CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

An understanding and command over the English language is a most important determinant of access to higher education, employment possibilities and social opportunities. School-leavers who are not adequately trained in English as a language are always at a handicap in the world of higher education. …This disadvantage is accentuated further in the world of work, not only in professional occupations but also in white-collar occupations overall. ...There are a very large number of people who simply do not have the resources for such investment. The outcome is exclusion. We believe that inclusion is possible through public provision.

National Knowledge Commission (NKC), 2007

The National Knowledge Commission, in its endeavour to suggest ways to create a knowledge based and an inclusive society recognizes significance of English language as not only medium of curriculum transaction or means of communication but also as a determinant to access to higher education, employment possibilities and social opportunities (NKC, 2007). On the one hand, the objectives of learning English today are upward social mobility,
access to higher education and an edge in employment possibilities. On the other hand, English being the global language now, “no one gains advantage having it. Rather, anyone without it suffers. We are fast moving into a world in which not to have English is to be marginalized and excluded” (Graddol, 2010, p. 10). However, the understanding of objectives behind learning English language will remain partial until identifying the drivers of English language in India and in the world.

1.1 Drivers of English at international level

The last few decades have seen a growth in the role of the English language around the world as the lingua franca for economic, scientific, and political exchange. The term lingua franca means “any language used for communication between groups who have no other language in common” (Matthews, 2000, p. 209). According to Crystal (2003), 85% of the world's international organizations use English as their official language in transnational communication. About 85% of the world’s important film productions and markets use English as well, and 90% of the published academic articles in several academic fields, such as linguistics, are written in English. In many cases, the increased growth in the use of the English language can be attributed to educational, economic, or cultural globalization.
1.1.1 English- a global language?

“The condition for the natural evolution of a World Language is that it gives to those who use it enough latitude to make it their own” (Nadkarni, 2003). Nadkarni (2003) believed that the condition mentioned is needed to make the users feel the closeness and loyalty which one feels for one’s mother tongue. A global language is a language which evokes mother tongue like sentiments among its users from diverse linguistic background. The users whose mother tongue is different, gets a mother tongue like feeling in using the global language. In other words, a Global language is potentially an auxiliary mother tongue of all those who wish to use it as a mother tongue. A global language unites people as it makes its users feel at home. The function of a global language, according is to foster an international or global consciousness without suppressing diversity in its manifestation. The world has seen quite a few international languages in the past, but not anything like English. English is regarded as the global language in spite of the fact that between 1980 and 1990, the number of Spanish speakers in the United States grew by 50 percent. Wallraff (2000) notes that over the same decade (80s) the number of speakers of Chinese in the United States grew by 98 percent. Today approximately 2.4 million Chinese-speakers live in America, and more than four out of five of them prefer to speak Chinese at home. The rate of growth of certain
other languages in the United States has been higher still. From 1980 to 1990 the number of speakers of Korean increased by 127 percent and of speakers of Vietnamese by 150 percent. Small American towns from Huntsville, Alabama, to Meriden, Connecticut, to Wausau, Wisconsin, to El Cenizo, Texas -- all sites of linguistic controversy in recent years -- have been alarmed to find that many new arrivals do not speak English well and some may not even see the point of going to the trouble of learning it.

The above quoted information may raise a doubt in the reader’s mind about the global status of English language as it seems struggling to hold its space in traditionally English speaking countries. However, the uniqueness of English as an international language is not merely a matter of scale. The reason why English is regarded as global language is very complex and vague. A “language has no independent existence, living in some sort of mystical space apart from the people who speak it. Language exists only in the brains and mouths and ears and hands and eyes of its users” (Crystal, 2003, p. 7). When the users of the language succeed, the language succeeds and when they fail, so does the language. There are many notions behind English’s becoming a global language. One of these is rise of the US. Graddol (2003) rightly pointed out that a “language has traditionally become an international language for one chief reason: the power of its people—especially their political and military power”. Over 2000 years ago, Greek
became a language of international communication in the Middle East because of the armies of Alexander, the Great, not because of Plato and Aristotle. However, the global or international language dominance is not solely the result of military might. Military powers may establish a language but it is the economic power that maintains and expands it. In this respect, the role of the US as the superpower is worth examining in emergence of English as a global language.

Britain reigned over the world till the middle of the 20th century. By the end of the 19th century Britain had established the pre-conditions for English as a global language through massive expansion of its power across the world. English communities were settled around the world along with trade and communication patterns (Graddol, 2010). However, without the rise of the US, English would not have been able to sustain the position due to decline of the British power. English would have vanished like languages of European colonial powers such as Portugal and the Netherlands. The US, due to its natural and human resource emerged as the most powerful of the industrialised countries. It is, today, the world’s third most populous country with around 260 million inhabitants (Graddol, 2003) resulting into the greater proportion of total number of native English speakers. Moreover, the aftermath of World War II was also decisive in spread of English. In post-world war II scenario, English acted as the vulgate of American power and of Anglo-American technology and finance according to Steiner (1975) (as
cited by Graddol, 2003). The US, through its economic power and technological, political and cultural influence proved significant in sustaining and raising the status of English across the world. This is marked by the rise of American English as popularly used variety in comparison to the British English. The second amongst these is “a language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognized in every country” (Crystal, 2003, p. 3). To accept this, ‘special role’ needs to be defined. The notion of ‘special role’ differs from country to country. For some the ‘special role’ may be use of English as a mother tongue. USA, Canada, Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and many Caribbean countries use English as a mother tongue. However, Spanish leaves English behind with more than twenty Latin American countries using it as a mother tongue (Crystal, 2003). So, use of a language as a mother tongue alone does not give her status of a global language. Crystal (2003) believes that there are two main ways a language can achieve status as a global language: i) by becoming official language of a country to be used as a medium of communication in government, the law court, the media and the education, and ii) by giving priority to a language in country’s foreign-language teaching. When English is made official language, it is generally described as a ‘second language’ as it is seen as a complement to the L1 or the first language. Moreover, there are several ways in which a language can be official. It can either be sole official language or may share
this status with other languages. In India, for example, English enjoys status of associate official language with Hindi being the official language of formal communication. English enjoys an official status in over seventy countries. This is more than the status achieved by any other language. (Crystal, 2003) On the other hand, a foreign language has no official status. However, it becomes the language which children most likely to be taught in school and is made available to adults who never or badly learnt it in their early educational years. A language is introduced as a foreign language due to reasons such as historical tradition, political expediency, and the desire for commercial, cultural or technological contact (Crystal, 2003). “English is now the language most widely taught as a foreign language – in over 100 countries and in most of these countries it is emerging as the chief foreign language to be encountered in schools, often displacing another language in the process” (Crystal, 2003, p. 5). Algeria, a former French colony, accepted English as the chief foreign language to be taught in schools replacing French.

There is enough complexity in the current situation of English and above mentioned points may add to it. However, as rightly pointed out by Crystal (2003), “it is inevitable that a global language will eventually come to be used by more people than any other language” (p. 6). English has already reached this stage. There are no chances of any other language of the world
matching this growth in near future. (Crystal, 2003) According to the press release for the launch of the British Council’s English 2000 project,

World-wide there are over 1400 million people living in countries where English has official status. One out of five of the world’s population speak English to some level of competence. …English is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science technology, diplomacy, sport, international competitions, pop music and advertising (as cited by Graddol, 2000).

There were several international agencies established after the World War II. Crystal (2003) estimates that 85% of international organisations now use English as one of their working languages. 49% international organisations use French and less than 10% use languages like Arabic, Spanish or German. English has also become the language of publications. Crystal (2003) estimates 99% of European organisations listed in a recent yearbook of international associations cite English as a working language, as opposed to 63% French and 40% German.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, English is the language of science and technology at international level. Its roots date back to 17th century when the English set up The Royal Society in 1662 to make English language a vehicle of clarity and precision. Carter and MacRae (1997) noted that the
main purpose of the society was ‘to guide and promote the development of science and scientific exploration, but it created a climate in which language itself could be subjected to greater investigation’. The renaissance of British Science put English language science publications at the foremost of the world scientific community. However, the position was soon lost to German till World War I. Once, again the growing role of the US then ensured that English became again the global language of science, technology, experiment and discovery (Graddol, 2003). Gibbs (1995, as cited in Graddol, 2000) gives an interesting example of Mexican medical journal Archivos de Investigacion Medica that first published only abstracts in English, then provided English translation of all articles and finally hired an American editor and accepted articles only in English and changed the name of the journal to Archives of Medical Research. Maheghini and Packer (2007) also pointed out an interesting fact that only 9 out of last 25 Nobel laureates in the field of science wrote in English. 16 works were brought out in the native languages which were eventually translated into English for recognition and attention of Swedish Nobel Prize Committee. Maheghini and Packer (2007) believe that “English has become the modern lingua franca in a world that is economically, scientifically and culturally largely dominated by Anglo-American countries”. And suggest that “any scientist must therefore master English—at least to some extent—to obtain international recognition and to access relevant publications”. The presence of English as a language of
publication varies in different disciplines. However, English clearly dominates. The Figure 1.1 shows the share of different languages in the realm of publication.

![Language Proportion Chart]

**Figure 1.1** The proportion of the world’s books annually published in each language. *The Future of English* by D. Graddol, 2000, p.09. Copyright British Council. Reprinted with permission.

Thus, the position of English in the world today is the joint outcome of Britain’s colonial expansion and the rise and activities of the US. However, sustainability of English as a global language much depends on globalisation and its impact on the future of the language. Globalization has been viewed primarily as an economic phenomenon, involving the increasing interaction, or integration of national economic systems through the growth in international trade, investment, and capital flow. The explanation of the term may also include cross-border socio-cultural, political, and technological exchanges between nations and in particular, between people.
The International Monetary Fund (IMF) defines globalization as “…the growing economic interdependence of countries worldwide through the increasing volume and variety of cross-border transactions in goods and services and of international capital flows, and also through the more rapid and widespread diffusion of technology.” (para.1).

Richardson(2000) describes three main forces behind globalization. The first is the digital revolution. The incredible advances in communication technologies have rendered the notion of time and space virtually irrelevant and obsolete. The second driving force is the collapse of the communist system in the USSR and the East European Block and the third force has been that of a synchronization of economic power in Europe, North America and East Asia, with these centers achieving strategic economic parity. The implication of this state of affairs is that no single country or region can claim pre-eminence, nor justify dictating what is right or wrong or what ought to be.

According to a study conducted by the American Management Association International (AMAI) in 1998, e-mail was taking over the place of face-to-face and telephone communication as a means of business communication. It has also been found to be popular among students with more than 95% of university students in the US using the Web to conduct research and stay in touch with friends (Diederich,1998 as cited by Warschauer, 2000). The US
has been a world leader in Internet use, and other industrialized countries are also reported to be using it widely, with the fastest growth on the Internet occurring in emerging economies of Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. According to one estimate, China will have more Internet users than the US by the year 2010 (NUA Internet Surveys, 1999).

The Internet appears to revolutionize the ways of human communication and language learning, as languages are being acquired and communication continues to occur between people. In this context, it appears that learners of English need a new set of literacy skills for English language acquisition. Thus, the forces which increased from the early 1980s have combined to bring the world closer. In this respect, language globalization implies a shared linguistic code. Block and Cameron (2002) argue that in the context of globalization “the commodification of language affects both people’s motivations for learning languages and their choices made by the institutions as they allocate resources for language education”(p.5). Everywhere in the world today English is identified as the powerful force of globalization. It is associated with a spreading international culture incorporating business, technological innovations, consumer values, democracy, world travel and the multifarious icons of fashion, sport and music.

Thus, English at the international level has been driven by many historical, political, socio-cultural, economic and foreseen futuristic factors. India has been a part of almost all international movements and is not an exception in
the spread of English language as well. Therefore, at the outset, it will be interesting to study the drivers of English in India.

1.2 Drivers of English at National Level

Thousands of pages have been written on the story of English in India. There have been debates on English language policies and status of English in India. For some, insistence on using English in India is a burden and for others it is liberation. Considering the volume of discussions on status of English in India, the investigator has focused on need for English in India. Need for English language teaching in India has been accentuated unanimously. The statement does not require any supportive argument as the very fact has been stated by the government of India in the National Knowledge Commission Report (2007) as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter: “In the current scenario, an understanding and command of the English language, is a most important determinant of access to higher education, employment possibilities and social opportunities”. “The place of English in India cannot be understood without simultaneously understanding both the local detail and the bigger national picture” (Graddol, 2010). On the one hand, English has emerged as a global language. There are many countries of the world like China, many other countries of Asia, Latin America and countries across Europe are teaching English as a basic skill to the youth to enable them to participate in the 21st century civil society. At
present English is the global lingua franca and is used to communicate to the people from almost any country of the world. English brings a competitive advantage to its speakers. According to Graddol (2010), there are three main drivers of English in India, a) Education, b) employment, and c) social mobility. All three are inter-connected and inter-dependent. One affects the other. However, the investigator shall attempt to shed some light on them for better understanding.

Way back in 1963, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India observed,

in the old days, we produced a relatively small, though numerically fairly large, class of people who knew English and who formed a kind of English knowing caste in India. In this land of caste, everything turns into caste. And people who knew English, even though they may not have known it very well, considered themselves superior to those who did not (as cited by Graddol, 2010).

Nehru could see how English language had empowered certain class of people and created a social divide in the past. This gap has expanded with the increase in population without access to English. 88% of Indian population does not reach higher education according to Graddol (2010). This is such a large figure that matters even if it is not related to access to English. However, the changing economic patterns that largely depend on
communication skills in English intensifies the seriousness of the fact. India is in the era of economic transition. On the one hand the population is increasing and on the other there is a great challenge to elevate the quality of life of average Indians. No country in the world can pay more to uplift the common man, rather everybody has to earn and contribute to the mission by becoming more productive. The biggest question here is what role English can play in this process.

India at present has more young people than any other country. The youth of India can provide an economic advantage provided they are educated to earn. The youth of India is significant from international perspectives as well. India, at present, houses 17% of the world population. This suggests that soon India will be home for over 20% of the world’s productive workforce. The dependency ratio in many developed countries is rising where as it is falling in India. There will be a time when the rest of the world may look to India for workers not because they are cheap, but because that is where they can find a large pool of people with talent. This may result into rapid increase in national wealth and welfare but only if the skill level of the working population is high. “If the workforce is under-educated and unproductive, the opportunity is lost” (Graddol, 2010).

The advantage of reducing dependency ratio is closely connected with the economic transitions in India and yet to be reaped. Indian economy is one of
the largest growing with only a few percentage points less than China. Indian economy has continued to grow at the rate 6.9% in the year 2011-12 according to the Ministry of Finance, Government of India figures. This is in the time of recession and may rise from here in coming years looking at pre-recession growth. The economic growth leads to increase in per capita income helping bring more families out of poverty and providing more tax revenues which can support national development (Graddol, 2010). In addition to this, as people become richer, demand for comfort commodity increases and it stimulates manufacturing. Moreover, people invest in financial services, insurance and bank loans.

Along with transitions in economic positions, there is also a transition in economic patterns. Indian economy has shifted from agriculture to industry and now to the service sector. The below given chart shows the results of the economic survey 2009 that indicates declining role of agriculture in Indian economy.
People in agriculture have little need to communicate with people outside their world but in the service sector, communication skills are inevitable. Smallest of the service based business like a small shop or a hotel require good communication skills both towards the customers and within the organisation. Domestic BPOs are growing faster in India. According to the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) report (2011), “within the global sourcing industry, India was able to increase its market share from 51 per cent in 2009, to 58 per cent in 2011, highlighting India’s continued competitiveness and the effectiveness of India-based providers delivering transformational benefits”. The report also indicates that industry continues to be a net employment generator and is expected to add 230,000 jobs in the financial year 2012, thus providing direct employment to about 2.8 million, and indirectly employing 8.9 million
people. This expansion is also evident in growing number of mobile phone companies, banks and outsourcing from the Indian government. However, it is difficult to find English proficient workers in smaller cities of India. Along with this, it is equally difficult to maintain English as the corporate language when most workers share a mother tongue (Graddol, 2010). Indian economy is on the track of growth and there is a long way to go. The growth story of a service based economy will continue only if people involved can communicate across language and culture boundaries, both internationally and nationally.

It is, indeed, a challenge to provide jobs to 12-15 million young people who are ready to be a part of the workforce every year. Only economic growth cannot create more jobs. A paradox of economic growth is that it depends on the workers’ productive skills. Industry has failed to play a major role in spite of trained workers as improved and technology based mechanism requires fewer workers. Because of vocationalization of education skills may have improved but researches show that only 15% of engineering graduates are employable. The major reason is lack of communication skills. The government reports have identified improving English competence as a key ingredient at all levels.

According to Graddol (2010) 93% of the Indian human resource work in ‘unorganised sector’. These are low wage workers working as farmers, auto-
rickshaw drivers, street vendors, *kirana walah* and many more. On the other hand there are many non-conventional (in Indian context) economic zones that are not looked upon as job providers. Tourism and Hospitality management are one of them. India has a very rich history and cultural heritage. However, our tourism industry is very small in comparison to many other developed nations. The 11th Five-year plan of the Government of India identified tourism as an important sector. Tourism companies and elite hotels need English-speaking employees for hospitality and management. Thus, if tourism and hospitality are seen as a boost to the economic growth, the people who run it will need better communication skills in Indian languages as well as in English.

Thus, English is changing its status in India. India does not need English only because it is given status of ‘associate official language’ but it is closely connected with social and economic factors affecting the country. Graddol (2010), identifies almost nine trends encouraging English in India. They are a) the growing middle class, b) increasing urbanisation, c) the shift to a service economy, d) widening access to higher education (from 12% participation rate to 30% in a decade), e) increased vocational training, f) improved communications/mobility, g) more children attending private schools, h) English taught in government schools from Class 1, and i) English medium streams opening in government schools.
The drivers of English in India are many and the demand for English speaking workforce is huge. Against this, according to the National Knowledge Commission (2009) report, no more than 1% of the population use English as a second language. The figure is based on the last household survey through interviews in English. However, according to the 2001 census data released in late 2009, 10.4% of the population claimed to speak English as a second or third language.

The concern is not only how many use English, it is equally important to know the level of proficiency of those who use it. As cited by Graddol (2010), a survey of wage earners in India carried out in 2005 found that a third of the total number claimed to be able to read in English but less than half of them claimed to be able to speak in it. The reasons may be shifts in English education policies in different states starting from the time of independence which has left the country with missing generation of English speakers. Moreover, the states where English was introduced in the curriculum, it was taught as a subject rather than a language. English, therefore, remained a ‘library language’ in India for long. English is still used for reading textbooks and writing exam papers rather than for actual conversation. This does not mean that those who use English for reading and writing only, become proficient in the respective skills. John Kurrien, Director of the Centre for Learning Resources, a Pune based NGO conducted a research. Hundred students studying in Class 10 of schools in
urban and rural area considered as the best by their teachers were asked to write as much as they can on their favourite film star. Surprisingly, only 10% were able to write more than five correct sentences. About half of these best students were unable to write a single correct sentence (as cited by Graddol, 2010). The quality of education is not only a concern in English language teaching, it is a serious concern in teaching of all subjects and languages. The Annual State of Education Report (ASER) 2009 sounds the alarm bell by reporting,

learning levels appear to be stagnant or declining, with for instance, only 41% across Grades 1 to 8 being able to read simple stories in 2008 as opposed to 43.6% in 2005. Similarly, only 27.9% children across grades could do simple division sums in 2008, as compared to 30.9% in 2005.

The deficit created by the early education is reflected in the students who pursue higher education as well. However, the investigator doubts the authenticity of the data, idealised age proficiency level, according to the figure given by Graddol (2010) demands B2 of Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) at the age of 18. Against that majority of our students stop at B1 level. Prof Rama Mathew describing the findings of a test devised at Delhi University informs that the students are B1 in reading, A2 in writing and listening and A1 in speaking (as cited by Graddol, 2010).
English, across the world, has been a part the foreign language curriculum and is taught from the age of 11 or 12 (Class 6). In India, the policy of English language teaching differs from state to state. At present, English is optional from first to fourth class. It is compulsory from fifth to twelfth. The current policy allows eight years of English learning before entering any university. However, the school timetable does not allow students to reach the proficiency level required for university study through English.

If India continues to strive for economic growth, creation of an inclusive society and becoming a super power in the 21st century, quality English language teaching and quality education should be made available to all or should reverse the English policy like Malaysia where teaching of maths and science were switched to English in 2003 and in 2009 it is reversed to the local language (as cited by Graddol, 2010).

India is passing through a time when common man of India recognizes English as “a determinant of access to and opportunities for a better life” (NKC, 2007). There is a large portion of the middle-income or lower-income society that spends on relatively expensive English medium schools with a priority equivalent to the health. English has been a part of the education system for more than a century now. However, only 1% people in India use English as a second language. The shortage is among the non-graduates, 88% of the population who do not reach college (Graddol, 2010).
The objectives of teaching and learning English have changed in degree from the past centuries and as a result the future English language learning may be for economic growth at national and international level, for better understanding of subjects across curriculum and to address social and political issues. On one hand, the need for conversational/communicative English has been accentuated by the difficulties faced by the young graduates in getting employment. On the other hand, English has remained synonymous to the teaching of English literature still. In view of globalization, the teaching of English has to shift its focus from teaching of literature to teaching of language and communication skills. The Government of India, acknowledging the facts, has proposed massive expansion of technical and vocational education during India’s eleventh five-year plan (2007-12) to provide the skills needed for the next phase of India’s economic expansion. India has the largest young population in the world. This advantage “needs to be converted into a dynamic economic advantage by providing them the right education and skills” according to the Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee in the 2009 Budget speech. As a part of the skill development programmes, India now aspires to make English a common man’s language from its long enjoyed status of language of an elite. This may take long but it will be impossible without use of technology to reach out to the masses in distant and remote parts of the large country. Several
initiatives have been taken to make English language teaching qualitative with very small quality human resource (i.e. English teachers).

### 1.3 The Government of Gujarat Initiatives

Gujarat is one of the progressive states of India with rich cultural and entrepreneur heritage. Gujarat is one of the states that significantly contributes to the overall growth of the economy and the nation. With its progressive outlook and its social reformation it has provided leadership not only within Asia but also to the entire humanity. It was one of the first states to implement the new pattern of education and three-language formula. It has a well organised network of institutions and organizations including a large number of NGOs working in the field of education and human resource development.

The Government of Gujarat reviewed the entire situation and recommendations of the NKC (2007) and felt the need to introduce programmes like Society for Creation of Opportunities through Proficiency in English (SCOPE), Digital Education and Learning Labs (DELL) (Formerly known as Digital English Language Labs) and Knowledge Management Programme for Faculty (KMPF) during 2008 to 2009. These programmes have been setup to build English language proficiency and thereby providing better employment opportunities to the youth of Gujarat. They are also to impart education and training of national standard and keep
striving towards excellence to reach ultimate goal of meeting international standard in English Studies. The programmes are first of its kind in India and have received much criticism since inception. However, the initiatives can be considered as milestones in the history of English Language Teaching in Gujarat.

1.3.1 Society for Creation of Opportunities through Proficiency in English (SCOPE)

The SCOPE was the first initiative of the Government of Gujarat, Department of Higher Education. According to the information retrieved from the SCOPE website, the English language programme is developed on the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR). The SCOPE offers five programmes, Level I to V, that map to the levels A1 to C1 of the CEFR. Levels I, II and III are available at all centers and levels IV and V will be available to the select few centers which demonstrate the competency to deliver the programme successfully. Each level covers listening, reading, speaking and grammar. Within each learning area there are a range of online tools designed to provide students with the pedagogical support needed to effectively and independently work in that learning area; for example, the audio version of written texts, the translation option, the dictionary, and the visual aids. SCOPE has a target to train 5 lac youth in
business English in a period of four years starting from 2008 through more than 1000 centers across the state.

**1.3.2 Digital English Language Laboratory (DELL)**

The Digital English Language Laboratory (DELL), now known as Digital Education and Learning Lab is another initiative of the Government of Gujarat. In order to meet the challenges posed by globalization and preparing the youth of Gujarat adequately, the Commissioner of Higher Education decided to establish DELL in all grant-in-aid colleges of Gujarat. This initiative is in line with the NKC’s goal of using English language as a determinant of ‘access’. The project was initially implemented through Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University and is now entrusted to SCOPE. The government established DELL set up consisting of twenty four computers (clients) and a server along with headphone and webcam for each client. The LAN based set up uses a software programmed by Globarena Technologies Pvt. Ltd., Hyderabad, India. (The 2.8.4 gives features of the software.)

As rightly pointed out by Graddol (2010), “many public sector jobs (in India) require applicants to pass English language exams – for over a century, English has been seen as a passport to a pensionable government job. Now, the private sector also requires English – but of a different kind” (p, 33). The employers demand communicative competence which requires
the learner to have fluency, accuracy and appropriateness in the language use. The focus of the DELL initiative is on developing effective and acceptable communication skills. As in most parts of India, the young graduates of Gujarat by and large are deficient in fluency. Very often, when they try to speak, their speech is marked by unnatural pauses and unintelligible accent. The Government of Gujarat hopes that the language labs will provide the much needed exposure to good accent and also provide opportunities for improvement in speech. Thus, the project aims at making students proficient in English and thereby increasing job opportunities for them.

1.4 Use of Technology in ELT

Technology has become inevitable in all fields of life in the past few decades. Education is not an exception. As in curriculum transaction of other subjects, technology is used in English Language Teaching extensively. Technological advancements and approaches and methods in ELT have developed side by side. Innovations in language teaching approaches, methods and techniques are supported by use of technology. Technology has supported cognitive, socio-cultural as well as constructivist theory of language learning fulfilling many basic conditions of effective language acquisition.
Development of language laboratories can be termed as first planned and formal use of technology in the field of language teaching and learning. It has a history of around 150 years starting in 1877 with the invention of the phonograph by Thomas Edison (Peterson, 1974). The modern digital language laboratory, also known as the fifth generation laboratory that uses computers with internet connectivity, has evolved to this stage as a result of two simultaneous advancements: technological and pedagogical. The fifth generation language laboratories support constructivist theory and communicative approach to language learning. They have potential to provide quality and comprehensible input required for quality language output according to the cognitive theory of language learning. With digital input and internet connectivity it provides extensive exposure to the authentic language use along with great enjoyment. Thus, technology in the form of digital language laboratory could prove to be an effective means to take English to the young Indians in the schools and colleges.

1.5 Rationale and purpose of the study

The history of language lab has been a story of success and failure. According to Davis, Bangs, Frisby and Walton (2005), the main reasons for the failure of the language labs to achieve expected outcomes were
• lack of proper training for teachers,

• lack of imagination in devising activities other than drills.

The Digital English Language Labs use software or programmes that provide input and language practice. There are many software providers available at present. On reviewing the available language laboratory software, it was observed that the materials for language practice are not based on contemporary approaches to ELT. India is a multilingual country with a huge socio-cultural diversity. A universal set of material for language practice may not prove effective. Therefore, need based materials are desirable. During the review of the digital language lab software, it was also observed that the complex navigation patterns within the software added to the difficulty of the learners who were struggling to learn the language. Therefore, for effective use of the digital English language labs, user friendly, need specific, contextual and quality materials are required.

1.6 Research question

Prior to arriving at the hypothesis as in 1.8 below, the current study embarked upon getting answers to the following research questions:

1. Can communication skills be enhanced using Digital Language Labs?
2. Can basic language skills be enhanced through Digital Language Labs?
3. Does the research in psychology and pedagogy favour the concept of language labs?

4. How has the concept of language lab evolved to its present form?

5. How does the concept of Digital English Language Lab (DELL) differ from the earlier generations of language labs in terms of means?

6. What are the criteria for developing the learning materials for the digital language labs?

7. How can integrative materials for the digital lab be designed with a view to develop communication skills?

1.7 Statement of the research problem

Preparation and Tryout of Multimedia Materials to Enhance Communication Skills of Students at the UG level in Digital Language Laboratory

1.8 Variables

Independent Variable

The independent variable in this study was delivery of the multimedia materials through digital language laboratory to enhance communication skills.
Dependent Variable

The dependent variables in this study were the pre-test and post-test scores that measured effect of the materials on communication skills with respect to gender, discipline of higher secondary education, achievement in English in 12th standard and SES of the participants.

1.9 Scope and Significance of the study

The study explored possibilities of creating need based materials that are user friendly and cost effective. Thus, the study could be useful to the teachers of English in preparing multimedia materials for a specific group of learners. It could be significant to the software providers and multimedia materials’ producers in preparing need based, adaptable and user friendly materials based on communicative approach.

Additionally, the study could also be useful to the Education Department, Government of Gujarat that has initiated the DELL project, in encouraging the English teachers and DELL coordinators to use free web facilities and authoring tools to prepare ELT materials specific to their own college students.

1.10 Hypotheses:

The following null hypotheses guided the study:
i. There will be no significant difference in the overall mean scores of the pre-test and post-test of the students in the experimental group;

ii. There will be no significant difference in the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test of the students in the experimental group with respect to certain variables.

1.11 Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

I. To study selected software and materials used in the digital language laboratories.

II. To prepare and validate a package of multimedia materials.

III. To study the effect of the multimedia materials’ package on undergraduate learners’ communication skills.

IV. To make suggestions for the production of multimedia materials for the digital language laboratory.

1.12 Research design and methodology

To investigate the effectiveness of the multimedia package for developing communication skills of ESL learners at the undergraduate level, a research design which tested the given hypotheses in a controlled context such as an experiment was required. The study therefore incorporated the one group pre-
test post-test experimental research design which was used to measure the communication skills of the participants in the study. On one hand, the pre-test was administered at the beginning of the experiment as a regulatory means to control prior differences among participants. On the other hand, the post-test was administered towards the end of the experiment to measure the effectiveness of the treatment, that is, the multimedia package.

In addition, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the multimedia materials, a program evaluation tool was adopted in the form of a questionnaire. A range of questions based on the literature available on the use of CALL were developed in the structured questionnaire. The questionnaire covered items that evaluated various features of the multimedia package.

1.13 Delimitation of the study

The study is confined to preparation and tryout of multimedia materials for undergraduate learners of Gujarati medium. In addition to this, as the study did not include writing skills, the generalization of information provided by this study will be limited to listening, speaking and reading skills of undergraduate learners.
1.14 Scheme of chapters

The first chapter introduces the context of the study. It presents the status of English in India and Gujarat. It discusses importance of English in the international context as well as for a developing country like India. The chapter further discusses the need for English underlined by the National Knowledge Commission and the plan of action prepared by the government for the eleventh five-year plan (2007-12). The chapter then relates it to the need for the use of technology in ELT and projects the Digital English Language Laboratory (DELL) Project of the Government of Gujarat, as a step to realize the goals enshrined in NKC report. On the basis of this, the chapter discusses the need and purpose of the study followed by the research questions, statement of the problem, scope of the study, hypotheses, objectives, research design and methodology, delimitation of the study, scheme of chapters and conclusion.

The second chapter reviews the literature including past research concerning the major areas of the present study such as pedagogy of Second Language Acquisition along with the development of and approach to the use of technology in English language teaching and learning. In addition to this, the chapter gives an account of development of the language laboratory to the present status. Finally, the chapter discusses the principles of multimedia materials’ design and evaluation.
The chapter is divided into three major sections: 3.1 research design and methodology, 3.2 the new materials and 3.3 the field trial. The first section gives an overview of the research design, mentions the variables and describes the participants (sample). It also gives an account of the research tools used for the study, measures taken for data validity and reliability and a description of the data collection procedure. The section 3.2 gives details of the procedures of the production of new materials. It gives details of the language components and the software used in preparing the multimedia materials. The chapter also presents a sample unit from the multimedia package. Finally, the section 3.3 gives an account of the piloting and the field trial of the materials for the data collection.

The fourth chapter reiterates the major hypotheses and gives demographic details of the participants. It describes the quantitative and qualitative analysis carried out to test the same. It also describes statistical tests carried out on the pre-test and post-test scores and interprets the results. The interpretations are taken into consideration for deriving the findings and arriving at a conclusion.

The fifth chapter presents the findings and conclusions based on the analysis. The chapter also offers suggestions for improving the multimedia materials and for further research.
1.15 Conclusion

This chapter introduces the context of the study. It presents the status of English in India and Gujarat. It discusses importance of English in the international context as well as for a developing country like India. The chapter further discusses the need for English underlined by the National Knowledge Commission and the plan of action prepared by the government for the eleventh five-year plan (2007-12). The chapter then relates it to the need for the use of technology in ELT and projects the Digital English Language Laboratory (DELL) Project of the Government of Gujarat, as a step to realize the goals enshrined in NKC report. On the basis of this, the chapter discusses the need and purpose of the study followed by the research questions, statement of the problem, scope of the study, hypotheses, objectives, research design and methodology, delimitation of the study and scheme of chapters.