



RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS SECOND LANGUAGE IN INDIAN SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT- We are aware of the importance of a window in our living rooms, a window enables us to have a view of the outside world. The study of English by Indians serves the purpose of a window. Through this window we can see what is happening in other parts of the world. The study of English helps us to know the progress being made by the world in different areas of life. F.G. French observed, "A traveller who can speak English will find somebody who can understand him wherever he may go: anyone who can read English can keep in touch with the whole world without leaving his own house". Modern technology has enabled us to remain informed about the advancement taking place throughout the world. It may be in the field of science, technology, machine or any human activity we come to know about it, it through this language. Our country cannot afford to close the window of English language. In the words of Pt. Nehru, "All regional languages must be developed and promoted. But that did not mean that English should be discarded. To do that would amount to closing a window on the world of technology. It was no use getting into an intellectual prison after achieving political independence". So according to Pt. Nehru, English is our major window on the modern world. It is only through this language that we have distilled essence of modern knowledge in all fields of human activity.

Keywords: English, Science, Technology, Language, Machine, Intellectual Prison, Human activity

I. INTRODUCTION

English is playing a very important role in the social life of Indian people. We find it convenient to converse in English. It is a means of social and intellectual communication in the highly educated sections of society, for example while introducing someone, interacting in parties, conducting interviews, sending invitations and asserting superiority English is used; spoken as well as written. Majority of educated people use this language for correspondence. English words have got interwoven in our daily conversation. They have become part and parcel of our mother tongues as well. We rarely come across a person who speaks his, other tongue in its pure form rather it is a bit of surprise when we come across a person speaking his mother tongue chaste. English has become very useful and handy in our social life by inter mixing it with our local and national languages. English is therefore, an important language and it must be studied, Prof. Gokak has rightly observed that, "It was in the English classroom that the Indian library renaissance was born. So it is decided fact that English is an important library language. The very argument that is difficult and cannot be taught reflects incompetence on the part of teachers. As a teacher of English, we should be able to teach it correctly. It is a living language; it is used in spoken, written and read with comprehension in our country. If all the teachers of English deal with the situation with earnestness, there is no reason they will not be able to succeed.

OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A LANGUAGE AT SECONDARY STAGE

a) Dr. S. Bloom has defined educational objective as the desired goal or outcome at which instruction is aimed. The result expected from teaching English in India is acquiring a practical command of the language. The system of education aims to prepare the students to understand the situation as well as be able to convey whatever they want to. They must be able to use the language whenever and wherever it is required. This utilitarian aim, something more important is needed which we must impart to the students, that is, the aim of literary development; Literary development begins with love for the language, by reading and appreciation of what we read in literature. Love for language is expressed through the creative ideas in Prose, poetry and drama. Thus two main objectives of teaching English may be: a) Language development and b) Literary development. During the early stages of schooling the teacher should aim at developing language. In the words of Thompson and Wyatt, 'At this point, to aim at literature is to miss the way to language. Educationists contend that it is necessary that the Indian student should not only understand English when it is spoken or written but they should also be able to speak and write it. The main objective is that students should be able to understand spoken English, speak English, read and write simple English. This is similar to four aspects of language which include:

a) Semantic - related to understanding.

- b) Phonetic - dealing with sounds – spelling and pronunciation.
- c) Graphic - related to writing.
- d) Phonetic cum graphic- dealing with reading.

A few decades ago a pupil would begin learning English around eight years of age and continue doing so for next eight to ten years to be proficient in that language. Now the needs and desire to learn have undergone a tremendous shift and children start learning English from the first year of their schooling. The process and aims of teaching English can be divided into fourfold to be carried along simultaneously:

- a) to understand the English when written
- b) to understand it when spoken
- c) to speak English and
- d) to write it.

An oral lesson, for example, usually provides practice both in understanding spoken English and in speaking it. So the two aims are being fulfilled at the same time. A teacher of English must have clarity of objectives in his mind and what sort of activity ought to be taken up in class to achieve that objective since different activities are required to imbibe different skills. Some skills are easier than others for example, the understanding of English, whether written or spoken is easier for the learner than the writing or speaking of the language. Because in understanding only a passive knowledge of the language is sufficient, whereas in writing and spoken form an active knowledge is needed. More so, understanding of written English is easier than the understanding of spoken English because an unfamiliar pronunciation may prove serious hindrance to comprehension. Similarly speaking of English is easier than writing it, for which skill of writing correctly; spelling and knowledge of sentence structure is needed.

Most school courses begin with speech and soon reading receives the greater emphasis. In the early stages there is a need for training in loud reading. Since loud training enables students to get familiar with the correct pronunciation. As the students advance in classes training in silent reading becomes the pupil's predominant need. The more a student reads the more proficient he becomes. The progress in reading is faster than other four skills. The knowledge of purposeful reading ought to receive much greater emphasis than it receives at the present day, more over since the need in adult life, in majority of cases is for a passive rather than an active knowledge of English.

AIMS of teaching can be categorised under two heads.

Passive Command Listening and reading are considered passive skills.	Active Command Speaking and writing are active skills.
These are far simpler to pick up.	These require great efforts.
They require less time and energy.	It is difficult to master these skills and they take longer.
Even weaker pupil gets to know these skills.	Proper instruction through sequence is needed.
Greater range of vocabulary and language can be utilised skills.	Active vocabulary is only half or one third of the passive in passive vocabulary in our mind.
Passive command has a higher practical value especially in Knowledge acquisition.	Practical value is greater especially in non-Hindi speaking areas.

DIFFERENT LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT ARE EXPECTED AT DIFFERENT STAGES FORM THE STUDENTS

Various seminars and discussions are held for the language teachers from time to time to sort out the issues of teaching English as to what should be taught and at which stage. In one such seminar, it was recommended that at the Higher Secondary stage a student must have mastery over 250 structures and 2500 vocabulary words. The study group on the teaching of English prescribed the following class wise division of the syllabus in terms of sentence structure and vocabulary.

Class	Structure	Vocabulary
VI	1-50	300 words for active use
VII	51-100	300 more words for active use
VIII	101-170	300 more words, in addition 200 new words
IX	171-200	300 new words for active use 300 new words for passive use
X	201-250	300 new words for active use along with 300 new words for passive use

Thus, it is expected that by the end of class ten, pupil would have attained the command of the structures prescribed so far. By the time a student is in class XI, language could be further consolidated and expanded through suitable texts. The main emphasis at plus two levels is to expand vocabulary and within two years a student must master 2500-3000 vocabulary words. He should be able to-

- a) Read books written in simple English.
- b) He should write correct simple sentences.
- c) He should be able to talk in familiar everyday routine English.
- d) He should be able to understand professional or technical subjects that he is likely to take up after plus two.

But we see a huge gap between the objective and achievement at various levels. Our matriculate students barely know 100 structures and a 1000 odd vocabulary words. Similarly, students at plus two levels do not have sufficient vocabulary to express themselves.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES OF ENGLISH: SECONDARY STAGE

1. The students understand simple English when it is spoken.
2. The students speak, simple and correct English.
3. The students read simple English with comprehension.
4. The students write simple and correct English.
5. The students know the functional use of the elements of the language.
6. The students appreciate simple poems in English.
7. The students translate from the mother-tongue into English.
8. The students develop interest in English.

MAKERS OF MODERN ENGLISH

Edmund Spenser was the pioneer who revealed the poetic beauty of English language through his exceptional pieces of literature like 'FarieQueene' and 'Shepherd's Calender'. Spenser followed Chaucer; Chaucer's works were the highly esteemed example of usage of English. Spenser's other significant works are 'Amoretti sonnets' and superb 'Epithalamion'. These poems have a special place in the development of English. Spenser's works especially his sonnets are regarded in the first rank of writing of the English Renaissance by the lovers of literature.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare's contribution towards modern English is very significant. Through his works he conveys the essence of the spirit of Renaissance. He was a poet, sonneteer and dramatist. His contribution to English language lies in the versatility of its use. The language is the product of his imagination. He loved lyrical beauty and rhymes. He experimented in the construction of different kinds of moods in English. Many of the phrases and usage of Shakespeare have become part of modern English language

JOHN MILTON

Among the makers of modern English JOHN MILTON occupies a very significant position. Milton's objective was to combine the perfection of the ancient art and morals of the Bible. The beauty of Milton's verse paved the way for the later writers to follow him. He used the pastoral form of writing and abundance of mythological allusions. Milton's style of writing is Latinised in many of his works. The meaning of words, syntax, sentence division and other usage are near to ancient classical writers.

PURPOSE OF LANGUAGE

The essential purpose of any language is to convey the message. The world is shrinking rapidly today. The advantages in information technology, scientific knowledge and audio-visual aids have transformed our sprawling earth into a global village. People of various cultures and nationalities now meet, interact, trade, socialize and ease on a daily basis. All this is made possible through a common language that is English. English is used by over 400 million people across the globe. In America, England, Canada, most of Europe and Australia, it is used as their mother tongue. Others like Indians, Africans, Chinese, part of Europe, Japanese and South Americans use it as a second language, the rest of the world learns it as a foreign language. One out of every four persons in the world can be reached through English. 50% of the world's newspapers, scientific and technical journals and over 60% of the world's Radio/ TV stations use English as a means of communication. It is the official language of United Nations Organisation (UNO).

ENGLISH IN INDIAN CONTEXT

Under such circumstances the teaching of English in our educational institutions has taken a special significance. In India, English is the link language, serving to connect the people of various regions and diverse backgrounds. It is the Lingua Franca of the people from the South, North, East and west of India. It is the official language among the central and state governments. In a country like India with enormous diversity of population, the number of languages being spoken here is equally mind boggling. Different languages are spoken in different regions. Under such circumstances, communication would

have been impossible; the legacy of the English rulers has succeeded in uniting us after attaining independence. Pt. Nehru was one of its strongest votaries and has described English as 'our major window on the modern world'.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The English system of education was introduced in India by the British rulers. When Britishers came in India, they planned everything according to their own utility. They had spread rule over the large areas from south and central India to north. They needed lot of workforce to control and manage their administration. It was not possible for them to bring everything and every person with them from their native country; Britain. They made the best use of resources available here. They made Indians learn English so that they could utilise their services to fulfil their requirements. Thus English language used by the British administration was politically imposed on the Indian education system to extract the satisfactory work from their subordinates. English was taught as a compulsory subject. For two centuries it has been playing an important role in our educational system as well as in our National life. East India Company brought English in India and Britishers used it only. History reveals that Charles Grant, a Christian Missionary was the precursor of English in India for more than a decade. He was committed to the spread of his religious message all over the world. He thought that the pre-requisite to the spread of Christianity was the knowledge of English. He was elected the chairman of the east India in 1805. He thought of spreading his message and said, "the communication of our light and knowledge to them". Being in power he had all the resources to put his thought process into action. His efforts further got a boost with the sanction of British Parliament and the education policy for their large colony was revised and a charter was issued.

In the charter of 1813, article 431 was a clause which changed the destiny of the people of India. The said clause authorised the Governor General in council to spend a sum of not less than one lakh rupee each year on the revival and improvement of literature..... For the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the science..... among the British territories in India. With this charter, a background for British education was prepared.

Later, Lord Macaulay, a Law Member the man behind the modern education in India clarified how the sum of one lakh rupees was to be spent. Lord Macaulay, in 1835, through his famous minutes suggested that through education we should produce "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, opinion, in morals and in intellect." He also said, "A single shelf of the good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia". Such utterances angered many Indians. They opposed the opportunist and selfish attitude of the British rulers but there was another section of native Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a social reformer and a man of vision for the future. He knew that future of India lies in learning English regardless of the prejudice that British rulers reflect in their attitude. He supported the English system of Education.

Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General accepted the suggestions made by Macaulay, confirmed it further and said, "The main object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English alone". That was the time when the foreign plant of English was made compulsory. Soon English became the medium of instruction.

PLACE OF ENGLISH BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

Before Independence, English enjoyed the privileged position in Indian education system. It was regarded as:

a) The Queen of Languages

It was the Lingua Franca of the educated class. In every walk of life, it was the vehicle of thought and activity. It was considered most important to learn English and people took pride in learning not only English language but also English manners and life style.

b) Medium of Instruction at Different Levels

English used to be the medium of instruction at school and college levels. In elementary schools especially in public schools of reputed English was used as a medium of instruction. People felt important to learn English.

c) English Teachers Taught English

Initially when English was introduced in the schools, it was taught by native English teachers only. The students who learnt directly from the native speakers learnt better language. Learning English at the time of school going was a matter of pride for the common man. Therefore people devoted great efforts and took interest in learning the language of rulers, which could assure them a government job.

PLACE OF ENGLISH AFTER INDEPENDENCE

India became free in 1947; the English people left India forever. With their Departure all the administration and policies came in the hands of Indian people. There were many things that needed immediate attention. Therefore the decisions regarding the formulation and implementation of Education policies took a little while before anything concrete could be decided. The national leaders let the system continue as it was till the time anew policy framework was prepared. When the policies were being framed there rose a controversy amongst the various policy makers about the usage of English in India. Some leaders were of the opinion that English must be allowed to continue as the medium of instruction, whereas the other group argued that English should be uprooted from our education system since it was the language of foreigners and reminded us of the suppression.

Views of Various Leaders

Mahatma Gandhi, on seeing the plight of Indian students said, "I would have our young men and women with literary tastes to learn as much of English and other world languages as they like..... But I would not have a single Indian to forget, neglect or be ashamed of his mother tongue." He condemned the study of English at the cost of the study of mother tongue.

C. Rajagopalcharya said that English should be in the Indian education system. His opinion was "we in our anger and the hatred against the British people should not throw away the Baby with the bath water."

Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, The first education minister of free India said, "So far as the general studies are connected it was never my intention to suggest that there should be any fall in the standard of English."

In the words of Pt. Nehru, "One hundred and fifty years of intimate contact has made English an integral part of our educational system and this cannot be changed without injury to the cause of education in India. In addition English has today become one of the major languages of the world and Indians can neglect its study only at the risk of loss of themselves. I am convinced that in the future as well; the standard of teaching English should be maintained at as high a level as possible".

PLACE OF ENGLISH IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM

After independence, various changes occurred in the education system. Various education commissions appointed by the government of India recommended slow and steady shift towards the mother tongue. However the importance of English too could not be overlooked. It is the language of the world, and the knowledge of English makes a person a citizen of the world. Even in the early days after independence as the English ceased to be the medium of instructions, it continued to be taught from standard VI or VII onwards and was a compulsory subject till the college level. In some schools English was introduced from standard VIII.

II. CONCLUSION

The fact is that Love-hate relationship of Indians masses with English continued. People wanted to get the feeling of freedom by getting rid of English language but at the same time they wanted to study it to know the advancements being made listed in English. In such an uncertain atmosphere the upper class society that wanted to be identified as refined and cultured chose to send their wards to the English medium schools. As a result the public schools of repute were set up at most of the hill stations. The children of rich classes studied there. Meanwhile the masses kept squabbling over the teaching of English in the schools. Over a period of time, as the realisation dawned on the common man that study of English has many benefits, the demand for English medium school started increasing and today we see schools competing with each other to raise the standard of teaching English in their schools. After independence various states devised their own educational policies, incorporating English as a second language. Thus it continues to be taught at various levels all over the country. The Kothari commission also recommended that the study of English as a language should be made compulsory subject at school level and an optional subject thereafter.

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