1. Genesis of the Study

1.0 Introduction

The present study revolves around five central aspects of English Language Teaching (ELT), namely: **(1) teachers, (2) learners, (3) methods, (4) materials and (5) policy.** (bold fonts here and elsewhere indicate emphasis by the researcher). This study focuses primarily on teacher empowerment as an outcome of ELT policy, method and materials. The theoretical paradigms of Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT), Multiple Intelligences (MI) and Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (RBT) are applied in this study specifically to study their impact on teacher-empowerment and its subsequent visible outcomes in learners. The study also discusses how ELT policy in the NCTE (National Council of Teacher Education) 2009, theoretically addressing teacher-empowerment, falls short of achieving this target in practice. The systemic mismatch between the aims of teacher empowerment stated in ELT policy and actual practices in teacher education followed by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) can be authentically expressed by teacher voices at the grassroots, this researcher being one such voice.

The researcher being a school principal enabled her dual roles of a participant in the education system and of a critical observer in the present study, spotlighting shortcomings in its functioning through narrative enquiry. Narrative inquiry is the process of gathering information for research through storytelling as "Humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively, lead storied lives. Thus, the study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1987, 2000). Narrative enquiry expresses the process of transition from experience into research (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006). Observations in this study are recorded in objective narrative inquiry mode, analysing the impact of policy, materials and methods on the community of teachers and learners this researcher interacted with as ELT practitioner, teacher educator and school administrator. Narration being an expression of personal experience, the researcher will briefly retrace her own professional development, culminating in the present study.

Entering the field as a lecturer in English Literature at the post-graduate level in 1993, the researcher saw that she was unable to provide remedial language learning for students with low English proficiency, despite her success with those who were fluent in English. Over the next four years, remaining unable to cater to language needs of learners, the researcher assumed that language learning problems were age-related, and young learners would learn better. To study this interesting problem of remedial language learning in context, she began teaching younger learners at high school. She discovered, however, that slow learners struggled with the same language problems, whether at school or in the university. Her degree in MA English literature did not help the researcher in resolving any ELT problems. In 1996, the researcher, like most other English teachers in schools, was untrained in ELT. The situation remains the same today, most qualified ELT teachers at school level being literature graduates.

Disappointed by her continuing inability to significantly help slow language learners, the researcher did her B.Ed in 2002, acquiring some theoretical knowledge of slow learners, but no practical solutions for classroom application. This prompted the researcher to advance her education in ELT, culminating in an M.Phil in 2008. Here, the researcher first learnt of **individual differences in learners.** The researcher's earlier simplistic view of learning was reshaped through five years of 'conscious' language teaching by continual insight into the complexities of **catering to individual needs in ELT**.

While attending seminars and workshops by ELT experts, conducting ELT workshops for colleagues, and teaching learners from primary to postgraduate classes across India for the next six years, the researcher studied the problem of teaching-learning English repeatedly from different angles, focussing in turn on learners, teachers, methods, materials and policy (see p. 1). Kaleidoscopic configurations of these five aspects of ELT research presenting varied perspectives on the 'how' and 'what' of effective ELT, arrive at the logical premise of the present study, that the **efficacy of ELT theory is proved when it leads to self-sustained autonomy in teachers as well as learners** (Grossman, 1994; Ertmer and Newby, 1996; Evans, 2002; Gebhard, 2005; Ellis, 2010). This realisation marked a milestone in professional learning for the researcher. Self-development being the intrinsic incentive of learning for this researcher and her colleagues, the present study will hopefully, motivate other teachers in similar contexts to begin the process of self-empowerment.

1.1 Situational Overview of the Research Problem

Teachers are crucial stakeholders at the grassroots in the global ELT problem of meeting professional standards of efficiency. Their own awareness of specific problems

and their conscious decision to find context-specific solutions pave the way to autonomy and self-empowerment (Ambrosie and Heller, 1972; Hedge, 2000; Hadfield, 2006). The solutions to the problem of effective teaching-learning vary with individual contexts and must rest on teacher introspection and experimentation (Betroth et al., 1989; Freeman and Richards, 1996; Freeman and Johnson, 1998). The present study posits one probable solution to the abiding problem of **teaching English effectively while catering to individual differences in learners,** focusing on one aspect of this complex kaleidoscopic problem. The solution proposed may emerge as one that can be flexibly adapted to various teaching-learning contexts, thus leading to teacher development through efficacy in ELT.

Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) is the latest approach to ELT action research (Freeman 1989; Bartlett 1990; Bailey, Curtis and Nunan 2001), incorporating learner collaboration for peer-learning of strategies catering to individual differences (Bailey, 1991; Nunan, 1992c, 1996). The paradigm of collaborative TBLT enables a range of interpretations and applications in different local contexts (Brinton and Holten, 1989; Freeman, 1991; Bartlett, 1990; Nunan, 1990; Gebhard, 1990; Kohonen, 1992; Brinton et al., 1993). In India, education policy framers and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) subscribe to this constructivist approach for learner-centric ELT and the professional development of teachers (Ghosh, 1987; Government of India [GOI], 1951-1997; NCTE, 1995; University Grants Commission [UGC], 1993, 1994, 1995).

1.1.1 Equipping Teachers with Constructivist ELT Pedagogy

The CBSE Communicative English syllabus, in particular, reiterates the need for the process oriented, learner-centric and teacher-facilitated pedagogy outlined by the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005. In a logical rider to the NCF-2005, the National

Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009 states the importance of teacher education in determining the quality of learner achievement, especially as the latter depends on the competence and motivation level of the teacher. The NCFTE-2009 points out that teachers need a repertoire of pedagogical skills to meet the challenges of diverse learning situations, thereby critically influencing the quality of curriculum transaction in classrooms towards a larger social transformation.

The CBSE conducts regular in-service 'capacity building' or training programmes for teachers from government, aided and non-aided CBSE schools, and since the inception of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) in 2009, it has been mandatory for English teachers to attend capacity building and CCE workshops every year. Inexplicably, workshops for capacity building in ELT are outsourced to private organizations empanelled by the CBSE, excluding the existing training infrastructure at the national, regional and local levels:

- National Commission on Teachers (NCT)

- National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)

- National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE)

- National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)

- Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs)

- State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT)

- District Institute for Education and Training (DIET)

- Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs)

- Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs)

- Teacher Learning Centres (TLCs)

The raison d'être of the above training organisations coincides with the purpose of CBSE training stated in various circulars: to create empowered teachers by providing them with

continuous professional development. Lack of operational transparency in the CBSE obscures the rationale for replacing legitimate teacher education resources with private agencies. It is evident, however, that CBSE workshops for capacity-building and CCE, having evaluation as their primary objective, merge teaching with testing and fail to improve teaching at the grassroots.

Professional development as a continuous process, not only indicates acquisition of a repertoire of ELT skills, but also targets the constant upgrading of existing knowledge and skills with self-empowerment as its ultimate aim (NCTE, 1986, 1998, 2006). This establishes a logical connection, at least in theory, between professional development as the means and teacher empowerment as its end. In practice, however, due to the absence of focus on ELT which is overshadowed by testing, CBSE training leaves the desired objective of teaching efficacy unrealised and its intended outcome of teacher empowerment unfulfilled.

There are four cumulative reasons for CBSE's failure in training teachers to implement newly acquired ELT knowledge and skills in the classroom (Basu, 1982; Yechury, 1986; Little, 2010):

1. **Perceptual flaw inherent in the concept of 'training'**
2. **Discrepancy between policy and practice of professional development**
3. **Evaluation versus Teaching in CBSE**
4. **Use of process-focussed materials for exam-centric teaching**

These four problems in ELT training are discussed in detail in the next four sub-sections.

1.1.2 Education versus Training for Teacher Empowerment

The first problem stated above is the **perceptual flaw inherent in the concept of 'training'**. Training is defined as a goal-specific outcome of teaching through practice and

instruction over time (NCERT, 1985, 1988, 1990), indicating an externally controlled phenomenon, not taking teacher initiative into account. Teacher-training is thus limited to routine practices. Education, on the other hand, is defined as the knowledge or skill developed as an outcome of learning (Keay, 1972; NCERT, 1975-78), synonymous with deep-seated and internally governed changes (GOI, 1968a), involving valuable teacher processes like autonomous decision-making and conscious choice (NCTE, 1986; NCERT 1998). Teacher education thus comprises comprehensive teaching-learning experience. This conceptual difference between training (teaching) and education (learning) makes training incompatible with its professed objective of enabling learner-centric practices (Basu, 1982; GOI, 1983b, 1985).

In post-Independence India, policy statements recommended training by quantitatively increasing subject knowledge and substituting more effective classroom procedures. This is seen in the Radhakrishnan Commission 1948-49 (GOI, 1952-53, 1954; UGC, 1960), the Kothari Commission Report 1964-66 (GOI, 1964-66, 1967), the Study Group on the Training of Elementary Teachers in India in 1961 (GOI, 1961b), the Nag Chaudhuri Report (NCERT, 1968), and the National Policy of Education recommendations (GOI, 1968a, 1968b, 1983a; UGC, 1974; NCERT, 1976, 1977, 1978). Failure of teacher-training is, however, evident in the learning outcomes repeatedly outlined (NCTE, 1986).

Teacher education replaced training as the stated objective of post-Independence policy framing (GOI, 1950, 1952, 1961a, 1971; Naik and Neurally 1972). The shift from training to education in policy, if not in actual practice, aimed at teacher autonomy to take decisions. This was reflected in teacher development and educational reforms in University Grants Commission's Panel on Teacher Education (UGC, 1974), Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshaiah Committee on Elementary Teacher Education (NCTE, 1975) and the Dr. Jha

Committee on Secondary Teacher Education (NCTE, 1978). Training is also viewed as value-orientation (GOI, 1979; GOI, 1983b; NCERT, 1988, 1990) in the National Commission on Teachers (1983-85) and The Working Group to Review Teachers' Training Programme.

Emergent Indian policy of holistic teacher education reflects a deeper understanding of the values underlying global teaching practices (Freeman, 1989; Bartlett, 1990; Bailey, 1991). This developmental tenet of teacher education explores "what we are now by reflecting on how we got to be here" (Bailey, Curtis and Nunan 2001: 247). The traditional role of teachers as deficient, passive or subordinate to expert trainers (Braine, 2010) has gradually been replaced by collaborative relationships where the teacher-educator facilitates change through teacher self-awareness (Freeman, 1989; Nunan, 1992a). Different learning styles and beliefs of both, teacher-educators and teacher-learners are acknowledged as learning resources, in collaborative professional development with trusted others (Bartlett, 1990; Nunan, 1990; Gebhard, 1990; Edge, 1992; Borg, 2011).

This new collaborative methodology for professional development and empowerment of elementary and secondary teachers is the primary objective of teacher education (GOI, 1951-97; NCERT, 1998), especially recommended by the NCTE Curriculum Framework for Quality Teacher Education (NCTE, 1995, 1998), the Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2006) and the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCTE, 2009). This model, with autonomous self-empowerment as its underlying principle, challenges the static concept of teacher identity. Teacher autonomy comprises a self-critical stance of reflective learning and changing perspectives and values as teachers construct their own knowledge base and accept responsibility for their own professional growth (Brinton et al. 1993; Nunan and Lamb

1996; Hyland, 2003a). Empowerment obtained by exploring emotions, personal beliefs, assumptions and values leads to further reflective awareness of how teaching behaviours are shaped (Gross, 1974; Wajnryb, 1992; Gebhard and Oprandy, 1999; Gebhard, 2005) and thus precludes prescriptive judgement (Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale, 1978; Amk, 2011). Such self-initiated developmental opportunities empower teacher-learners to construct personalized knowledge at their own pace (Freire, 1970). Teaching perspectives and behaviours thus change from egocentric subjectivity to be reconstructed and redefined through negotiations of multiple voices in collaboration (Edge, 1992).

1.1.3 Teacher Empowerment in Policy and Practice

Emergent pedagogical theory based on classroom evidence proves that language teaching involves abstract, complex and conceptual high-inference skills which cannot be explicitly taught, unlike low-inference skills and routine practices (Medley, 1979; Britten, 1985; Wallace, 1996). This complex concept of teacher education is also evident in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE) in the NCFTE and the Teacher Education Programme Through Distance Education Mode (NCTE, 1986; NCERT, 1990).

This, however, is not how ELT practitioners in India generally view professional development. Good examination results are the chief objectives of teachers, students and school authorities, as the researcher observed during interactions with trained English teachers from government, aided and private CBSE schools across India, in her capacity as principal and while collaborating in ELT workshops. English teachers described their career goal of preparing candidates from Classes IX to XII for CBSE and competitive examinations like TOEFL, defining professional development in terms of the prestige from

good exam results and ensuing lucrative income from private coaching. These teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with innovative ELT methods that were incompatible with the exam-oriented teaching environments prevailing in schools. The actual interpretation of professional development for a large section of English teachers remains limited to the tunnel-vision of teaching-learning as a consumer product, teaching efficacy being measured in marks and grades, and self-empowerment viewed as the outcome of good exam results.

The above exam-centric perspective of teacher empowerment is in direct conflict with the process approach to ELT prescribed by educational policy (GOI, 1961a, 1964, 1979, 1990), including TBLT, collaborative learning and action research. Teacher education needs to close this gap between constructivist, process-based, learner-centric teaching methods, values and beliefs defined by NCFTE-2009 and deep-seated, career-linked, exam-centric attitudes of teachers indirectly fostered by CBSE-CCE. Teacher-training by CBSE since 2009 has echoed policy statements of autonomous, collaborative-reflective teacher education by the NCFTE-2009 while contradicting it in practice with exam-centric CCE implementation. In India, therefore, progress in teacher education has mostly remained confined to theoretical expression.

ELT workshops, moreover, have not promoted change in classroom methods (GOI, 1992). Learner-centric classrooms are the outcome of teacher ability to assume a democratic, process-based facilitator role as opposed to the autocratic, exam-centric and product-based knowledge-provider role (GOI, 1964, 1986, 1993; UGC, 1990). Workshops however, rarely provide the impetus required to empower teacher as agents of change within the classroom through better teaching (NCERT, 1975, 1985; GOI, 1985, 1990, 1992). The shortcomings ELT workshops, therefore, need to be carefully examined and

remediated (Waters and Vilches, 2005). Since its introduction in 2009, CBSE-CCE has been criticised for its ambivalent combination of product-focussed assessment guidelines with a professedly process-focussed teaching approach. CCE workshops deflect focus from language teaching to testing outcomes, thus hindering the emergence of ELT facilitators according to NCFTE-2009 principles. This is discussed in the next section.

1.1.4 CBSE Evaluation Policy vis-à-vis Learning Objectives

The gap between ends (evaluation) and means (methods) is the fallout of **emphasising evaluation over teaching during CBSE-CCE implementation**, the third problem of teacher-training mentioned in Section 1.1.1 (p. 6). The NCF-2005 reiterates the need to shift ELT focus from the written products of testing to learner-centric, collaborative and task-based learning processes. The NCF-2005 recommendations being applicable across rural and urban India (NCERT, 2005), the stated objectives of the Academic, Training, Innovation and Research Unit of the CBSE in its website (Fig.1.1) are:

i.	To define appropriate approaches of academic activities to provide stress free, child centred and holistic education to all children without compromising on quality
ii.	To analyse and *monitor the quality of academic activities* by collecting feedback from different stakeholders
iii.	To *develop norms for implementation* of various academic activities including quality issues; to *control and coordinate* the implementation of various academic and training programmes of the Board; to *organize* academic activities and to *supervise* other agencies involved in the process
iv.	To adapt and innovate methods to achieve academic excellence in conformity with psychological, pedagogical and social principles
v.	To encourage schools *to document the progress of students* in a teacher and student friendly way
vi.	To propose plans to *achieve quality benchmarks* in school education consistent with the National goals
vii.	To organize various capacity building and empowerment programmes to update the professional competency of teachers

Fig. 1.1 Academic Objectives of CBSE based on NCF-2005

In the above statement by CBSE of its broad aims of teaching, evaluating and teacher development (Fig.1.1), text italicized by the researcher emphasizes an inherent contradiction between the overall democratic spirit of these objectives and the autocratic norms for their classroom implementation. The stated need to *monitor, develop norms for implementation, organize, control, coordinate* and *document progress* emphasises evaluation over teaching-learning in an attempt to ensure *benchmarks*. This counters in practice, teacher empowerment and professional competence, which are pedagogically sound learner-centric objectives (Jones and Sommers, 1976). The contradiction between psychological and intellectual process outcomes of CCE and focus on the written products of testing is evident in the prejudiced attitudes of teachers and learners.

Interactions with English teachers in government, aided and private CBSE schools (mentioned in Section 1.1.3, p. 9) revealed that even after attending CCE and capacity building ELT workshops, most teachers identified formative assessment with documenting written products of testing instead of diagnostic objectives. The inherent contradiction between learner-centric diagnostic processes and product-documentation or collecting evidence of formative testing for CBSE-CCE can be held responsible for this systemic ambivalence. An instance of practice undermining policy was evident in 2009-10 when even as grades were replacing marks in CBSE, the exam grades of Class X candidates in Maharashtra were reconverted into marks on demand. Focus on testing outcomes thus undermined learning processes. Monitoring, controlling and documenting written products of testing can be counterproductive in diagnosing learning needs.

The emphasis on continual recording of marks, grades and written products as evidence of formative testing in CBSE-CCE policy leads to exam/product-oriented

approach in teachers. While CBSE advocates holistic development in a stress-free learning environment, CCE itself dictates that every student be compulsorily graded in separate listening, speaking, reading and writing assignments, for four to six formative assessments, annually. This amounts to the recording of up to twenty-four grades per student, multiplied by the total number of students. The extensive documentation of this grading and its material and audio-visual evidence has to be completed within a period of thirty to forty working weeks, alongside teaching and maintaining anecdotal records of all learners.

Teacher feedback states that the overwhelming paperwork involved in CCE documentation, regularly monitored and inspected by the CBSE, curtails time for lesson-planning, diagnosis of individual needs and reflection on learning processes and strategies. The admirable theoretical precepts of CCE, in practice therefore, lead to the bureaucratisation of teaching-learning through overemphasis on evaluation. The CBSE, instead of empowering teachers through effective ELT methods, makes them focus instead, on the grades and product output of CCE. English teachers interviewed by this researcher showed no awareness of the differences between teaching and testing. Their knowledge of teaching-learning was restricted to syllabus-coverage, testing and grades.

Shift of teacher focus from the complexity of teaching-learning processes to products detracts from the validity of evaluation (Shohamy, 2005). The displacement of teacher focus from observation, reflection, diagnosis and remediation to output measurement is the negative washback of testing on teaching (Cheng et. al., 2004; Spratt, 2005, Saif, 2006; Bailey, 2010). Confusing testing with teaching negates the ELT policy of the CBSE by hindering diagnosis of individual learner needs and acquisition of teaching and learning

strategies. The ELT objectives of the NCF-2005 and NCFTE-2009 are countered in CCE implementation by teachers lacking the requisite knowledge and skills despite training.

Interviews with CBSE-trained teachers (Section 1.1.3, p. 9) revealed that despite attending the prescribed number of annual ELT workshops, most remained unaware of the differences between diagnostic/formative and summative assessment, or between CCE objectives and their own approach to ELT. CBSE workshops, instead of ensuring continuity in teacher learning, provide temporary, external stimulus, which may not be sustained in classroom practice, let alone leading to teacher empowerment.

The subversion of ELT objectives is concurrent with CBSE-CCE training programmes being fixed in time and space. Teachers attending workshops at specified locations for limited durations, come away without sufficient motivation to change teaching-learning in their own schools. This outcome classifies workshops as 'training' rather than 'educating' centres, according to NCFTE-2009 directives. The lack of post-workshop institutional support is thus, another reason for the mismatch between learner-centric ELT methods desired by the CBSE and exam-centric classroom practices. Available resources in schools therefore, are diverted into conducting examinations rather than innovative teaching programmes.

CBSE training moreover, does not create opportunity for teacher initiative at grassroots. Ironically, it replicates an autocratic hierarchical training-model with an expert knowledge-provider at the helm, while expecting teacher participants to follow democratic learner-centric processes. The private organisations empanelled by the CBSE are responsible for perpetuating this autocratic training model (Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996) with an expert predominantly in control. Teacher participants rarely get to voice

individual issues or take autonomous decisions for solving problems specific to their teaching contexts. Consequently, certified workshop participants revert to pre-workshop values, beliefs, attitudes and practices after exiting the space-time ambit of training.

Very few teachers take the initiative to carry forward new learning from workshops into classroom implementation, and of these, most fail to sustain new learning, due to lack of institutional support (Cook and Richards, 1972). In the CBSE schools mentioned earlier, (p. 9) the researcher observed that as the logical outcome of exam-centric values, skill-based language tasks in NCERT/CBSE Communicative English texts were replaced with language-testing items like textual questions and grammar exercises. Teachers supplemented prescribed texts with private publications that favoured testing items over learning tasks. The next section discusses how process-based ELT materials developed by NCERT and CBSE are affected by this exam-centric approach.

1.1.5 Methods versus Materials in CBSE Schools

The **use of process-focussed materials for exam-centric teaching** is the fourth problem in teacher-training mentioned in Section 1.1.1 (p. 6). The discrepancy between CBSE objectives and CCE implementation in schools leads to subversion of process-based CBSE/NCERT Communicative English coursebooks by rote-learning and exam drills with language-testing items. Trained English teachers in CBSE schools (p. 9) expressed preference for grammar-composition manuals and guidebooks with ready-made test questions and answers, as being more useful for testing than CBSE/NCERT Communicative English texts!

The outcome of this is teacher-led, text-based and exam-focused English lessons, with literature being taught through lectures, language through grammar-drills, and writing

through dictated notes and composition. Debates, quiz, poster-making or oral-presentations in the 'activity method' prescribed by CBSE-CCE are rarely occurrences, conducted only for 'formative grading' of the oral/written product output. Formative evaluation is invalid without diagnosis of remedial needs. Further, summative assessment washback, replacing skill-based NCERT/CBSE tasks leads to skills-imbalance in the ELT curriculum. Writing exceeds reading and oral-aural skills, being reinforced by CBSE circulars (August 2013) emphasising the need for yet more writing. Most learner writing is controlled by teachers dictating set answers to textual questions, for rote learning. Language testing therefore, lacks validity, eliciting content-recall instead of writing skills. As a result, the researcher observed many learners with high summative grades in English who yet, could not read or speak with corresponding fluency. Ambivalence in CBSE-CCE policy and implementation thus compounds grassroots teaching-learning problems (Fig. 1.2):
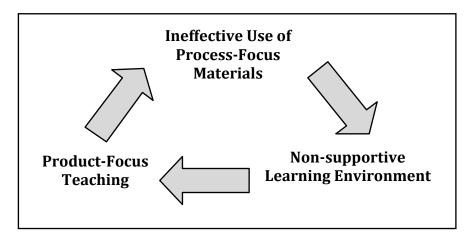

Fig. 1.2 Product-Process Incompatibility in CBSE Schools

The prevalent grassroots ELT scenario in CBSE schools (Fig. 1.2) is an exam-centric learning environment stemming from inadequate policy implementation that, in turn, leads to teaching focus on learning products instead of processes. The outcome is that teachers subvert constructivist, process-oriented CBSE/NCERT texts with exam/product-focussed ELT. This vicious cycle is the fallout of the four problems of teacher education (Section

1.1.1, P. 6) discussed so far. It is therefore, necessary to supplement CBSE workshops with teacher learning that enables the translation of ELT theory into classroom practice.

1.1.6 Teacher Education in ELT From Materials to Methods

The present study seeks a way out of the vicious cycle of teaching-testing (Fig. 1.2) by focussing on four processes of teacher education, to counter the four problems discussed in preceding sections. These four processes align professional development with effective teaching practices, thus enabling teacher-empowerment within the classroom and reducing dependence on external workshops (Fig. 1.3):
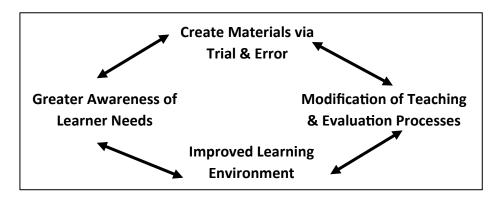

Fig. 1.3 Teacher Education for Professional Development and Self-Empowerment

The four processes of teacher education (Fig. 1.3) that effectively lead to self-empowerment are based on Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT):

1. Make teachers aware of learner-centric TBLT, enabling reliable and valid evaluation of language products without overemphasis on testing.

2. Observe whether TBLT enables teachers to combine CCE with reflective practice based on framing and implementing language tasks.

3. Observe whether the TBLT approach helps in replacing training with a context-specific, reflective self-sustained process of education within the classroom, without longterm reliance on external support.

4.   Positive outcomes in the three above areas could change teacher attitude towards professional development and self-empowerment, redefining these goals in learner-centric terms of effective strategies and processes in the classroom.

Replacing temporary training workshops with teacher education for self-empowerment, the present study proposes an ongoing, self-sustained programme of experiential and metacognitive learning to help teachers evolve into more effective facilitators. The study rejects conventional training to focus instead, on teacher education, offering teachers a voluntary rather than compulsory experimental exercise. The present study thus considers teacher volition for professional development as true indication of self-empowerment.

The success of the study would indicate its replicability in teaching contexts. The study introduces teacher-volunteers to TBLT theory, framed by Gardner's (1983) Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory and the cognitive dimension of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (RBT) (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001), requiring them to translate this learning into practice in their own classrooms, in an ongoing teacher-education workshop for self-empowerment. Functioning at the grassroots, this workshop would be relevant to individual teaching contexts, thus, motivating teachers to accept responsibility for learning.

The teachers of this study would attend workshops in TBLT, CL and assessment, prior to framing tasks, followed by reflection on procedures and feedback. Ongoing cycles of planning, implementation and reflection would serve to counter negative washback from CCE. The present study thus, intends to overcome time-space limitations of conventional training programmes through self-sustained learning (Little, 1992; Kitsantas et al., 2004; Murphy et al., 2004). Continual engagement in TBLT is expected to encourage habits of

reflection, introspection and deliberative changes in classroom procedures as a conscious move by teachers towards self-empowerment (Land, 1980; Miller et al., 1988; Lantolf, 2000a; Morrow et al., 2006; Robinson and Lai, 2006; Kabilan, 2007).

CBSE-CCE advocates a comprehensive list of skills-based tasks for formative evaluation in Communicative English, including poster-making, quiz, book review, visits and field trips, survey projects (group/individual), group discussion, debate, declamation, dramatization, role play, presentation, seminar and model-making. These language learning tasks and activities do not lead to the logically expected positive washback from task-based evaluation to teaching methods because of infrequent use, solely for grading, while lecture and rote-learning persist.

The researcher observed three major drawbacks in teachers she interacted with (Section 1.1.3, p. 9), preventing TBLT for formative evaluation:

a) **No practical knowledge of TBLT:** The main reason why English teachers are unable to teach using skill-based tasks in NCERT/CBSE texts is their ignorance of TBLT pedagogy. Teachers are unwilling or unable to frame language tasks for collaborative learning. Lacking the knowhow to frame learning tasks or assessment rubrics, teachers only use tasks for testing and grading. It is necessary, therefore, for teachers to first learn TBLT before using tasks.

b) **Absence of clear cognitive objectives:** Teachers grade LSRW outcomes in task output without setting clear learning objectives, task parameters or even predefining a grading rubric. A rubric presents learners with the opportunity to learn from peer or self-assessment. In its absence, there can be no objective measure of the extent of task-fulfilment. Lack of a guiding rubric reduces chances of learner autonomy in the

learning process as learners merely fulfil teacher instructions without a predefined cognitive objective. There is thus a disconnect between teacher evaluation of the final task-output of learners and the cognitive potential of the task for learner autonomy. Learners when given an assessment rubric can achieve autonomy through self-monitored task-performance.

c) **Lack of attention to individual differences:** Teachers, instead of observing learning processes occurring during the planning and preparation stages of the task, merely focus on grading its product output at the performance stage. They remain unaware therefore, of the individual differences in learners manifested in the process phases of the task, and ignorant of learning strategies applied during task-planning and negotiation. Focussing on task-processes would enable teachers to identify and activate learning strategies in individual learners (Bialystok, 1978, 1990).

1.2 Theoretical Framework of Research Intervention

The three above drawbacks being directly responsible for disabling positive washback from testing to task-based teaching, learning TBLT can therefore, effectively correct these drawbacks. The present study considers materials or task-framing as the most effective entry-point to understanding and applying TBLT. To overcome teacher inexperience in task-framing, the study provides a guiding framework for task-construction that counters the three above drawbacks by factoring in their corresponding positives:

a) Teacher knowledge of **Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)** (Prabhu, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Ellis, 2003a) would resolve the means-versus-ends debate between process and product by combining language skills (LSRW) in task processes with clearly defined learning objectives in task outcomes (Bygate, 1999a). Task-framing

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would make teachers aware of the diagnostic properties of teaching tasks and increase their knowledge of strategies used by learners in collaborative negotiation to compensate for individual differences. Framing tasks would motivate teachers to explore beyond textual content into real life contexts (Cameron, 2001), thus reducing text dependence. Ability to enhance their teaching skills and confidence within the classroom would enable teachers to accept responsibility for their learners, thus, leading to autonomy and empowerment (Benson, 2000, 2002).

b) Focussing on cognitive task objectives would enable teachers to correlate these with descriptive indicators of the task rubric, ensuring balanced learning and evaluation. **Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (RBT)** (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001) determines cognitive objectives in content-based and task-based language teaching. The language learning objectives of tasks can be clearly demarcated in the RBT hierarchy of cognitive levels. RBT would define learning objectives and assessment rubrics of tasks, correlating these effectively in the task outcome (Gürsoy, 2010). RBT as a cognitive-evaluative TBLT guideline would therefore lead to teacher-awareness of process phases in tasks, individual differences in learners and use of collaborative strategies to compensate for these differences.

c) Teacher awareness of individual differences in learners enables focus on learning strategies at different stages of task engagement (Nyikos and Oxford, 1993; LoCastro, 1994; Naiman et al., 1996). TBLT caters to individual differences in learning styles and cognitive functioning of learners by incorporating Gardner's (1983) **Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI).** MI theory, being learner-centric, is popular in classroom application. MI as a TBLT guideline would therefore enable teachers to cater to learner differences through task inputs and processes that elicit

collaborative learning strategies compensating for individual differences (Fuchs and Mathes Fuchs, 1997; Griffiths, 2007).

MI and RBT guidelines for TBLT would help teachers in framing language tasks for teaching-learning as well as evaluation, while demarcating the difference between diagnosis/remediation and assessment. This research intervention is referred to as **MI-RBT-TBLT** hereafter, in the study.   **MI-RBT-TBLT** is expected to enable multiple cognitive approaches to language learning. Framing, implementing and reflecting on tasks would enable teaching-learning LSRW skills with the NCERT/CBSE texts, without recourse to other exam-centric publications.   It would thus enable teachers to focus on learning processes as well as product outcomes.

The present study focuses on teacher motivation for exploring sources of language-learning beyond prescribed English texts. English, although meant to function as a 'library language' in tertiary education, is usually learnt solely through prescribed texts. The researcher's discussion with teachers (Section 1.1.3, p. 9) confirmed that learner difficulty in listening and reading (processing input) and speaking and writing (communicating output) in English extended across the curriculum and into real life. In most cases, teachers were unable to cater to these real-life language needs of learners. Teacher initiative in applying LSRW skills, sub-skills and strategies across the curriculum would enhance professional efficacy and lead to self-empowerment.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

Theories of teacher development have usually originated alongside new philosophies of learning, but right from Behaviourism up to Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivist Theory and beyond, the focus has been on the learner, leaving teachers to adjust

automatically to the requirements of learners and to structure lessons around individual needs. Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE) programmes are expected to equip teachers with emergent pedagogy to create the appropriate learner-centric environment in the classroom. SLTE therefore, introduces teachers to theory, expecting seamless transition into practice, supported by teaching materials. When this fails to happen, teachers are provided with more detailed instructional aid in teaching manuals. Some manuals even include stepwise instructions on classroom procedure, overlooking the implicit danger of reducing the teacher role from that of facilitator to mere conduit between textual content and learners. Instruction manuals, moreover, being open to individual interpretation and initiative, do not fulfil the objective of ensuring that the teacher applies the pedagogical theory underlying the materials.

Some teachers, gaining expertise with time, successfully create a rich learning environment through effective method and use of prescribed materials (Schofield and Start, 1980; Rosenholtz, 1991). Expert teachers in turn, become teacher-trainers and develop teaching materials (Pigge and Marso, 1992; O'Keeffe and Farr, 2003). Pedagogical expertise is thus, precursor to the development of teaching materials, while teachers at grassroots are viewed as task-facilitators rather than task-creators. This conventional route of professional development from theoretical expertise to materials development overlooks the fact that method and materials evolve together in emergent pedagogy.

Teacher education therefore, needs to modify its **focus on methods** of learning to simultaneously include **focus on materials**. Developing teaching materials or task-framing is yet to be considered a viable step towards understanding the corresponding method and continues to be regarded instead, as an outcome of it. Materials development in TBLT remaining entrenched in the domain of pedagogical expertise, research is yet to explore the

link between TBLT method and task-framing for enabling transformation of theory into practice. How teachers frame and use tasks in the classroom is yet to be studied and documented, leading to dearth of available information on the attitudinal, cognitive or metacognitive development in teachers as outcomes of framing, implementing and reflecting on tasks.

The present study positions itself precisely in this perceived hiatus between materials and method. **Reversing the conventional methods-to-materials route to professional efficacy, this study seeks to explore the efficacy of materials development or task-framing as the means of practising TBLT in the classroom.** The study explores whether framing, implementing and reflecting on MI-RBT language tasks helps teachers to apply TBLT, focusing on teaching as well as testing. It investigates changes in teacher beliefs about learning and professional development as a result of MI-RBT-TBLT and its corresponding language-learning outcomes. TBLT involves task structure, inputs and cognitive outcomes of tasks. Examining task-structure would increase teacher knowledge of TBLT methodology, MI in task inputs would cater to individual differences in learners and RBT would identify definite cognitive objectives achieved in task outcomes. Together, MI, RBT and TBLT would provide variety in task inputs, definite cognitive levels of task outcomes and thus, increase teaching efficacy.

This study therefore, analyses MI-RBT-TBLT, not just as a method of language learning, but also as a method of professional development to empower teachers within the classroom, reducing need of external training. This professional empowerment would constitute the four-way process (Fig. 1.3 in Section 1.1.6) of teacher education by enabling:

(1)   Teacher awareness of interrelated learner needs and task objectives

(2)   Learner-centric task processes in the classroom

(3)   Effective use of prescribed materials

(4)   Strategy-enhanced teaching-learning environment

As long as teachers remain passive recipients of prescribed NCERT/CBSE texts without reflecting on the apposite method, they will continue to subvert the teaching method implicit in these texts with product-focussed exam requirements (Fig. 1.2 in Section 1.1.5). Logically, the uptake or internalisation of learner-centric MI-RBT-TBLT principles through task-framing would enable teachers to effectively use prescribed CLT materials, evolving metacognitively from mere evaluators into facilitators (Cohen et al., 1972; Coladarci, 1992). This argument as the rationale for the present study is developed in detail in Chapters Two and Three.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the four problems of teacher education and their proposed solutions discussed above, the present study addresses three interrelated research questions:

(1)   Can teachers be empowered to develop their teaching skills in the language class by learning to frame tasks, supported by the theoretical frameworks of Multiple Intelligences (MI) and Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (RBT)?

(2)   Can tasks created by the teachers and supported by the MI framework cater to individual differences?

(3)   Can Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (RBT) help teachers in framing tasks that ensure definite learning outcomes?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

Answers to the three research questions in the previous section can be categorised as providing three kinds of outcomes to the present study. The results may be anticipated as indicating (a) Positive, (b) Null or (c) Negative hypotheses as described below:

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(a) Positive Hypothesis: Framing MI-RBT tasks has positive impact on autonomous teacher development and learner performance. The hypothesis will be proved positive if the data from this study shows that:

1. Teachers can successfully frame language tasks with MI inputs using RBT guidelines

2. Teachers manifest motivation and initiative in such task framing

3. Teachers become less text-dependent and create their own materials

4. Teachers become effective facilitators who are metacognitively aware of the learning processes

5. Teachers become self reliant for their cognitive growth

6. A more discernible use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies is observed in learners

7. Teachers show greater empathy for learners through motivation and problem-solving

8. Teachers include learners more frequently in the decision-making process

9. Greater learner autonomy is seen in the classroom

10. Peer collaboration and feedback and measurable improvement in language proficiency is observed in learners

(b) Null Hypothesis: Framing MI-RBT tasks has no visible impact on autonomous teacher development and learner performance.

(c) Negative Hypothesis: Framing MI-RBT tasks has negative impact on autonomous teacher development and learner performance.

1.6 Conclusion

The emergence of a positive research hypothesis for the present study would indicate that MI-RBT-TBLT enables teachers to become effective facilitators, without recourse to

extraneous training programmes. Task-framing will then make teachers more aware of teaching processes and enable them to use the prescribed NCERT/CBSE texts correctly (Austad, 1972). They will also develop an analytical and learner-centric approach to all new teaching methods and materials (Bloom and Stance, 1979; Cornbleth and Korth, 1980). This will enable autonomous teacher development and self-empowerment with positive learner outcomes in strategy use and autonomous learning (Chamot and Küpper, 1989; Chamot, 1993; Chamot and O'Malley, 1996; Chamot and El-Dinary, 1999). Skills and strategies gained by teachers and learners through MI-RBT-TBLT could extend into the sphere of tertiary education to meet the desired goal of social transformation envisaged by the policy-framers of the NCF 2005 and NCFTE-2009 (Dam and Little, 1999).

The scope of this study may be limited by the fact that the teacher and learner participants are from English medium CBSE schools in Surat, a growing city, where English is as yet rarely spoken outside school. The results of the study may be applicable in similar urban settings. The replicable outcomes of a similar study would be further subject to the individual creative ability of teachers. The teachers in the present study, as voluntary participants, are expected to manifest high motivation for task-framing with direct impact on autonomy and empowerment. The present study focuses on teacher efficacy in task-framing and awareness of individual differences and learning strategies as the measure of teacher cognition, without analysing other aspects of professional development that may also empower teachers or make them better facilitators.

Individual teacher initiative, motivation and creativity being major causative factors in self-empowerment (Feiman-Nemser and Featherstone, 1992; Benson, 2009, 2011), the results of the present study should be of help to English teachers in a rural or urban school settings, who wish to enhance their professional efficacy by helping learners. TBLT being

the most versatile of methods, is applicable in different contexts of language learning, to learners of all ages (Gardner and Miller, 1996). The guiding framework of MI and RBT would help teachers to focus simultaneously on individual learner interest and ability as well as on the cognitive challenge of task objectives (Darling-Hammond and Sykes, 1999). The present study is relevant in the specific context of CBSE-CCE. Teacher training being outsourced by CBSE has created a curricular imbalance in favour of evaluation over teaching due to CCE implementation. MI-RBT-TBLT, if successfully applied in the classroom, would help retain equipoise between teaching and testing by highlighting diagnostic, remedial and formative elements of evaluation (Coreil, 2007).

The present study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One discusses the background, general theoretical framework, rationale, scope and limitations of this study, focussing on three research questions and the hypotheses. The subsequent chapters carry this discussion forward in progressive detail. Chapter Two reviews the relevance of the available literature in TBLT pedagogy, RBT, MI and collaborative learning to the present study. This chapter identifies the existing gap between theory and practice of TBLT pedagogy and contextualises the present study by outlining its contribution to bridging this gap through practical teacher education in task-framing. Chapter Three discusses the Research Questions, stating the Aims of the study and describing the Study Sample, Research Tool, Research Methodology and Pilot Study. Chapter Four statistically analyses and presents the qualitative and quantitative data, interpreting significant outcomes with reference to the research questions. Chapter Five concludes the study with a discussion of the wider implications of its outcomes and their relevance to teachers, learners and policy framers. Directions for further research emerging from the present study have also been outlined at the end of Chapter Five.