quotation-

notes, summary notes)

Interpreting charts, graphs, time-tables and information

presented in various types of tabular formats

Consulting dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopaedias and

other reference books

Making use of the library for locating information

Locating, classifying and retrieving information from

office records, newspapers, magazines

Indexing of minutes, books, registers, records, etc

3.0 Materials

3.1   Materials/workbooks for this course will have to be prepared.

3.2   The teacher must make available a wide range of materials to

cater for the needs, interests and ability levels of the students.

3.3 Taped materials (audio and video) may be prepared and used for both teaching and testing.

3.4 The following books can be made use of as source materials:

1. SAUNDERS, Alta Gwinn   Effective Business English. 3 ed. New York, Macmillan, 1957

2. BINHAM, Philip   Executive English 3 v. London, Longman Group, 1968-70

3. BLUNDELL, JA & MIDDLE MISS, NMG   Career: English for the Business and Commercial World pt.2:Developments 2 V. Oxford, OUP, 1982

4. CARRAD, HL   English and Commercial Correspondence 3 ed. London, Cassel, 1964

5. JASMIN, S & BRIGHT, JS   Business Letter Writing. New Delhi, Universal, n.d.

6. KING, FW & ANNCREE, D   Modern English Business Letters: Commercial Correspondence for Foreign Students. London, Longman Group, 1962

7. KANE,TS   The Oxford Guide to Writing.

                                New York, OUP, 1983

8. GHOSE, PC   Commercial English and

                                Correspondence.

                                Calcutta, World Press, 1957

4.0 Methodology

Students will have to be given a lot of exercise materials to enable them to develop the skills required in the day-to-day office routine.

The teacher's role is that of an active facilitator of the learning process. He is expected to provide regular feedback to the students through correction and suggestions for improvement of their performances.

The class may be divided into small groups. Presentations by individual students should be discussed in open sessions for regular feedback and improvement.

4.1 Teaching aids promoting classroom activities should be used.

Practical training for at least 4-6 weeks in at least two different offices should form a part of this course. A report on the student's performance should be obtained on a suitable proforma from the office in which he receives his training.

The report should be made use of for internal assessment (see 5.1 below).

5.0 Testing

There will be one public examination at the end of the year.

The examination should be directly related to the objectives of the course and be based on the skills aimed at.

5.1 The distribution of marks is as follows:

Part A	i. Writing ability	...	45 %
(Final examination)	ii Reading comprehension	...	25 %
Part B	iii Reports of employers and		
(Internal assessment)	sessional work	...	20 %
	iv Oral communication and listening		
	comprehension (continuous assessment)	...	10%

5.2 The students must pass separately in Part A and Part B, and the marks obtained in each must be indicated separately on the marks sheet. The type of the English course studied, viz, the Functional English Unit- English for Secretarial Practice, should also be indicated on the marks sheet. The marks obtained in the English course should be counted towards the overall grade/ division/GPA for the year and also towards the final grade/division/GPA in BA/ BSc/BCom.

ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

1.0 Rationale/Objectives

For admission requirements, see 1.0 under English for Competitive Examinations.

This one-year course is designed to equip the student with the language proficiency expected of him if the chooses to take up a business career (e.g., clerk in charge of business correspondence of office assistant).

2.0   Course Content

    2.1   Skills to be developed

        2.1.1 Independent reading with comprehension of materials related to business

        2.1.2 Written communication of different forms

        2.1.3 Expansion of vocabulary

        2.1.4 Oral communication related to business

        2.1.5 Study skills

    2.2   Elaboration of the course content (sub-skills to be developed)

        2.2.1 Independent reading with comprehension of materials related to business

              Independent reading with comprehension of commercial correspondence

              Rapid scanning of letters, reports etc, for specific information

              Summarizing main ideas from a given passage

        2.2.2 Written communication of different forms

              Using mechanics of letter-writing (format, organizing of information, style and tone)

Writing various kinds of business letters (e.g.,

    letters of enquiry and answers to queries,

    letters of reference, sales letters, letters of

    complaint and answers to complaints,

    collection letters and replies, letters relating

    to legal transactions, follow-up letters, D O

    letters within and outside the office, letters

    relating to placing of orders and compliance

    with orders)

Writing circulars, memos, notices, agendas,

    minutes, etc

Preparing notes, outlines; writing summaries of

    letters/reports

Handling mail (preparing notes on action taken /to

    be taken)

Maintaining a diary and using memory aids

Issuing and asking for testimonials and certificates

Writing business telegrams, telex messages

Writing advertisements for newspapers, souvenirs

Writing a short project (8-10 pages) at the

    beginning of the year on some aspect of

commercial correspondence (e.g., Essentials

of Commercial Correspondence; The New and

Old Concept in Letter-Writing; Role of Clear

Thinking; Sincerity; Brevity, Proper

Presentation and Format; Courtesy and

Etiquette in Letter-writing; Good and Bad

Letters)

Editing draft letter ; proof-reading typed matter

2.2.3   Expansion of vocabulary

Using words related to commercial

correspondence appropriately

Acquiring familiarity with abbreviations used in

commercial correspondence and

advertisements

Spelling words related to commercial

correspondence correctly

2.2.4   Oral communication related to business

Receiving messages and replying to messages on

the telephone

Dealing with business clientele with clarity,

courtesy and persuasiveness

2.2.5 Study skills

Consulting a dictionary for meanings, usage and

spelling

Retrieving relevant information from files,

reports, letters, etc

3.0 Materials

3.1 Materials for this course(including workbooks) will have to be

prepared.

3.2 The students should be exposed extensively to materials actually

used in the business world (such as letters, telegrams, memo

pads, bank and postal proformas, etc).

3.3 The following books are suggested as source-books for the

preparation of materials:

1. SAUNDERS, Alta Gwinn Effective business English. 3 ed.

New York, Macmillan, 1957

2. BINHAM, Philip Executive English 3 V. London,

Longman Group, 1968-70

3. BLUNDELL, JA & Career: English for the Business

MIDDLE MISS, NMG and Commercial World Pt. 2:

Developments 2 V. Oxford, OUP,

1982

4. CARRAD, HL	English and Commercial Correspondence, 3 ed. London, Cassel, 1964
5. JASMIN, S & BRIGHT, JS	Business Letter Writing. New Delhi, Universal, n.d.
6. KING, FW & ANN CREE, D	Modern English Business Letters: Commercial Correspondence for Foreign Students. London, Longman Group, 1962
7. KANE, TS	The Oxford Guide to Writing. New York, OUP, 1983
8. GHOSE, PC	Commercial English and Correspondence. Calcutta, World Press, 1957

4.0 Methodology

4.1   The students will have to be given plenty of exercise materials to enable them to develop the skills required in the day-to-day office routine.

4.2   The students should be encouraged to work independently. The project listed under Course Content is to be treated as a step in this direction.

4.3   The teacher's role is that of an active facilitator of the learning process and he is expected to provide regular feedback to the students through correction and suggestions for improvement of their performance.

4.4   The class may be divided into small groups. Presentations by individual students may be discussed in regular and frequent open sessions for feedback and improvement.

4.5   Role-playing and simulation exercises should be used to train students in oral communication.

4.6   Practical training for at least 4-6 weeks in an office should form a part of this course. A report on the student's performance should be obtained (on a suitable proforma) from the office in which he/she gets this training. This report should be used for internal assessment (see below).

4.7   The student should be asked to present a report on his training/ work experience in about 8-10 pages.

5.0 Testing

5.1   There will be one public examination at the end of the year.

5.2   The examination should be directly related to the objectives of the course and be based on the skills aimed at.

5.3   The distribution of marks is as follows:

Part A (Final examination)	i. Writing ability	...	50 %
	ii Reading comprehension	...	20 %
Part B (Internal assessment)	iii Oral communication (continuous assessment)	...	10%
	iv Two project reports by the student	...	10 %
	v Report from the firm/office where the student received training	...	10 %

5.4   The students must pass separately in Part A and Part B, and the marks obtained in each must be indicated separately on the marks sheet. The type of the English course studied, viz, the Functional English Unit- English for business Communication, should also be indicated on the marks sheet. The marks obtained in the English course should be counted towards the overall grade/division/GPA for the year and also towards the final grade/ division/GPA in BA/BSc/BCom.

Adapted from:

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