

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1. Introduction

The English language is essential in several fields, such as academia, industry, administration, business, science and technology, and political interactions. It is highly valued as a key qualification for employment opportunities. The Indian educational system should, therefore, prioritise the instruction of the English language to every Indian child, ensuring that they attain a sufficient level of proficiency and are not subjected to discrimination due to their lack of English language skills. English is taught as a second language in India and it is also one of the official languages of the country along with Hindi. The current status of English language education in India is defined by the variety of educational institutions and their linguistic settings, as well as the widespread implementation of classroom methods.

Textbooks are essential tools in the process of improving language abilities as they are the main means of imparting knowledge to learners. One of the primary objectives of textbooks is to present existing knowledge to learners in a curated, accessible, and structured manner. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) assert that textbooks play a crucial and beneficial role in the teaching and learning process by providing essential information and guidance through various activities and explanations. Richards (2001) states that a learning programme may not have any impact if it lacks textbooks. Textbooks provide a structure and a syllabus for a certain course and hence it is an integral part of any language learning program. In addition, the textbooks contain a diverse range of educational materials, such as CDs, cassettes, and videos, among others. These resources enhance the learning

environment and make it more engaging and entertaining for the learners. Textbooks not only assist teachers in attaining the course's goals and objectives, but also function as a reference during classroom instruction.

Considering the significance of textbooks and their impact on enhancing language skills in learners, the researcher conducted an evaluative study on the English textbooks of grades I, II and III developed by National Council of Educational Research and Training (henceforth NCERT) used mainly in the Government run Central Board of Secondary Education (henceforth CBSE) schools. One of the major objectives of NCERT is to research and design textbooks for school education. The current study seeks to evaluate the NCERT English textbooks for students in grades I, II and III by collecting feedback from the teachers using a well-defined checklist. This is, in turn, followed by an in-depth analysis of some vocabulary items, viz., prepositions and phrasal verbs of the textbooks as well. The objective is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks in general, along with the representations of the two above-mentioned items specifically. The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for curriculum planners, instructors, and specialists at educational institutes, enabling them to make appropriate recommendations for enhancing the quality of English language textbooks.

## **1.2. The Advent of English Language in India**

Before we delve into the main topic of the thesis, we think it is appropriate to discuss at this point the history of English in India briefly. The historical trajectory of the English language in the Indian subcontinent is characterized by its lengthy and intricate nature, tracing its origins to the initial decades of the 17th century. The first group of people from England to venture into the Indian subcontinent were merchants, who proceeded to establish commercial outposts along the coastal regions. To establish effective

communication channels with the indigenous population, the traders embarked upon the arduous task of acquiring proficiency in Hindi and various other vernacular languages spoken in the Indian subcontinent. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that English, in addition to its primary role as a means of communication among traders, started to assume the status of a lingua franca within the Indian subcontinent. Over time, this linguistic phenomenon facilitated the gradual dissemination of English to various regions across India.

During the early years of the 19th century, the British East India Company commenced its governance over the Indian subcontinent. The company's administrators recognized the inherent worth of English as a medium for administrative and educational purposes, thus initiating efforts to actively endorse its utilisation. At the same time-frame Raja Ram Mohan Roy along with a group of few Indians demanded English education for Indians. They believed English would help Indians in the academic, scientific, socio-economic, and international purposes. In the year 1835, Lord Macaulay, the Governor-General of India, routinely composed a renowned memorandum wherein he posited the proposition that English ought to assume the role of the educational medium in the Indian subcontinent. He believed that English would help to create a class of Indians who would be "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect."

The minute presented by Macaulay exerted a significant influence, resulting in the adoption of English as the primary medium of instruction in the educational system of India. This phenomenon resulted in a creation of an elite class who were well-versed in the English language and at the same time crippling the entire education system and bring down the literacy rate of majority of Indians. Upon the attainment of independence by India in the year 1947, it is noteworthy to acknowledge that the English language had already achieved a significant degree of establishment as a prominent linguistic medium within the Indian subcontinent.

Following the declaration of independence, the Indian government made a deliberate decision to designate Hindi as the official language of India. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that English has been upheld as an official language and its utilisation persists across various domains of Indian society, encompassing governance, commerce, academia, and mass communication.

Presently, the linguistic landscape of India encompasses a substantial population of approximately 129 million people who engage in the usage of the English language according to the 2011 census, thereby constituting approximately 10% of the overall population. After Hindi, the second most widely spoken language in India is observed to be present (2011 census). English is employed across a diverse range of domains within the Indian subcontinent, and it is frequently perceived as a linguistic medium that affords advantageous prospects. A prevalent belief among the people in India is that acquiring proficiency in the English language can enhance their employment prospects, facilitate international travel opportunities, and enable access to education and information resources. English has become an intrinsic component of the Indian societal fabric, and it is anticipated to persist as a significant linguistic medium within the Indian context for a long period of time.

With this background of English language in India, we will try to find out the current issues that prevails in the teaching of English in India.

### **1.3. Current Issues in English Language Teaching in India**

In addition to the lack of qualified teachers and resources, there are several other issues in English language teaching in India. These include:

1. The utilization of outdated instructional approaches: A significant number of English language instructors in India continue to employ conventional instructional

approaches such as Grammar-Translation Method in many schools especially in rural India that is based on rote memory learning and prove to be ineffectual for individuals learning English as a second language.

2. There is a predominant emphasis on grammatical accuracy as opposed to linguistic fluency. In numerous educational institutions in India, the emphasis of English language instruction is placed on grammatical aspects rather than the development of fluency. This phenomenon may result in students who have a solid grasp of grammar rules yet struggle to communicate in English effectively.

3. One of the challenges faced by individuals learning English is the absence of an immersive environment conducive to practicing and developing their communicative skills in the language. To facilitate effective English language acquisition, it is imperative that students are provided with ample opportunities to engage in speaking and listening activities. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that in numerous educational institutions in India, the scope for students to engage in English language activities beyond the confines of the classroom is quite restricted.

### 1.3.1. Solutions to the Challenges of English Language Teaching in India

There are several steps that can be taken to address the challenges of English language teaching in India. These include:

1. The allocation of resources towards the enhancement of teacher training: It is imperative for governmental bodies and private entities to allocate resources towards developing teacher training programs aimed at equipping educators with up-to-date English language teaching methodologies.

2. Expanding the resources available for English language instruction: More resources, such as textbooks, instructional materials, and technology access, should be made available to schools.
3. Fostering an atmosphere where English is spoken in communication, schools must establish a setting where children may practice speaking and listening in English.
4. Evaluation and changes in the curriculum: It is necessary to alter the English language instruction curriculum to balance fluency and communication skills along with the knowledge of grammar.

Our work will be a contribution to understand the gaps in the textbook and the instruction exercises at the primary level and to provide some suggestions to the curriculum developers, textbook writers and teachers to handle the gaps for more effective English as a second language learning in the Indian classrooms.

## **1.4. National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) An Introduction**

NCERT is an independent organisation that has been founded with the purpose of offering ongoing academic assistance in enhancing the diverse policies and activities aimed at enhancing the quality of the national school education system. Establishing the NCERT in 1961 was a significant milestone in the development of school education in India. The NCERT has been dedicated to doing research, development, training, and provision of model curricula, syllabi, and extension activities since its establishment. NCERT has persistently engaged in the dissemination of educational materials such as school textbooks, workbooks, supplementary readers, teacher guides, laboratory manuals, source books on assessment, and educational magazines, etc.

*“The major objectives of NCERT and its constituent units are to: undertake, promote and coordinate research in areas related to school education; prepare and publish model textbooks, supplementary material, newsletters, journals and develops educational kits, multimedia digital materials, etc. organise pre-service and in-service training of teachers; develop and disseminate innovative educational techniques and practices; collaborate and network with state educational departments, universities, NGOs and other educational institutions; act as a clearing house for ideas and information in matters related to school education; and act as a nodal agency for achieving the goals of Universalisation of Elementary Education.” (ncert.nic.in)*

The aims mentioned above, such as curriculum development, textbook and instructional material creation, training of key personnel, and research in many aspects of school education, are closely aligned with the primary goal of enhancing the quality of school education in India. The NCERT, therefore, maintains strong connections with universities and other organisations that are invested in ensuring the high standard of school education. The Kendriya Vidyalays Sangathan (KVS), the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), and the Navodaya Vidyalays Samiti (NVS) are notable entities in this context. NCERT has formulated suitable curriculum design standards that aim to increase creative and critical thinking skills and foster innovations in teaching and learning approaches and materials. These guidelines are based on the development of student-centered paradigms.

#### 1.4.1. NCERT English Textbooks for Primary Grades

The NCERT has been tasked with creating and providing primary and secondary school students with textbooks. These publications, typically called NCERT books, cover the disciplines included in the CBSE curriculum for grades 1 to XII. The textbooks under our consideration are meant for the students of grades I-III. We will now delve into some

of the book's characteristic features as intended by the textbook developers and the needs it seeks to cater to.

### **1. Holistic Language Development**

The NCERT English textbooks for grades 1, II, and III are meticulously crafted to facilitate holistic language development in young learners. The curriculum emphasizes integrating all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Through engaging activities, stories, poems, and exercises, students are encouraged to actively participate in language learning actively, thereby enhancing their vocabulary, grammar, and communication abilities.

### **2. Engaging Content**

The textbooks incorporate age-appropriate and culturally diverse content to capture the attention and interest of young learners. The stories, poems, and illustrations are carefully selected to provide an immersive and enjoyable reading experience. This exposure to diverse literary genres, themes, and characters helps students develop a love for reading and cultivates their imagination and critical thinking skills.

### **3. Phonics and Pronunciation**

Grade I, II, and III English textbooks lay a strong foundation for phonics and pronunciation skills. Students are introduced to the sounds of the English language through various activities and exercises, allowing them to develop phonemic awareness. These textbooks pave the way for effective oral communication skills by focusing on correct pronunciation early.

### **4. Language Comprehension and Expression**

The NCERT English textbooks emphasize comprehension and expression. Students are encouraged to understand and analyse texts, answer questions, and engage in discussions to enhance their comprehension skills. Through group activities, role plays, and

presentations, students develop their ability to express their thoughts and ideas confidently and coherently.

### **5. Creative and Critical Thinking**

The curriculum in these textbooks fosters creativity and critical thinking skills. Students are prompted to engage in imaginative and reflective exercises, such as storytelling, drawing, and problem-solving activities. These activities nurture creativity and encourage students to think critically, analyse situations, and develop logical reasoning skills.

### **6. Assessment and Evaluation**

The NCERT English textbooks provide regular opportunities for assessment and evaluation. Formative and summative assessments are incorporated to gauge the progress and understanding of students. These assessments help teachers identify areas of improvement, provide constructive feedback, and support students' overall language development.

The NCERT English textbooks for grades I, II, and III serve as a foundation for language learning and development in young learners. With their engaging content, and focus on comprehensive language skills, phonics, comprehension, and creative thinking, these textbooks provide a holistic approach to language education. By instilling a love for reading, fostering effective communication skills, and nurturing creativity and critical thinking, the NCERT English textbooks play a crucial role in shaping students' linguistic abilities and overall development at the early stages of their educational journey.

## **1.5. National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF 2005)**

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in India released a document titled the National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF 2005). It is a

series of recommendations for the advancement of schooling in India. Following several meetings with experts and stakeholders from all throughout the nation, the NCF 2005 was created.

The NCF (2005) has several key goals. These include creating a learner-centered educational system that prioritises critical thinking and active learning, advocating for a multifaceted approach to education that includes social, emotional, mental, and physical growth, promoting awareness of the linguistic and cultural diversity of India, and finally getting students ready for the problems of the twenty-first century.

The NCF of 2005 has exerted a substantial influence on the landscape of school education in India. The phenomenon mentioned above has resulted in various modifications to the curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and evaluation methodologies. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of 2005 has played a crucial role in facilitating the creation of novel textbooks and instructional resources.

The NCF of 2005 has faced criticism from various quarters. There have been assertions made regarding the excessive idealism of the proposal, suggesting that it fails to consider the practicalities inherent in the Indian school education system. Some scholars have contended that the current emphasis on English within the Indian education system is excessive, and that it fails to adequately support the development and promotion of other indigenous languages spoken in the country.

Despite these critiques, NCF of 2005 has constituted a significant stride in the advancement of primary and secondary education in India. The implementation of a learner-centric education system that prioritises active learning and critical thinking has proven to be beneficial. Furthermore, it has facilitated the advancement of a comprehensive educational approach that encompasses the domains of physical, mental, emotional, and social development.

### 1.5.1. Impact of NCF (2005)

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of 2005 has exerted a substantial influence on the landscape of school education in India. The phenomenon mentioned above has resulted in various modifications to the educational curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and evaluation methodologies. The NCF 2005 has played a significant role in facilitating the creation of novel textbooks and instructional resources. The current textbooks are results of the NCF 2005.

The NCF is also responsible for a shift from a teacher-centric to a learner-centric approach with the focus on holistic development and incorporating creativity and innovation. There is an emphasis on inclusion and development of life skills. Thus, we can say that the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of 2005 is a seminal document that has exerted a substantial influence on the landscape of primary and secondary education in India. The implementation of this initiative has facilitated the development of a more pertinent and efficient educational framework within schools, thereby enhancing their capacity to address the unique demands and complexities of the contemporary era.

## **1.6. National Education Policy (NEP 2020)**

The next major milestone in the education system of India came after 15 years with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. It represents a significant paradigm shift in the educational landscape of India, encompassing a comprehensive restructuring of the existing system. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, granted approval to the policy mentioned above on July 29th, 2020, thereby supplanting the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986.

### 1.6.1. Goals of NEP-2020

The NEP 2020 has several key goals, including

1. Providing universal access to quality education from early childhood to higher education
2. Making education more relevant to the needs of the 21st century
3. Promoting equity and inclusion in education
4. Strengthening the teaching profession
5. Investing in research and innovation in education

The NEP 2020 introduced several new reforms, including: a 5+3+3+4 structure for school education. The focus on interdisciplinary learning and vocational education. The NEP also gave greater autonomy for schools and universities and aimed for setting up a new national testing framework.

The NEP represents a commendable and expansive manuscript with the capacity to revolutionise the educational landscape in India. At this nascent stage, the government demonstrates unwavering dedication towards the implementation of the policy, with a resolute determination to ensure its triumphant realisation.

The NEP of 2020 represents a significant stride towards the advancement of the educational framework in India. The initiative mentioned above possesses the capacity to revolutionize the educational experiences of a vast multitude of students, thereby positioning India as a prominent global force in the realm of knowledge acquisition and dissemination.

### 1.6.2. NEP 2020 and English Language Textbooks

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a seminal manuscript that delineates a visionary blueprint for the transformation of the Indian education system. One

of the primary objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) is to foster the cultivation of critical thinking abilities and the development of problem-solving aptitude among the students. This necessitates a departure from conventional instructional resources that prioritise mechanical retention towards the adoption of more captivating and participatory educational materials.

Within the realm of English language education, the National Education Policy (NEP) places significant emphasis on the utilisation of textbooks that adhere to a set of fundamental principles. These principles serve as guiding tenets, ensuring the alignment of educational materials with the overarching objectives of the NEP. These fundamental principles are listed below: -

1. They should be based on the communicative approach to language teaching, which focuses on developing students' ability to use language for real-life purposes.
2. They should be designed to promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
3. They should be culturally sensitive and inclusive.
4. They should be aligned with the National Curriculum Framework.

To ensure that English language textbooks meet these requirements, the NEP calls for a comprehensive evaluation system to be put in place. This system should be based on the following principles:

1. It should be independent and objective.
2. It should be based on a set of clear and transparent criteria.
3. It should involve a variety of stakeholders, including teachers, experts, and students.
4. It should be used to provide feedback to publishers and authors so that they can improve the quality of their textbooks.

The evaluation of English language textbooks is a complex and challenging task. However, it is an essential part of ensuring that the NEP's vision for a transformed

education system is realized. My work on evaluation of English textbooks for the early second language learners is a small step towards fulfilling this broad vision of NEP 2020.

Here are some specific suggestions for how the evaluation of English language textbooks can be carried out in accordance with the principles outlined in the NEP.

1. A panel of experts should be appointed to develop a set of clear and transparent criteria for evaluating textbooks. These criteria should be based on the principles of the communicative approach to language teaching, critical thinking and problem-solving, cultural sensitivity, and alignment with the national curriculum framework.
2. A sample of textbooks should be selected for evaluation. The sample should be representative of the different types of textbooks available in the market.
3. The textbooks in the sample should be evaluated against the criteria developed by the panel of experts. The evaluation should be carried out by a team of qualified reviewers.
4. The results of the evaluation should be published. This will allow teachers, experts, and students to provide feedback to publishers and authors.

The evaluation of English language textbooks is an important step in ensuring that students have access to the high-quality learning materials they need to succeed in the 21st century. By following the principles outlined in the NEP, we can create a more rigorous and objective evaluation system that will help to improve the quality of English language textbooks in India.

## **1.7 National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE 2023)**

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 is a document that defines the educational framework and guidelines for school education in India. The NCF is periodically updated to offer a framework for curriculum development,

pedagogical practices, and educational reforms in the nation. It functions as a comprehensive guideline for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders engaged in influencing the education system. NCF 2023 encompasses revised methodologies for teaching and learning, subject-specific curricular guidelines, interdisciplinary themes, and strategies to foster holistic development and quality education.

### 1.7.1 Key Highlights of NCF-SE 2023

1. The NCF-SE 2023 is formulated in alignment with the goal of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and seeks to accomplish a constructive transformation of the school education system in India.
2. It pertains to education for the age span of 3 to 18 years and encompasses various institutions nationwide.
3. NCF further elaborates on the 5+3+3+4 framework of school education, in accordance with NEP 2020, and the fundamental concepts that inform curriculum development.

### 1.7.2 Insights from NCF-SE 2023

1. The NCF 2023 highlights the Foundational Stage which is defined as the age group between 3-8 years. The Learning Standards for this Stage has been set based on Cognitive development. The textbooks used in this work are intended for the students belonging primarily to this stage.

2. Their capacity for new vocabulary and making mental pictures allows for more learning about the world and other people. In the fourth chapter, we uncover the image schema representation of two of the most frequent prepositions i.e. *in* and *on* and study their conceptualization in the foundational stage with the usage of image schema theory of Cognitive Linguistics.

3. Vocabulary development increases dramatically during early childhood. Therefore, systematic selection and representation of these vocabulary items become important. In the present study, we delve into the selection and representation of two of the most difficult linguistic elements i.e. prepositions and phrasal verbs and look through the lens of cognitive linguistics and corpus linguistics to study their representation.

4. The balanced approach of including oral language, phonics, and word-solving instruction, and meaning making needs to be incorporated all together for the Foundational Stage. In the third chapter we elicit response from teachers incorporating questions that touch upon these aspects of the textbooks.

## **1.8. Statement of Purpose**

The instruction of the English language in India is an essential phenomenon. English is being taught as a secondary language in India, serving as the medium for advancement and growth. Therefore, it is undeniable that the English language holds significant importance. In the context of English language instruction at the school level, the significance of learners, teachers, and textbooks is well acknowledged. Textbooks are regarded as the primary foundations of instruction and the learning process in the classroom. The current study aims to assess the effectiveness of the NCERT English textbooks for students in grades I to III, considering its significance in enhancing students' competency. These textbooks have been utilised for many years and have garnered positive feedback from users. Nevertheless, it is imperative to periodically revise and update any collection of materials. The feedback received from teachers indicates that textbooks should possess a more interactive nature and incorporate practical elements of teaching and learning to truly enhance their utility for classroom application. Thus, the researcher has conducted an evaluation of the NCERT English textbooks for students in grades I to III,

assessing their adherence to the guidelines set by NCERT and NCF, as well as their effectiveness in meeting the requirements of both learners and teachers in facilitating the acquisition and instruction of English at the school level.

## **1.9. Research Objectives**

The main objectives of the research are as follows

1. To find out the perceptions of one of the stake-holders, the teachers, who are directly using the textbooks in the classroom about the textbooks
2. To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook using the Checklist Method
3. To evaluate the textbooks with corpus-driven approach (using the British National Corpus)
4. To analyse the use of a particular vocabulary item selected for the study, i.e., prepositions using cognitive linguistic insights
5. To assess the use of the selected vocabulary items in the textbooks against the cognitive maturity level of the learners through cognitive linguistic approach
6. To study the frequency of use and the cognitive load of a specifically difficult vocabulary item phrasal verbs in the textbooks
7. To provide suggestions for the improvement of textbooks

## **1.10. Theoretical Foundation**

### **1.10.1. Textbook Evaluation using a Checklist**

Checklists are instruments which are used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a textbook. It is an evaluation based on a well-defined instrument widely used in the evaluation process, i.e., a checklist is considered a more systematic approach to textbook evaluation. Ansary and Babaii (2002, p2) states that teachers are often tasked with the

evaluation of textbooks. They often lack confidence in the criteria for their judgements, the qualifications for their conclusions, and the reporting of evaluation outcomes. In situations like this, a checklist reduces the burden on teachers by providing them solutions to the problems mentioned above. Checklists can be quantitative or qualitative in nature. To measure the quality of textbooks, qualitative checklists use open-ended questions to conduct subjective evaluations. This sort of checklist is ideal for doing an in-depth examination of textbooks. Quantitative checklists are based on objective evaluation and employ a Likert-style scoring scale. This form of checklist is more dependable and easier to use. Even the evaluation can happen before implementing the textbook, while the textbook is in use or after the textbook has been used for a substantial period.

For our study, we adopted a checklist, which was developed by Demir & Ertas in 2014. The checklist comprised 54 questions based on a systematic review of 23 checklists. It had four sections: Subject & Content, Skills & Sub-Skills, Layout & Physical Design, and Practical Consideration.

### 1.10.2. Cognitive Linguistics and English Language Teaching

In the realm of Cognitive Science and Linguistics, image schema theory provides a fascinating framework for understanding the cognitive underpinnings of human perception and conceptualization. Developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Johnson (1985), and later expanded upon by various scholars, image schema theory explores the role of embodied cognition and how our bodily experiences shape how we understand and interact with the world around us. In Chapter 4 we would delve into the image schema representation of two of the most frequent prepositions in the NCERT English textbooks and the BNC, *in* and *on*. We would also look at the various senses like spatial, temporal, or metaphorical associated with these prepositions. This study therefore aims to study if students are being exposed to the proto-typical senses of these prepositions owing to their

cognitive maturity. Additionally, when it comes to the acquisition of English phrasal verbs, idiomatic phrasal verbs tend to be more challenging than the aspectual or literal phrasal verbs because they carry a meaning which is different from the meaning of its individual constituents.

### 1.10.3. Corpus Linguistics and English Language Teaching

Corpus linguistics can be defined as the study of large collections of real-world language data. It offers a powerful toolkit for language educators. Here is how it can be applied in language teaching.

1. **Data-driven learning:** Corpora provide authentic examples of how language is used. Students can analyse real-world data to discover grammar patterns, collocations (commonly used word pairings), and natural language use, promoting a more data-driven approach to learning.
2. **Vocabulary in context:** Corpora allow students to see how words are used in different contexts, helping them understand shades of meaning and appropriate usage. This is especially helpful for phrasal verbs, idioms, and words with multiple meanings.
3. **Examining register variation:** Corpora can show how language use varies depending on the situation (register). Students can explore formal vs informal language, technical terms in different fields, and tailor their language accordingly.
4. **Corpus-informed teaching:** Teachers can use corpora to verify grammar rules and identify common errors students might make. This helps in creating more effective lesson plans and addressing specific student needs.
5. **Developing authentic materials:** Corpora can be a valuable resource for creating teaching materials that reflect real-world language use. Teachers can find natural

examples to illustrate grammar points, vocabulary usage, and different writing styles.

6. Learner corpus analysis: Corpora of student writing can be analysed to identify common learner errors and areas needing improvement. This allows teachers to tailor their instruction to address specific student challenges.
7. Evaluation of Existing textbooks and materials: Using corpus data and insights we can evaluate the existing textbooks and materials. A corpus-driven textbooks is more useful for a student to learn the vocabulary items and their specific uses.

Our work addresses this use of corpus linguistics in language teaching and learning. For our comparative analysis, we use the British National Corpus (BNC). The aim was to compare the frequency of difficult vocabulary items like prepositions and phrasal verbs against the BNC.

Mindt (1996) asserts that a significant issue with non-corpus-based syllabuses is that the sequence in which items are presented frequently fails to align with expectations derived from corpus data of spoken and written English. He contends that teaching syllabuses ought to be grounded in empirical evidence rather than tradition and intuition, utilising frequency of usage as a criterion for prioritisation in instruction (Mindt, 1996, pp. 245–246). Although frequency is not the only factor influencing the curriculum and its sequence, it may significantly enhance the efficacy of learning.

## **1.11. Beneficiaries of the Research**

This research will be beneficial for curriculum planners, textbook writers, teachers, and researchers. Curriculum planners would be able to consider what to include based on the cognitive maturity of the learners. They can further check whether the present curriculum is at a level appropriate to the needs of students. Textbook writers can be

informed about characteristics of a good textbook and about including appropriate content based on the learners' needs and maturity. Teachers can benefit by being already informed about the strength and weaknesses of the textbook and thereby compensating for its weakness by means of activities or supplementary materials developed by them. Researchers can evaluate textbooks based on different criteria and checklists, followed in different schools and grades to enable the other stakeholders mentioned above produce, design and use textbooks in the best possible way.

## **1.12. Definition of Terms**

Here are few terms that have been used throughout the entire investigation. It would be beneficial if these words are explicitly stated beforehand.

**Curriculum-** According to (Nunan, 1988a), curriculum is defined as “principles and procedures for the planning, implementation, evaluation and management of an educational program. Curriculum study embraces syllabus design (the selection and grading of content) and methodology (the selection of learning tasks and activities).” (p. 158).

**Syllabus-** “a specification of what is to be taught in a language programme and the order in which it is to be taught. A syllabus may contain all or any of the following: phonology, grammar, functions, notions, topics, themes, tasks” (Nunan, 1988b, p. 159).

**Textbook-** A textbook is a material that contains essential content for the successful completion of a class or course. The objective of the book is to offer a comprehensive resource that may be used as the sole reference material for learners throughout their entire class or course. A book typically emphasises all aspects of language, including grammar,

vocabulary, pronunciation, functions, and the abilities of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

**Evaluation-** According to Brown & Rogers (2002), evaluation can be defined as “the process of seeking to establish the value of something for some purpose”. (p. 289).

**Textbook Evaluation-** Evaluating the strength and weaknesses of textbooks in relation to their intended purposes and the goals of the learners who use them. Evaluation can occur before using something and is thus centred on forecasting its prospective worth. The approach is centred on awareness and description of the learners' actions during the usage of resources, making it suitable for simultaneous use. Additionally, it can be utilised after its first use, allowing for a concentrated investigation of the outcomes resulting from the utilisation of the components.

**English as a Second Language (ESL)-** English as a Second Language (ESL) pertains to the use or study of English by an individual whose mother tongue is a different language. It is primarily employed when discussing the process of acquiring English language skills in a nation where English is the predominant language.

### **1.13. Organisation of the Thesis**

The thesis has been organised in six chapters. The summary of each of these chapters is illustrated below.

Chapter one introduces English language teaching in India and the NCERT guidelines for creating textbooks that enhance language proficiency based on the principles of National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2005). This chapter also seeks to explore the issues in ELT in India and attempts to provide some probable solutions to address those issues. It also covers material evaluation and the objectives of NCERT English textbooks for Grade I to Grade III. National Education Policy proposed in the year 2020 (NEP) has

also been dealt with in this chapter. An overview of the goals, highlights and provision regarding textbook evaluation outlined in the NEP-2020 has been discussed. The limitation of the study has been stated. The important terms that are used throughout the study has also been defined beforehand.

Chapter two delves into the field of textbook evaluation. It emphasizes the importance of textbooks. After having established the importance of textbooks specifically in the field of language education, the chapter emphasise on the need for evaluation of textbooks. Furthermore, it seeks to cover the ways in which the textbooks can be evaluated. Later it covers the various textbook evaluation checklists that have been used. Finally, the chapter covers the works on textbook evaluation both outside India and in India.

Chapter three provides a comprehensive assessment of the NCERT English textbooks for elementary grades using the checklist approach. The checklist in question was formulated by Demir & Ertas in 2014. The checklist consisted of 54 questions from a comprehensive analysis of 23 checklists. A total of 14 teachers' response was gathered for the purpose of the study, using the devised checklist. The feedback obtained from the teachers through the specifically created checklist provides valuable perspectives on the practical use of the textbook, emphasising its advantages and disadvantages. Based on a comprehensive analysis, our study shows that 78% of the questions in the checklist received positive responses, suggesting that the textbooks we examined were appropriately designed and suitable for learners. However, some modifications are needed, particularly in the Skills and Sub-skills section.

Chapter four deals with the distribution of prepositions in the NCERT ESL textbooks for grades 1, II & III. All the prepositions found across the three grades are enlisted along with their frequencies. Furthermore, a contrastive analysis of the 10 most frequent prepositions found in the textbook and the British National Corpus (BNC) is also

carried out. Two of the most frequent prepositions i.e. *in* and *on* are analysed from a cognitive semantics perspective. The domains (spatial, temporal and metaphorical) in which they occur along with the image schema they represent are also encapsulated in the chapter.

Chapter five deals with the representation of phrasal verbs across the three grades in the NCERT ESL textbooks. A comparative frequency analysis of lexical verbs, particles and phrasal verbs is done with the NCERT ESL textbooks and the British National Corpus (BNC). We also seek to uncover the semantic and syntactic representation of these phrasal verbs. We would also touch upon the cognitive complexities associated with these constructions.

Chapter six deals with the major findings of the works. It also addresses the limitations of the study and provides scope for future works. Based on the findings of the study there are suggestions that can be incorporated to enhance the textbooks.

## **1.14 Conclusion**

This chapter presents an overview of English language teaching in India and the function of NCERT and NCF (2005 and 2023) in the Indian education system. Moreover, it presented the objectives and the theoretical backgrounds of the work done as well as the relevance of this research. With this general background we will start the next chapter particularly focused on the topic of textbook evaluation.