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AN INSIGHT INTO TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONS UNDER  
DIFFERENT SET UPS WITH DIFFERENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

It is generally believed that an explicit linguistic analysis and well written textbooks are sufficient for students to perform well in second language. But, in practice, it is found, in spite of good text books and methods of teaching, the performance in English is not up to the mark. There seem to be certain factors other than men, methods and material which prove significant in producing successful second language learning. As far as schooling is concerned, there are different educational institutions under different sectors with different objectives. Teachers and students would struggle to fulfil their own goals at primary, secondary and higher secondary levels.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication. It is related to present, past and future. It plays an important role in the mental, emotional and social development of a person. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, language is "The system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people of a particular country". Some define language as the mental faculty that allows humans to understand linguistic behaviour. Some others define language as a formal system of signs governed by the grammatical rules to communicate meaning. To sum up, language is a tool for communication. Language is defined as anything that can be written, spoken or communicated between people. Language is the most important factor on which most of the human activities depend. This tells how significant the role of the language is. Without any form of language, any co-operation and communication would be almost; if not totally impossible.

In India, Education is divided into three stages: 1) Basic or primary, 2) Secondary and 3) University stage. During the British period English occupied a very important position in the list of school subjects. In those days almost all subjects were taught through English medium. As such, the student could learn a lot of English while studying History, Geography, Mathematics and Science. The child had more chances for learning English than for learning his own mother tongue in the atmosphere of the school. The teachers and parents were inspired by the utilitarian aim of teaching English. Grammar was prominent in the examination papers. English was learnt more than any other language. For nearly one century, English dominated the scene in Primary and Secondary Schools (1834-1935).

English had a pre-dominant role in college and University Education also in those days. It was the medium of instruction in the Higher Education. All the courses were taught in English medium and more importance was given to English Literature. The curriculum in English was heavily classical and included the works of Shakespeare, Milton, Goldsmith, Pope, Johnson etc. Even India produced a galaxy of writers in English like Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, Toru Dutt, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. S. Radha Krishnan, R.K. Narayan, Mulkraj Anand etc. whose works were also included in the curriculum in the later years.

The position of English today is much different. They no longer have the pre-dominantly English atmosphere in their schools and colleges and it is now taught as a second or foreign language. After the attainment of Independence to India, the rise of political consciousness and demand for an education befitting their conditions became the slogan of the day. The Indian leaders, the people in general and especially the educated masses began to feel their problems in a more realistic way.

Expressing his views on English Education, Mahatma Gandhi wrote, "It is my considered opinion that English Education in the manner it has been given has emasculated the English educated Indians; it has put a severe strain upon the Indian students and has made us imitators". Rabindranath Tagore also strongly supported education through mother tongue. Maulana Azad, the then Education Minister said, "English was there with us for more than 200 years and had become part and parcel of our education and we cannot do away with this English language"(1951). Rajaji said, "it was a precious gift given by the Goddess Saraswathi ... and it would be foolish to throw away the baby along with bath water". Consciously or unconsciously the people of India use English words in their daily life. After a lot of controversy over the status of English between the politicians and the educationists, it was decided to continue English as one of the compulsory languages in our education

Since majority of people live in villages, there may be little need for the study of English at the elementary stage itself. The Kunzru Committee felt that secondary and higher education should not aim at preparing students for university education alone but to prepare them for various occupations. However English should be retained at the secondary education stage but the emphasis must shift from the study of literature to the simple language of the day i.e., at the secondary stage it must be taught as a second language.

The Secondary Education Commission observed that English brought us political awakening and national unity. The Commission recommended that "our youth should acquire knowledge from all sources and contribute their share to expansion and development. In the attainment of this objective, the study of English is bound to play an important part"(1952). However, the Commission declared that mother tongue should be taught throughout school stage and in the middle school stage; two more languages can be taught.

## DISCUSSION

As far as the medium of instruction is concerned, the country has shifted over to mother tongue or regional languages. The official language Act of 1963 and Amendment Bill of 1967 insisted upon compulsory replacement of English by regional languages or mother tongue at the school stage. This has given rise to three language formulae where there was a shift in the emphasis. English, now can be taught as a second language or a third language. Indian Education Commission viewed that only regional language or mother tongue should be taught from class I to IV. Second Language is from V to VIII and third language from IX to X. The Central Advisory Board of Education and the Chief Minister's Conference approved the three language formulae. The study group appointed by the Government of India and headed by Prof. V.K. Gokak recommended that English should be introduced not earlier than Class V.

The Kothari Commission reiterated the three language formulae to meet the needs of mother tongue/regional language, the national language Hindi and the international language English. The commission also specified how the three-language formula is to be implemented. As:

Class	I	to	IV		Regional language
Class	V	to	VII		Two languages – Regional language and Hindi or English.
Class	VIII	to	X		Three languages - Regional language, English and Hindi.

In keeping with the changed position of English in India as a second or third language, it is being taught as a compulsory language in the Southern States from classes III / IV / V. In the Northern States, it is taught from class III, Class VI or Class VIII. It is optional in some states.

In the country, there are institutions like Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, Sainik Schools run under ministry of HRD. State Government institutions like Model schools, Social Welfare Schools, Kasturibai Vidyalayas, Tribal schools, Zilla parishat schools, municipal schools etc. Besides these, there are many institutions run under private sector and even public private partnership. In some institutions, English is introduced as a compulsory third language from class III onwards in the non-English medium schools. English medium schools teach two other languages apart from English i.e. the students' first language, and another regional language. In an English Medium school, English is one of the compulsory languages, and all the other subjects are taught in English only. Thus, a matriculate from an English medium school will undergo approximately 12-13 years of formal instruction in English. In Non-English medium schools, English is one of the compulsory languages from class III. In this case, school will undergo approximately 9 - 10 years of formal instruction in English.

#### **Objectives of Teaching First Language at Primary Stage:**

The following are the main objectives of teaching English as first language at primary stage.

1. To develop the skill of correct pronunciation of vocabulary.
2. To develop the skill of writing words with correct spellings.
3. To develop the skill of reading the passage correctly.
4. To enrich the English vocabulary.
5. To develop the ability for reciting poems with proper stress.
6. To develop the ability for writing dictation correctly by listening to the words.
7. To develop the habit of reading and writing by practice.

#### **Objectives of Teaching English at Secondary Stage:**

The following are the main objectives of English teaching at secondary level.

1. To develop the knowledge and understanding of Grammar.
2. To develop the ability for using grammar in his own writing English.
3. To develop the understanding of comprehension passages.
4. To develop the interest in reading English text books.
5. To develop the habit of self study.
6. To develop the ability for writing essay and meaning of the passage in his own words.
7. To develop the interest and favourable attitude towards English language.
8. To develop the understanding about rules of grammar and their use in writing English.

#### **Objectives of Teaching English at Higher Secondary Stage:**

The following are the main objectives at this stage.

1. To encourage and motivate students for more studying English language.
2. To encourage for composing poems and writing essays.
3. To develop the ability for grasping the theme of poem or English passage.

4. To encourage the students for writing the meaning or theme of poem or passage in their own words.
5. To develop the ability of appreciation of ideas and criticising.
6. To develop the creativity of students related to verbal ability and reasoning.
7. To develop the ability of understanding of other school subjects
8. To develop the mastery of language for expressing ideas and feelings.
9. To develop the ability of evaluation and analysis of language components.
10. To develop the moral values and character of the students.

Indians are not native speakers of English; for those English is a second language. So, teaching or learning is not as natural to them as it is to the native speaker. The native speaker of English has imbibed the language naturally. He/she has become familiar with the components of English in the natural process of growing up. This cannot be so with Indians. For Indians, teaching English is essentially a deliberate effort at developing a command and control of the different components of the language; its phonology (the sound system), its morphology (the patterns and parts of words) and its syntax (the patterns of phrases and sentences). The question is, how can Indians, master these components of English when it is taught or learnt as a second language?

A common mistake in vocabulary teaching is to entertain the notion that for every word in the mother tongue there is an exact equivalent in the second-language. Every English teacher in India knows that one of the problems he has to contend with in the classroom arises from the pressure of the mother tongue on his students. That is to say, the mother tongue of the students of a particular language group, learning English as a second-language influences their performance in English in such a way that almost all of them make the same mistakes in pronunciation, spelling, grammar and vocabulary.

In connection with the Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), students have to take part in an array of activities like debate, role play, speech, extempore, dramatization etc. Teachers witness a lot of differences among the students who face so many difficulties when they take part in those activities. The mother tongue has its impact on students and it plays a vital role. The socio-economic and educational background of parents would also influence the students.

The secondary education commission (1952-53) and the Education Commission (1964-66) elaborated on the themes emerging out of Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy in the changed socio-political context with a focus on national development. The three-language formula is an attempt to address the challenges and opportunities of the linguistic situation in India. It is a strategy that should really serve as launching pad for learning more languages. It supports teaching of mother tongue in schools.

W.M. Ryburn is of the opinion, "If mother tongue is taught at the school level and if it is well taught, habit may be formed in that classroom which will be of the greatest value in connection with the learning of English. In Kendriya Vidyalayas, regional English was taught earlier after the school hours by paying some honorarium to the teachers who taught the regional language. But the practice was put off all of a sudden. The three language formula insists teaching of regional language. Mahatma Gandhi recommended the use of the immediate environment, including the mother tongue as a resource for socializing the child into a transformative vision of society.

According to National Curriculum Framework, (NCF 2005) "if a school does not have provisions for teaching in the child's home language at the higher levels, primary school education must be covered through the home language" (P. 37). According to Article 350 -A of Indian constitution, "It shall be the endeavour of every state and of every local authority within the state to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups" (P.38).

Students enter the school not only with thousands of words but also with a full control of the rules that govern the complex and rich structure of language. The child obviously has the cognitive abilities to abstract extremely complex systems of language from the flux of sounds. Honing these skills by progressively fostering advanced-level communicative and cognitive abilities in the classroom is the goal of education. At the initial

stage, the child's learning of words, group of words, phrases and idioms in his mother-tongue will facilitate the work of an English teacher. Certain experts believe "If a speaker talks freely and fluently in his own language, he can soon learn to speak well and easily in another language, when he has mastered its form and structure. Ryburn is of the opinion that "The habit of speaking well should first be cultivated in the mother-tongue class room." But it requires a constant practice. The teacher of English should proceed gradually so that "speech habits" may be formed in the children. The mother-tongue can become a source of supplying ideas and Information. Its well-graded practice will help the people in arranging these in a well-knit in English. Professor P. Gurrey is also of the view that "Children, who have been taught to read their mother-tongue well, can quickly learn to read English after one or two years of oral English". In short, however, it should be kept in mind that mother tongue is not an end, but an aid, merely a tool. It is merely the occasional, essential calling upon that it is to be permitted and not regular giving of or asking for translation.

To address these problems, the following suggestions would help the teachers teaching in different institutions under different set ups with different goals and objectives.

- a) The child's learning of words, phrases, idioms in his / her mother tongue will facilitate the work of an English teacher.
- b) The content of written responses and expected and unexpected text markings in the two languages show that transfer of L1 is possible for better understanding of content in L 2.
- c) The use of mother tongue becomes a necessary to help the learners overcome their difficulties.
- d) The most difficult areas can be taught using the mother tongue.
- e) First language can augment learning a second language with an academic context.
- f) Some areas are identified where the use of the mother tongue seems to be useful and economic. For example, teaching of vocabulary and grammatical rules.
- g) If teachers can creatively and consciously deploy the first language as a resource, it would make the learning process of second language more meaningful and less stressful. The judicious use of mother tongue is not wholly discouraged. Remedial teaching for low achievers can be done using the regional language (mother tongue of children) where ever it is necessary. Children may find it difficult if the entire teaching is done through English. The only thing is that the teacher should bring it in when he finds its utility and help. Its use should be restricted to explanation of difficult and abstract words. Once the use of word has been made, the teacher must immediately come back to the target language. It is agreed upon with the suggestion that at the early stage instructions should be given in pupils' mother tongue, but the teacher should gradually break this habit and start giving instructions in English.
- h) The children must be taught grammar in detail. It is indispensable for learning English that is target language (L2). Teachers should not only teach grammar but also give a number of exercises for the children to solve. This helps them to speak correct English. Among the four L, S, R, W skills, students as well as teachers give more importance for writing skill since it is the deciding factor of the students in examinations. The ultimate success of a student lies on speaking skill. Now everyone needs to be an effective communicator to be successful in life. Of course, Reading skill and Listening skill are also to be given paramount importance.
- i) The students should be encouraged to speak English. The school management should appoint spoken English teachers in the primary section as well as in the secondary section. It is learnt that spoken English teachers are appointed only for primary classes but not for secondary classes. It is indeed necessary for children up to class VIII if not up to X. Teachers have to put up their sincere efforts to bring up the students by creating interest and taste for learning and speaking good English without any hesitation and nervousness. It is not only the responsibility of teachers of English but also other non- language subject teachers. Language learning is not confined to the language classroom. A

science, social science or mathematics class is *ipso facto* a language class. Learning the subject means learning the terminology, understanding the concepts and being able to write about them. Children may effortlessly learn more grammar from such activities. English does not stand alone. The aim of English teaching is the creation of a multilingual who can enrich all other languages; this has been an abiding national vision. English needs to find its place along with other Indian languages in different states, because children enrich English with their local language.

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